AWAKENING THE CALABRIAN STORY: THE DIVERSE MANIFESTATIONS OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE

by

Pina Marchese

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Pina Marchese 2010
Abstract

It all began in the village. We would wake up with the sun, we would rest our laboured bodies underneath the moon. Gli vecchi (old folks) often told us: “In the end, all that will remain is our story. Nothing else really matters.” This thesis “Awakening the Calabrian Story: The Diverse Manifestations of Acquiring Knowledge” will take you into the lives of ten Southern Italian women from Calabria. They will lure you back to their villages: their place of birth, their hearth, to the midst of the olive trees. Their stories will then migrate to Canada, as these women take their first steps on Pier 21.

“In the end, all that matters is our stories.” This thesis will give voice to ten Southern Italian women who will tell the world what, to them, matters most. They will tell their tales and pass on the wisdom they have learned along the way. With each breath and each step, they are always growing, never remaining the same. They go along and live out their villages wherever the thread takes them.

This thesis itinerary will begin in the village, follow a journey across the Atlantic Ocean to a life in Canada. Chapter One: (Introduction) will outline and describe the background, purpose and objectives, on this journey of awakening. Chapter Two: (Literature Review) will look at pedagogical perspectives in curriculum theory. Chapter Three: (Methodology) will focus on the research methodology applied throughout this thesis process. Chapter Four: (Stories as Data) will lure readers into the personal lives and experiences of participants. Chapter Five: (Interpretation of Stories) will reveal the analysis of acquired knowledge as reported by participants. This thesis itinerary will continue and conclude by the fireside with a collection of Calabrian folktales told by these participants, and translated from the Calabrian dialect into English.
AWAKENING THE CALABRIAN STORY
The Diverse Manifestations of Acquiring Knowledge
Doctor of Philosophy 2010
Pina Marchese
Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
University of Toronto
Acknowledgments

I devote this thesis to everyone who has “moved” my life!

Dear David Booth, you never gave up on me. You’ve believed in me from the very beginning. For this, I’ll be forever grateful. I will forever pass-on your loving spirit and press-on with your love for story. Xo

Dear Linda Cameron, from the beginning I was yours. You’ve renewed my strength, mounted up my wings like eagles, mentored me to run and not be weary, and encouraged me to walk and not faint. I’m forever grateful for these new wings. I promise to pass on your loving light. Xo

Dear Thesis Committee: Professor Cicely Watson (Chair), Professor Belarie Zatzman (External Examiner), Professor Linda Cameron (Thesis Supervisor), Professor David Booth (Voting Member), Professor Barrie Bennett (Voting Member), and Professor Grace Feuerverger (Voting Member); the awakening has begun. I THANK YOU all for the unfolding of what was and what is…. Xo

Dear Giulio Urgi, Will Ellis, Luigi Pennacchio, Kim Bezaire, Tony Leong: A journey begins with the first step and it’s never traversed alone. Thank you for picking me up and holding my hand along the way…. Xo

Dear Helen Porter, this thesis is for you – Who has given me the spirit of story, in this life and the next. I will continue to walk with you, awaken my voice and love you forever! Xo

To Our Lady of Guadalupe, Who continues to bless me. I hear Your call. Love You! Xo

To my ancestors, who live with me wherever I go. Your story will never be lost. Amore Sempre, Xo

To my Lord, Who reigns heaven and earth, You knew from the beginning what You were getting! Xo
Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................... iv
Table of Contents .................................................................................................. v
Table of Figures ..................................................................................................... viii
Appendices ............................................................................................................ ix
Dedication ............................................................................................................... x
CHAPTER ONE ......................................................................................................... 1
Introduction ........................................................................................................... 1
Figure 1: In the beginning ................................................................................. 1
Figure 2: Between cultures ................................................................................ 4
The Wall on Gladstone Avenue ........................................................................ 5
CHAPTER TWO ....................................................................................................... 10
Literature Review: Stories as Curriculum ....................................................... 10
CHAPTER THREE ................................................................................................... 21
Methodology ......................................................................................................... 21
Oral History .......................................................................................................... 22
Portraiture as Methodology ............................................................................ 25
CHAPTER FOUR ..................................................................................................... 27
Analysis of Stories ............................................................................................... 27
Pier 21 .................................................................................................................. 27
Figure 3: The village .......................................................................................... 31
Figure 4: Pier 21, Halifax, Nova Scotia ............................................................. 31
Two Ways, Two Worlds .................................................................................... 32
Figure 5: Nonna Marianna ~ Midwife ............................................................... 35
NONNA MARIANNA: “Press-On...!” ................................................................. 35
Figure 6: Nonna Marianna ~ Midwife ............................................................... 40
Figure 7: Nonna Betta ....................................................................................... 41
NONNA BETTA: “Courage!” ............................................................................. 41
Figure 8: Nonna Betta ....................................................................................... 45
Figure 9: Nonna Caterina ................................................................................ 46
NONNA CATERINA’S “Follow Your HEART...” ............................................. 46
Figure 10: Nonna Caterina ............................................................................... 50
Figure 11: My Mother ....................................................................................... 51
MY MOTHER: “Have Faith!” ............................................................................. 51
Figure 11: My Mother ....................................................................................... 51
Figure 12: Annunziata Maria Tedesco ............................................................. 63
ANNUNZIATA MARIA TEDESCO: “Get Your Own Key!” .......................... 64
Figure 13: Annunziata Maria Tedesco ............................................................. 75
Figure 14: Mara Franco ..................................................................................... 76
MARA FRANCO: “I Take No Shit!” ................................................................. 76
Figure 15: Mara Franco ..................................................................................... 83
Figure 16: Maria Rosa ....................................................................................... 84
MARIA ROSA: “Have Hope!” .......................................................................... 84
Figure 17: Maria Rosa ....................................................................................... 88
Figure 18: Nunzia Ruffo ................................................................................... 89
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God and Raphael (Lu Signuri e Rafaeli)</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God, St. Peter and The Poor Man (U Povareddu, Lu Signuri e San Petru)</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God and the Bad Tenant (Lu Signuri e Lu Malu Alloggiu)</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God and St. Peter (Lu Signuri e San Petru)</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peter’s Mother (La Mamma di San Pietru)</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Poor Man and the Door (Lu Povareddu)</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Sibilla (La Mamma Sibilla)</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Mary’s Story</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Mary and the Evil Woman (La Fimmana Mala e La Madonna)</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Martin (San Martino)</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Serpent Child</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariuzza</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bird (L’Aceddu)</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiorilla</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re Pipi (King Pipi)</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Mother of Montserrat (La Madonna di Montserrat)</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Mother of Providence (La Madonna Di Providenza)</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Mother of Polsi (La Madonna Di Polsi)</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Mother of Polsi (Another Miracle) (Madonna Di Polsi Unaltro Miracolu)</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madonna Di Polsi (Another Miracle)</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calabrian Women Speak: A Dramatic Narrative</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In the beginning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Between cultures</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The village</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pier 21, Halifax, Nova Scotia</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nonna Marianna ~ Midwife</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nonna Marianna ~ Midwife</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nonna Betta</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nonna Betta</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nonna Caterina</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nonna Caterina</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My Mother</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Annunziata Maria Tedesco</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Annunziata Maria Tedesco</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mara Franco</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mara Franco</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Maria Rosa</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Maria Rosa</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Nunzia Ruffo</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nunzia Ruffo</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nunzia Ruffo</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Vittoria (Pileggi) Galati</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Vittoria (Pileggi) Galati</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Rita Solarino</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Rita Solarino</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Paese</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Walking through stories</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Stories by the doorstep</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices

APPENDIX A .................................................................................................................. 126
The Talking Doll (A Pupa Chi Parra) ............................................................................. 126
The Merchant and his Daughter (U Mercante e La Figgia) ........................................... 129
The Bread and the Fish (Lu Pane e La Pisci) ................................................................. 132
The Miracle from St. Joseph ......................................................................................... 134
The Turkey (La Nia) ....................................................................................................... 136
Bad Luck (Mala Furtuna) .............................................................................................. 143
Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) ............................................................................................. 148
Giacaddaruni ................................................................................................................ 153
The Three Goats (Li Tri Pecreddi) ............................................................................... 157
The King’s Son (U Figghiu Du Re) ................................................................................ 160
The King of Portugal’s Daughter (La Figghiaedu Re Di Portogallu) ......................... 162
Petrusinella .................................................................................................................... 165
The White Riccotta (La Ricotta Janca) ........................................................................ 167
The Beauty of Seven Veils (La Bella di Setti Veli) ....................................................... 175
Eye Drops of the Beauty of Seven Veils (L’acqua di L’occhi e la Bella di Setti Veli) ........ 179
Tradicinu ........................................................................................................................ 191
Juxa ................................................................................................................................ 193
God and Raphael (Lu Signuri e Rafaeli) ...................................................................... 195
God, St. Peter and The Poor Man (U Povareddu, Lu Signuri e San Petru) .............. 197
God and the Bad Tenant (Lu Signuri e Lu Malu Alloggiu) ......................................... 201
God and St. Peter (Lu Signuri e San Petru) .................................................................. 202
St. Peter’s Mother (La Mamma di San Pietru) .............................................................. 204
The Poor Man and the Door (Lu Povareddu) .............................................................. 204
Mother Sibilla (La Mamma Sibilla) ............................................................................... 206
Mother Mary’s Story .................................................................................................... 206
Mother Mary and the Evil Woman (La Fimmana Mala e La Madonna) .................. 208
St. Martin (San Martino) .............................................................................................. 209
The Serpent Child ........................................................................................................ 210
Mariuzza ....................................................................................................................... 214
The Bird (L’Aceddu) ..................................................................................................... 218
Fiorilla ............................................................................................................................ 221
Re Pipi (King Pipi) ....................................................................................................... 228
Divine Mother of Montserrat (La Madonna di Montserrat) ....................................... 231
Divine Mother of Providence (La Madonna Di Providenza) ..................................... 232
Divine Mother of Polsi (La Madonna Di Polsi) ............................................................. 234
Divine Mother of Polsi (Another Miracle) (Madonna Di Polsi Unaltro Miracolu) ... 235
Madonna Di Polsi (Another Miracle) .......................................................................... 235
APPENDIX B .................................................................................................................. 238
Calabrian Women Speak: A Dramatic Narrative ....................................................... 238
Dedication

Cara Ma e Pa,
Con curraggio aveti venuti,
Con crocce aveti soferto,
Con cuore aveti cantata!
Grazie mille per darmi la vita!
Amore sempre,
Tua figlia Pina xo

Dear Ma and Pa,
With courage you have arrived,
With cross, you have carried,
With heart, you have sung!
With Love,
Your daughter, Pina xo

My thesis is dedicated to my mother (Domenica Marchese) and father (Nicola Marchese) who’ve had the courage to leave their home Calabria and come to Canada. Your stories will live forever! You will never be forgotten!

Always in my heart,
Your daughter,
Pina xo
Love you both! xo
Figure 1: In the beginning…

Since the house is on fire,
Let us warm ourselves…
(Calabrian Proverb)
My doctoral thesis, *Awakening the Calabrian Story: The Diverse Manifestations of Acquiring Knowledge*, presents an investigation of education as a living process, growing out of situations that are historical, social, orderly and dynamic (Hall-Quest as cited in Dewey, 1938, p. 11). I will inquire into the lives of ten women from Calabrian Southern Italy, who left their place of birth in the 1950s and crossed the Atlantic Ocean hoping for a prosperous life in Toronto, Canada. As they were youthful, with strength and vitality, they prepared to work hard and to build a foundation for the next generation. From their homeland, each brought with them, along with their luggage, narratives, which they had learned from the village elders. The phenomenon of immigrant adaptation to a new land, if it is to be studied, cannot possibly omit the study of their folklore. The way of life, the ethical code, and the retributive justice system, are all reflected in the lore of the people (Augimieri, p. 7).

Connelly writes about, the narrative inquirer: “By highlighting the context and the background stories, I can remain true to the scholarly task, laying bare my assumptions and rational for the work” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The ideas for this thesis have been formulating since my childhood. I am a first generation Italian-Canadian who grew up hearing the folk tales and family tales told in the Calabrian dialect by family elders and my mother’s friends. Enriched by these tales of poverty, struggle and prosperity, I went on to university to become a storyteller with a special interest in the folklore of Calabria. When I started my PhD studies at OISE, I wanted my thesis topic to focus on researching the stories I had heard since childhood. The main purpose for this research is to examine how these stories were vital for human survival within a particular focus of ten Calabrian women who immigrated to Canada. I wish to champion their knowledge, learning, skills, adaptability, and celebrate their voices. They deserve recognition for their lives and achievements.

In this paper I substantiate the core ideas of the proposed study through a review of the relevant scholarly literature. I also describe and justify my proposed research methodology, within the qualitative research framework – narrative inquiry and portraiture.
I draw upon the work of authorities such as Clandinin and Connelly (1994) who state, “stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell our experience” (p. 415). This research explores how people craft tales of their past as part of an existential project to create meaning in the present. “Education is a narrative of experience that grows and strengthens a person’s capabilities to cope with life” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 27). Dewey’s (1897) statement, “I believe that education is a process of living and not a preparation for living” (p. 87) supports this research. Crucial to narrative inquiry, the researcher must bring forward his/her own life narratives. From this perspective, the life story is seen to stem from the creative process by which the human imagination is in constant transformation, and making sense, sometimes, of the disconnected arbitrary events that make up a lifetime.

For this research I will document and analyze the life experiences and acquired knowledge of ten Southern Italian women who immigrated to Toronto after WWII. The youngest is now 69 and the eldest is 94. All ten participants are illiterate in both Italian and English printed texts. These women did not receive formal education; thus, they never experienced an institutionalized schooling system. The education of these participants concerns actual life experiences, an approach shared by Dewey (1938), Schwab (1978, p.371-374), Connelly and Clandinin (1998) and Conle (2005). I will analyze their stories to see how they acquired knowledge and passed it forward, using narrative knowing. This thesis explores the highly neglected topic of women’s activities, life stories and folktales. Del Negro (2003) writes about Southern Italian women who came to Canada in the fifties: “In daily life, popular culture and academic writing, men’s experiences and ideas are taken as the norm and women are pushed to the margins or made invisible” (p. 12). In these life stories, these women take centre stage. No longer an adjunct to the male experience, these “women of the shadows” (Cornelisian, 1976, p. 24) emerge from their silence to speak in their own voices about their hopes, dreams and struggles. Women have always shared their stories and knowledge as they laboured.

Because everyday life is the raw material from which people create knowledge, we stand to gain new understanding and new visions of social life by turning our attention to the life stories and folklore of these ten women. Most importantly, these
women’s lives clearly show how knowledge and meaning grow out of everyday experiences.

This research will attempt to uncover the diverse knowledge acquired from these women sharing personal narratives around a warm, burning fire. I will focus on the importance of narrative as a fundamental means of learning and survival. “Teaching and learning is a continuous process of reconstruction of experience” (Livo, 2003, p. 21).

Figure 2: Between cultures

My passion for this work began when I was three years old. Oh, how I loved the sounds of words and writing and learning new words. My mother often said: “Pina was born with a pen in her hands.” Now come with me as I lure you into my world of awakening. Like Sleeping Beauty, I’ve just awakened after a long dormancy to my story. Like Rapunzel, I’ve let my own hair down and have been helped to escape from the deep, dark tower, which has held me captive for years – now venturing into the world, excavating and discovering. There’s a reason to my madness as I walk into the world guided by the lantern of the moon and encouraged by the rays of the sun. So come with me, as the days unfold, on a journey to where the olive trees whisper and the rooster crows early in the morning – awakening…rising….
The Wall on Gladstone Avenue

By telling and sharing my own life history and creating a framework of understanding of my narrative experience, I learned to recognize different types of knowledge and feel that I can offer diverse ways of manifesting experience (Carter, 1993). My story and identity are embedded within my expression of culture, language, diversity and the unconscious myths (Feuerverger, 1991) of the daily life narratives of my family. Hunt (1991) indicated that if I begin with myself, I validate the educational research I intend to undertake. Thus, to successfully identify and understand the diverse manifestations of acquiring knowledge and learning, I needed to reflect on my life history (Cohen, 1991; Cole, 1991, 1994;) in relation to my present life as a daughter of an immigrant, as a teacher and as a soul seeker.

I grew up on Gladstone Avenue. My family lived on the main floor, and upstairs lived the “Blagonic” family from Croatia. All the kids in my house slept in the same room. Nobody had their own bed. My socks were her socks and her socks my socks. And this is how it was. All the adults worked until dark. The older children took care and kept a close eye on the younger kids. We didn’t have books in the house.

Cat, hat, rat, mat: oh how I held onto the rhythms of words. Once again at the age of three, my mother and I sat together in front of the television as we watched the Sesame Street program. My mother, who never had any formal education learned to speak the English Language and also learned enough letters of the alphabet to write her first and last name. Visuals such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 55555 in flashing red, yellow and blue colours enlightened both of us as we copied the numbers, letters, and then words onto a blank piece of paper. However, we discovered singing to the theme song even more enjoyable:

“Sunny Days,
Sweepin’ the clouds away
On my way to where the air is sweet
Can you tell me how to get
How to get to Sesame Street
How to get to Sesame Street… “
Soon, my mother mastered the English language. Proud of her accomplishment and further independence, every evening she teased my father for speaking the English language more articulately than he. During dinnertime, as we all sat together eating pasta, my mother intentionally practiced out-loud the sounds and words in which we both had learned and shared throughout the day. “My name is Domenica; I cook pasta anda broccoli,” she would say. Furthermore, as if she almost searched for recognition and approval she practiced the words referring to the different parts of the human body: “This is my head, this is my nose; these my eyes.”

While my father was impressed with my mother’s determination to speak the English language, he never led her to believe how impressed he was with her ability. “Ah,” he’d often comment: “I have seconda media; I went to school for two years, you didn’t.” “Ah… if I had the opportunity to attend school, I would have been a teacher,” she’d respond. “Ah, for someone who never went to school, I “speaka” English better dena you! I don’t needa anyone to transalata when I go to the doctor. I speaka for myself!”

My father nodded his head slightly, as he sighed deeply and held his glass of wine up to his mouth. After a strenuous day in construction, my father did not have much energy to argue with my mother. Often he responded silently as he looked into my mother’s face with his emerald green eyes and reddish-brown, sun burn ed skin. He held a glass of red wine in his large laboured hands while his body contained a life of its own as he echoed:

“My words are very easy to understand, very easy to practice. But no one is able to practice them. Words have authority, affairs have an ancestry. It is simply because of their ignorance that they do not understand me. Those who understand me are few. Thus, I am ennobled. For this reason, the sage wears coarse clothing over his shoulders, but carries jade within his bosom” (Ching, 1990, P. 45).

Different levels of language comprehension existed within my family household. Whereas my mother became the household communicator for acquiring the English language, my father could only speak the Calabrian (Southern Italian) dialect. Thanks to the Sesame Street Program which became essential for both my mother and me; we both learned to read and write in English. Everyday, I learned and recopied and rehearsed
words I had learned from the Sesame Street program that day. The basement of the semi-attached house on Gladstone Avenue was my play and creative ground. This was a place, I could be and become. In this place, I felt free. With white, yellow, pink and blue chalk I’d write on the cold, rough cement ground. My mother didn’t mind. And with my crayons, I’d write on the great, big wall facing the washing machine. On the light grey wall with a rough surface, I’d write:

cat
hat
bat
mat

Oh, how I loved to hear the rhythms and sounds made when putting these words together. After each word, I drew pictures. Yes, this was my WALL. I FELT ALIVE AND FREE WITH MY OWN WALL. I would spend hours writing words, chanting, singing these words and then drawing pictures next to each word. We didn’t have books in our home – on Gladstone Avenue… We had stories, we had words, we had music…

SONG: “GIRA, GIRA, TONDO
QUANTO E BELLO IL MONDO
HUSHA, HUSHA,
E NOI CADIAMO…”

“Sunny Days, Sweepin’ the Clouds away…

My parents immigrated to Canada from a predominately oral culture. After dinner my parents told stories they had once heard in Calabria. Stories of “Genorentola” (Cinderella); stories about the Wise Old Man who lived in their village; stories about the wealthy Marquis, who corrupted the masses; stories about the “evil eye” (mal occhio) were my favourite. Both my parents strongly believed in the perils of witchcraft practiced in the villages throughout Calabria. Life was predestined by fate and curses. If someone was hexed by a curse, only Natuzza, the wise Old Woman who lived alone in a house on top of the mountain, could remove the “Ietaturras” (curses). Natuzza, I was told, had special powers from God. In a past life, Natuzza was a saint and had once again returned on earth to heal humankind and save souls. She was the village healer, who accepted only food for her special practices. Natuzza’s healing powers extended far
beyond other supernatural worlds. Natuzza had a direct line with the Divine. Many sought Natuzza for advice and healing. My grandmother, the village midwife, who everyone knew as “Comara Beta” (Godmother Beta) exchanged herbal remedies with Natuzza. Calabrian Women relied on the oral wisdom and healing practiced by the elders. My grandmother’s knowledge to deliver babies was passed on from my great-grandmother (Nonna Marianna) who was also once the village healer. Hence, in Calabria, women were educated by older women who passed on centuries of wisdom and knowledge.

“Sunny Days, Sweepin’, the Clouds away…”

I’m three years old. I want to go to school like my older brother and sister and all the other kids. There are seven children living in this house. Another family who came to Canada from Croatia also lives with us. I’m not the oldest, and I’m not the youngest. I’m right in the middle. I like to do things on my own. I don’t like to be TOLD what to do. Let me do it my way or else…

The house is empty. Everyone is either at work or at school. I’m alone in the house with Signora Maria (the Croatian lady). I like her. She’s kind to me. She speaks to me in Croatian, and I understand her.

Down to the basement I go. I’ve covered all the walls. I put two chairs together and I pretend that I’m in school. In this school, I am the teacher. At the front of the classroom, I ask my students to read out loud the words on the wall. “Okay, everyone, say:”

Cat
Hat
Bat
Mat
Rat

“Now, whoever is good gets one of my marbles.” The basement on Gladstone Avenue was also my classroom. Signora Maria is calling me; I have to go now.”

SONG: “BATE, BATE, LE MANINE
ADESSO VENE PAPA,
MI PORTE LI CIOCALATINI

8
Eeva Hoffman (1989) similarly speaks of a “double vision” where children of immigrants learn to live in two worlds, their reference points varying according to the culture in which they are placed. To find meaning in the inevitable double vision of reality, there is a need to assimilate the multiple perspectives and their constant shifting (p.164). This middle ground is the place where I live. It has become my waking world.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review: Stories as Curriculum

I situate these core ideas in three literatures in the larger field of curriculum studies. “Curriculum is an explicitly and implicitly intentional set of interactions designed to facilitate learning and development and to impose meaning on experience. The explicit intentions usually are expressed in the written curricula and in course of study; the implicit intentions are found in the ‘hidden curriculum’, by which we mean the roles and norms that underlie interactions in education” (Miller & Seller, 1992, p. 3-4).

First, I place these ideas within a literature that sees education as experience made accessible through narrative; second, I use the literature of knowledge acquisition; finally, I position my thesis within a literature of voice, alongside women’s and immigrants’ voices.

My underlying preoccupation concerns how ten Italian women without benefit of schooling or literacy were capable of acquiring the knowledge they needed to live successful lives. Dewey’s theory of experience and education shapes my personal meaning of learning for life. Dewey’s (1897) statement, “I believe that education is a process of living and not a preparation of living” (p. 87), supports my definition. For Dewey (1938), education is a positive, ever-present process (p. 36), linked to growth (p. 38), and the reconstruction of experience (p. 64). Education is growth as a result of a culmination of experiences organized over time in social situations (p. 44). When I met my Calabrian grandmother for the first time in Canada she commented: “Who went to school? If you had a good ear, a good eye and some common sense, you could learn anything. Life is your greatest teacher. Lessons are learned daily” (2008).

Connelly’s and Clandinin’s (1998) meaning of education builds on Dewey’s with education as experiential, practical, personal and narrative: “Education is a narrative of experience that grows and strengthens a person’s capabilities to cope with life” (p. 27). Stories allow us to handle many hypotheses and variables cohesively. I also distinguish education from training, conditioning, or indoctrination (Green, 1986, p. 479). Connelly and Clandinin (1998) add that “a curriculum can become one’s life course of action” (p. 2). Schwab’s (1978) curricular commonplaces, subject matter, milieu, learner, and teacher, shape this study. The subject matter for these participants is life itself. The
home, the neighbourhood and the world-at-large overtake the classroom milieu. The ten participants are the learners. The teachers, Dewey’s (1938) “more-mature learner(s)” (p. 38), include the participants’ parents, family, friends and wise elders.

Awareness of my participants began in my childhood. As books were not commonplace, I often heard these participants reiterate stories as a means of learning life lessons and acquiring further knowledge. Children appear to know the importance of storytelling as if by instinct. Stories function as a social, political and educative activity (Mallan, 2003). After a long day, all the children gathered to hear stories told by the elders (mainly women) residing in the household. Dewey (1938) stated that “teaching and learning is a continuous process of reconstruction of experience” (p. 87). The knowledge acquired through stories became ingrained in the minds of us children. These stories echoed in our lives, at home, on the street and at school.

My intention in writing this thesis is to contribute to the growing body of literature on narrative and to relate it to the diverse manifestations of acquiring knowledge as a Calabrian woman. Oral narratives are a record of a people without a history, that is, a history not formally written and only to be found in what is left to us in their folklore. Studying these Calabrian women’s stories is like travelling back in time, before the 1840’s, to the period before compulsory schooling, to study learning in a pre-literate culture. Calabrian women began as early as age five to “work the land” for wealthy landowners and barons. As we today emphasize and value literacy so much, we are in danger of forgetting the importance of these non-literate ways of learning. “The tradition issues from a reservoir of wisdom of the people and is generated from them” (Raspa, 1988, p. 6).

Within the Calabrian family the prominent storytellers were women. Most importantly, the tales preserved by these participants reveal a great deal about the central role played by storytelling in Calabria to maintain customs and belief systems (Iacovetta, 1995, p. 3). Antonio Gramsci, the twentieth-century Sardinian who studied the lives of the people of Southern Italy including the Calabrians, understood this distinct purpose of storytelling and drew much of his information directly about the life of the people through their stories. He was concerned with what themes the local *poeti* (shepherd-poets who improvised) were using in their performances each year. Since they were selected
by Calabrian villagers, these themes revealed the immediate concerns of the peasants and, thus, the present state of their folk culture (Raspa, 1988, p. 7).

Calabrian women are known for their pagan and superstitious beliefs. It becomes apparent in their folktales. We sense how these women are directed by their intuition and have a strong belief in the village *strega* (witch) who casts and removes spells (Iacovetta, 1995, p. 7). Their intuition and wisdom are similar to what Iacovetta discusses in her study “Such Hard Working People”. Iacovetta states: “Intuition is a kind of wisdom that someone acquires after a lifetime of learning and watching and doing. It’s judgment. What all stories and studies and arguments add up to – is an attempt to understand this magical and mysterious thing called judgment” (p. 260).

Hence, the manifestation of acquired narrative and knowledge continued with further immigration to Toronto. Many Southern Italians underwent a transition from being peasants in an underdeveloped rural economy to becoming proletarians in an urban industrial economy. For former peasants, Calabrian women, for the first time, became wage earners selling their labour power and were forced to adjust and adapt not only to the occupational world (Iacovetta, 1995, p. 4). The principle that the development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process (Dewey, 1966, p. 58).

Voices for immigrant women are embedded in the oral tradition of storytelling. Knowledge is acquired, passed on and woven into the fabrics of their everyday lives. “The spoken word is maintained in their memories, like the written word” (Feldburg, 2008). In this regard, most Calabrian women have survived in neighbourhood communities where the oral tradition of acquiring and passing of knowledge was the medium. Furthermore, as a writer of this thesis, I must expand the boundaries of knowledge to include these women.

The diverse manifestations of acquiring knowledge through narrative continued with the immigration of Southern Italian peasant families to post World War II Toronto. Within the patriarchal framework of the family, Italian women performed demanding roles as immigrants, workers, wives and mothers. Their active commitment to the family helped bridge the move from Old World to New. The transition from *Contadina* (peasant) to worker did not require a fundamental break in the values of women long
accustomed to contributing many hours of hard labour to the family (Burnett, 1992, p. 197).

As noted earlier, the ten Southern Italian women from Calabria were illiterate. They acquired and manifested knowledge and survival skills from the art of storytelling and narrative. Stories were embraced with reverence as a method of acquiring treasures of knowledge and wisdom. The hearth, where narrative was acquired and passed on, took the place of educational institutions. This manifestation of narrative knowledge was an essential component in Calabrian culture. Folk and fairy tales, which have been honed through many generations of retelling, are a testament to the enduring nature of story. “Story can create a common bond that binds us together (Barton & Booth, 1990, p. 12). Story is the principal way we as humans have of making sense of our world. Barbara Hardy (1978) calls it “a primary act of mind (p. 11)”. We retell events from our lives in stories to try to decode them and to share them. We imagine future possibilities in stories. When we hear the stories of others, we may begin to build bridges of understanding. “Perhaps one of the few hopes for the future is if we can truly hear each other’s stories and build a new shared vision” (Yashinsky, 1993, p. 34). For Calabrian women, stories are the essence of knowledge regarding everyday life. In Canada, my Calabrian grandmother continued: “Who had television? After working the land all day, family and friends gathered around the fire to hear the elders tell a story or two. Stories were told for our enjoyment. However, by telling and hearing each story, the hidden lessons were always revealed” (Galloro, 2008).

It has generally been assumed that stories were first created for children and are largely the domain of children. But nothing could be further from the truth. Story is curriculum. From the very beginning, thousands of years ago, when stories were told to create communal bonds in face of the inexplicable forces of nature, to the present, when stories were written and told to provide hope in a world seemingly on the brink of catastrophe, mature men and women have been the creators and cultivators of the storytelling tradition. On the whole, story has become an established genre within a process of Western civilization that cuts across all ages (Zipes, 1979, p.1). Though it is difficult to determine when the first literary story was conceived, we know that oral stories have existed for thousands of years and were told largely by adults for adults. For
Calabrian women, motifs from these stories, which were memorized and passed on by word of mouth continue to exist in the lives of Calabrian women in Canada. They were to be shared and exchanged, used and modified according to the need of the tellers and the listeners. As more and more stories were written down in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, scholars went to peasant communities to seek out a treasure of timeless stories (Zipes, p. 2).

By learning to examine situations from multiple perspectives, we may build bridges of understanding (Greene 1993, p. 7), a natural curriculum. When people examine their perspectives alongside those of others, they begin to predict what the alternative perspectives are likely to mean to themselves and others (Diamond, 1991). Like these Calabrian women, we all have a basic need for story, for organizing our experiences into tales of important happenings.

Stories, these ubiquitous discourse forms, are of great interest in language and literacy education, particularly in light of the increasing socio-cultural diversity of students in our classrooms (Dyson, 1994). “Stories are an important tool for proclaiming ourselves as cultural beings. Voices of Calabrian women echo those of others in the socio-cultural world – what those others think is worth commenting on how they judge the effectiveness of told stories” (p. 4). “Thus, the storytelling self is a social self, who declares and shapes important relationships through the mediating power of words. For example, in sharing stories, we have the potential for forging new relationships, including local, classroom “cultures” in which individuals are interconnected and new “we’s” are formed” (p. 5).

For Calabrian women, narratives are the means by which we gradually impart meaning to the events of our own lives. There is, on all sides, a growing interest in narrative or in storytelling as a mode of sense-making (Bruner, 1986). In this regard, Miller and Mehler (1994) in “The Power of Personal Storytelling in Families” state: “The stories people tell about remembered experiences from their own lives provide an important, indeed a privileged site for self-construction because multiple sources of narrative-self-affinity (e.g., temporal, evaluative) converge in this narrative genre”(p. 13).

Hence, the following research is an example of the importance of stories and bringing forward validity to narratives of Calabrian women. Just as Heath (1983); Miller
and Sperry (1988); Snow et al. (1991), found a transition with preschoolers when exposed to narrative, this claim is true for Calabrian women. Our work on “personal storytelling at home” affirms these intuitions in that it contributes to the growing body of empirical evidence that personal storytelling is an area of strength for many preschoolers – including preschoolers from low-income and minority backgrounds (Eisenberg 1985; Heath 1983; Miller & Sperry 1988; Snow et al. 1991). When we say an area of strength, we mean not just that young children are surprisingly skilled narrators, but that they are interested in personal storytelling, participating frequently and avidly (Miller, 1989). In addition, they use personal stories as tools for expressing and making sense of who they are. Children’s involvement in personal storytelling promotes involvement with other people, including more experienced members of the culture, who wittingly or unwittingly expose them to a complex and varied set of narrative practices (Miller & Mehler). While in Canada, my grandmother told me stories. “There once was….” She always brought me into the homes and hearts of the characters and into the settings and plots of each story connecting me closer to the values and beliefs of Calabrian existence.

For the Calabrian woman, to be a person is to have a story to tell. Within each of us there is a complete cycle of legends, dances and songs to be sung. We were all born into rich mythical lives: we need only claim the stories that are our birthright. What all persons have in common is their uniqueness. Every person has a story to tell. That’s what makes a person a person and defines the journey that person makes through life. “There are no autonomous, anonymous, pragmatic individuals – we were all raised by an intimate group that had traditions, values, rites of passage, ceremonies and legends. When we forget our stories, leave our heroes unsung, and ignore the rites that mark our passage from one stage of life into another, we feel nameless and empty” (Keen 1989, p. 2).

In the early 1960s, ethnicity took on a new meaning. The word “ethnicity” first appeared in dictionaries after 1950. Various events in the 1960s caused the term “ethnicity” to surface and to replace other labels of religion and nationality around which groups could form to put forth their demands for attention and rewards. Almost concurrently, and as a result of the same causes, a new feminism emerged with different terminology and demands. “Women’s liberation” in its early days in the late 1960s
carried an emphasis on attitudes and social processes which old feminist theories had overlooked when they concentrated on changing laws and legislating opportunities (Caroli, Harney & Tomasi, 2003, p. 3).

Both “ethnicity” and “feminism” became world words as they moved in the vocabularies of people who had been unfamiliar with them. In response to the new interest in both ethnicity and women’s history, the Canadian Italian Historical Association and the American Italian Historical Association met in Toronto on October 28-29, 1977, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. For two days these representatives discussed “The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America” (Caroli, Harney, Tomasi, p. 4). New World experiences did not occur on a tabular, separate from the life experiences that had preceded them. Each woman brought the cultural baggage of a particular region: its accent, customs, and work traditions. Scholarly research in Italy and more popular writings, such as Cornelisen’s Women of the Shadow (1976), illustrates the attempt to understand what occurred on the other side of the Atlantic. The interest was reflected in several papers presented in Toronto. Professor Emiliana Noether in her research paper Le Contadine del Sud discovered more women worked in Italy than in America at the turn of the century, but pay levels remained low (Caroli, Harney & Tomasi p. 6).

For Calabrian women, feminist pedagogy (Finn & Miles, 1992; Gaskell & McLaren, 1991; Belenky et al., 1986) is intrinsically transformative – outward reaching in its aim to change society, while respecting the power of experience. This is summarized in the feminist understanding that the personal is political. Feminism maintains a broader perspective on what we conventionally refer to as “life skills”, urging that the building and supporting of human relationships be central. This was significant for Calabrian women and their survival. Thus, feminists confirm the value in women’s experience, that creates knowing pertaining to the full scope of life. For many women, the “real” and valued lessons learned did not necessarily grow out of their academic work but in relationships with friends and teachers, life crises, and community involvement (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 4). Feminists together critique the rampant neglect of relatedness in education, noting that we need to completely rethink what it means to be educated in terms of relationships and caring (Noddings, 1992, p. 12). In Canada my grandmother
mentioned: “A dear friend is better than gold. In tragedy and in triumph, a true friend is there for you. Many lessons are learned with a friend by your side” (Grandmother Galloro, 2008).

While there are many voices within the women’s movement, they all speak in favour of empowerment: extrication from longstanding physical and emotional dependency upon androcentric social and mythic structures, and release from the dark shadows of constructed dualisms. These voices urge women into greater self-reference, self-sufficiency, as well as, community interdependency that are not self-negating. My research process – Calabrian women narrative and their diverse manifestation of acquiring knowledge -- rests upon the authority that is central to women’s feminism. Kirby and McKenna (1989) confirm this feminist research mandate that “there is power in being able to tell your story and hearing others tell theirs” (p. 170). Listening to my grandmother’s stories overtime encouraged her to give voice to each story and pass on knowledge to the one who heard. True to the experience of Kirby and McKenna (1989), I aspire to find myself living in my research and learning about myself as I examine the experiences of others.

Knowing, which originates and develops from continuous connecting to the fullness of one’s life experience, is the most natural path to action that has the potential to be world transforming. The personal agency of authentic empowerment has the capacity to translate into political activism – a power that is central to integrative feminism and not satisfied with a nominal equality frame whereby women gain equal access to a flawed and unjust system in order to carry on “business as usual”. Values derived from deep experience are those, which drive and motivate activism (Christ, 1989). Feminism embraces experience and body knowledge in the learning process. Christ (1989) calls for an embodied thinking where “we seek to speak a truth rooted in our experience, our time and place, our bodies” (p. 14).

Feminism strongly informs an understanding of transformative learning that is passionate and deeply connected to experience where the personal heart of inner work merges with political activism. Transformation is a feminist issue whose embryo finds nurturance in the validation of personal narrative (Spretnak, 1997, p. 397). In Canada,
my grandmother always said: “If you don’t have a story, you don’t have a life” (Grandmother Rizzuto, 2008).

When we deal with a Calabrian woman, we are confronted with a segment of the population who is truly silent, not only because the judgment on what and who were important in the society was patriarchal, but also because being illiterate, they were unable to leave any expression of their innermost feeling for posterity. Illiterate and subordinate, these women appear only as statistics in the records compiled by authorities (Caroli, Harney & Tomasi p. 7, 2003).

What the Calabrian woman felt, how she regarded herself, is difficult to assess. Illiterate and brought up in a world whose view of and attitude toward women were ambivalent, she could have had no real sense of her own worth and no incentive to break out of the narrow circle that custom and convention drew around her. Their stories are full of denigrating references to women, and men did not welcome the birth of daughters. Until she married, she was a potential liability, for she had to be provided with a dowry, which often strained the family’s meager resources. Once married, however, and a mother, her role changed. She became a stabilizing, unifying focus of the new family.

While her husband might well be the pater familias both legally and by accepted custom, exercising his authority over wife and children, she in fact dominated the family. Unless her husband was a drunkard, womanizer, or gambler, she usually controlled the family finances. She enjoyed the reverence and love of her children, but she never publicly flaunted her authority within the family. If maltreated, she usually kept her sorrows to herself, making little public outcry and even trying to find some plausible explanation for outward signs of physical abuse (Caroli, Harney & Tomasi p. 8,9, 2003). In Canada, my grandmother taught: “a woman must have her own pocket” (Grandmother Rizzuto, 2008)!

Paths are made by walking. My questions, long dormant, surfaced when I wanted to unravel the narratives of Calabrian women and how they used the manifestation of knowledge they acquired daily. In this regard, Dewey (1897) supports this inquiry: “I believe that education is a process of living and not a preparation for living”(p. 87).

Only in the last few years has the folklore dealing with women’s activities achieved a legitimate place in the discipline. Until recently, folklore history has tended to
neglect the “uglier” side of Italian immigration families (Del Negro 2003, p. 18). While Italian immigrant women survived the strains of the immigration process, one historian reminds us that “we ought not forget that this was sometimes achieved at great emotional cost short of documenting women’s history in a way that illustrates women’s full participation in and interaction with her various worlds (Ibid., p. 16). This position has been echoed by other historians, whose work on Italian immigrant women in North America tries to represent the diversity of women’s worlds by showing many different settings. In recent years there has been an emerging interest in the experiences of ethnic women. However, even with the latest trends in academic research, there is little work that examines the experiences of Italian Canadian women. Research has denigrated women’s expressive behaviour, referring to it as “women’s talk” or “old wives tales” (Ibid., p. 21).

Although in Western society women’s roles are no longer confined to the home, many specifically female forms of folklore are transmitted in intimate surroundings, often in situations to which only women are privy. Studies have shown that, while men were typically found in the public sphere talking on street corners and in general stores, women were found talking behind closed doors (Ibid., 2003, p. 9). The tendency in academic discourse has been to “marginalize the private domestic realm placing it outside of history” (Ibid., 2003, p. 10).

The male bias in folklore studies has greatly excluded the experiences of women from academic discourse; however, more and more scholars are becoming sensitive to issues of gender and how gender shapes human experience. With the increasing interest in women’s personal experience narratives (stories of everyday events), some challenging interpretations are being presented. In a feminist analysis of women’s speech, Radner and Lanser (1987) argue that women’s subordinate position within the power structure has led them to develop different communications strategies from men (p. 412). These scholars suggest that women’s expressive style conceals different levels of meaning, often hiding subversive messages of protest against the established order (p. 415).

Current feminist analysis in this area tries to uncover the covert ways in which women have managed to speak through and with the constraints and limitations of patriarchal structures. Many studies demonstrate how women use traditional forms of
expression to express non-traditional messages. Italian folklorist Alessandro Falassi (1980) points out how Italian lullabies express hostile attitudes about motherhood (p. 62). Here, the soothing and melodic tunes frequently draw attention away from lyrics, which speak of the desire to be liberated from the burdens of motherhood. In such a way, feelings of frustration and resentment are expressed and the role of the mother, highly revered in Italian culture, is indirectly criticize. Given all these factors, there is a great deal of data that has been left unexplored or inadequately covered.

Rejecting the simplistic characterization by historians of the Italian woman as peasant (contadina), Scarpaci argues that the scarce literature on this subject ranges from the orchard and the field to the home” (p. 83). Hence, this was the experience of many immigrants in Canada.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Oral history relies on story as a powerful tool for understanding experience in education (Dewey, 1938) and teacher knowledge. Qualitative research as a form of inquiry allows the researcher to ask socially relevant questions and develop theories with descriptive and explanatory power. Qualitative research is fundamental to understanding another culture can be used to understand how participants organize their experiences (Silverman, 2004). Elliot, too, argues that both qualitative and quantitative methods are characterized by a concern with narrative, and that our research data can best be analyzed if it is seen in narrative terms (Elliot, 2005).

For this thesis, the research process will combine two Qualitative Research Methodologies: narrative inquiry and portraiture, to document and analyze participants' daily experience and learning. These story-based research methodologies remind us of Joseph Campbell’s (1949) work “The Hero With A Thousand Faces”: “Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind” (p. 15). In Canada, my grandmother told me: “Stories are integrated in our human existence. As we learn from each story, they also give us hope for what is to come” (Grandmother Galloro, 2007). Qualitative research is fundamental to the understanding of experience, subculture and in the comprehension of how interaction is organized (Silverman, 2004).

Thus, I will also employ narrative inquiry as a methodological approach in this research. “Although narrative inquiry has a long history both in and out of education, it is increasingly used in studies of educational experience. One theory in educational research holds that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Narrative as a methodology applies a range of “real world” situations in research inquiry (Trahar, 2006). The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general concept is refined into the view that education and educational research are the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories: learners, teachers, and researchers and storytellers and characters in their own and other’s stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991).
**Oral History**

Oral history is a research method that will be employed to record in-depth biographical interviews, during which the researcher will spend an extended period questioning respondents about their lives, or about an aspect of life (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004; Yow, 1994). Several terms will be used interchangeably with *oral history* in this paper. Atkinson (1998) talks about *life story* or *life history* as a form evolving from the oral history approach to field work; a qualitative method of in-depth study of lives and how the individual plays various roles in society (p. 3). The use of oral history in this study serves to fill a gap in a current body of knowledge, and in educational history curricula regarding Calabrian participants.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) identify the oral history interview as one of the most common forms of personal narrative. Understanding experience through storytelling – also known as narrative inquiry – has gained popularity and credence in the field of qualitative research. Narrative inquiry successfully extends personal dimensions (Clandinin, Huber, Huber, Murphy, Murray-Orr, Pearce, Steeves, 2006). Through this method, a rough shaping and narrating of personal and social histories are gathered (p. 111). Oral history as a method works well with senior citizens in this study on a number of counts. Histories may be done in one or multiple sittings, depending on the stamina of the respondent. A primary goal of oral history is to help the respondent give meaning to his or her own life experience through a detailed narrative (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). In-depth biography-styled interviewing allows the participants to speak as much as possible, and share their stories with the researcher. Oral history as a method allows for flexibility in process; the interpretation of oral history may be used to build on existing theory related to this inquiry while giving voice to those who have been previously silenced.

As Barton (1999) comments: “To be a person is to have a story. More than that, it is to be a story” (p. 3). Similarly, the discussion of the personal narrative literature examines how stories of everyday life are embedded with powerful symbolic meanings, meanings which invoke the past and become richer each time they are retold. These narratives of the quotidian are extraordinarily revealing, as they provide glimpses into the
musings of the human soul. Included in this study is the folklore of these participants: stories and traditional beliefs.

From a psychological viewpoint the personal narrative carries the teller’s personal stamp. In this sense it is an extension of the narrator’s identity, a personal badge which encapsulates both individual and collective meanings (Dolby-Stahl, 1985 p. 45). It is also used as a coping mechanism through which narrators achieve greater insight into their lives and rehearse new strategies for facing the future.

Existentially, the narrator not only acts from experiences, but thinks about his actions, evaluates them, learns from them and tells the story – not to express values, but to build them, to create them, to remake them, each time he tells his stories (p. 47).

In her study of female support groups, folklorist Kalcik (1985) noted that women tend to talk in phrases that trailed off and observed what she called *kernel story*. These unfinished kernel stories, are highly packed narratives which emerge in interaction and invite women to share their own stories or fill in the gaps; such speech patterns are an attempt to create intimacy and encourage inclusive dialogue.

Many social scientists have suggested that our desire to narrate human experience and dramatize the past stems from an effort to reorganize events in meaningful terms.

Life story interviews have the advantage of being readily interpretable. The use of life story interviews suggests that researchers feel respondents can make sense of their own past in a way that is clear and based in reality (Brenner, Brown, & Canter, 1985). Ultimately, it is the researcher who interprets the story; thus, for researching the life story, researcher biases are a concern. Life story researchers consider interpretive validity (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000), the ability of the research to catch the meaning, interpretations, terms and intentions that situations and events (i.e. data) have for the participants themselves in their terms. Validity, with respect to ‘historical facts’, is often gleaned from official documents, which are saved as artifacts that shape one view of the past (Yow, 1994). Little may be preserved ‘off the record’ for public consumption, such as the unheard personal accounts, diaries, letters, papers from small businesses or the personal photographs and memorabilia that shape an alternate history. Strategies vary for obtaining an oral history (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000). Using a structured set of questions allows the researcher’s intentions to be uppermost, allowing the participants to
tell their stories in their own way, and opens the field to having participants’ purpose of primary concern.

Recent studies on the life story have emphasized the meanings people attribute to their life experiences. This perspective views the sharing of reminiscences and personal experience as an active, meaning-making process, which involves both the creativity of the narrator and the researcher; the life history is a joint production (p. 36).

Limitations of the life story interview are noted, particularly when interviews take on a life of their own, become unconstrained and cover myriad themes and perspectives. The ability to generalize from life stories may occur when senior respondents offer two points of view, their own, and that of a family member, such as an older sibling, mother or father, relating the story as they remember it or have been told it. The participants willing to take part in this study can be characterized as feisty, articulate and sociable individuals who are eager to tell their stories. Although the articulate will speak for others, would a different picture emerge with the less enthusiastic participants being represented in this study?

I draw on the work of Moustakas (1990), who investigates human experience through the form of heuristic research. Moustakas asserts that through heuristic research “one seeks to obtain qualitative depictions that are the heart and depths of a person’s experience…depictions of situations, events, conversations, relationship, feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs” (p. 38). The practice of heuristic inquiry involves using a qualitative methodology to obtain first person accounts from participants who have directly encountered significant events. Through heuristic inquiry, the researcher gathers detailed descriptions and direct quotations. This method serves to delineate themes, meanings and essences of experience. Several guiding principles of heuristic inquiry are outlined by Moustakas, beginning with the formulation of interview questions on a topic or theme that personally engages the researcher and possibly relates to his/her own identity and inner awareness. These influences are thought to ultimately sustain the researcher’s interest and active involvement throughout the process. A further stage in heuristic inquiry involves the construction of methods and procedures, most typically open-ended interviews, to help clarify the meanings and patterns of experiences pertaining to the research, and to encourage open expression and dialogue. An open
dialogue allows the researcher and participants to engage in a process of cooperative sharing as well as to elucidate the meanings and essence of experience. Lastly, heuristic inquiry involves the creative synthesis and analysis of research data. Immersion in, and reflection on the interview data assists in gaining an intimate portrait of participants’ experiences. Subsequently, a process of identification of core themes and patterns emerging in the research data is determined.

**Portraiture as Methodology**

Portraiture is a method of qualitative research that seeks to record and interpret the perspectives and experiences of the researchers’ subjects, documenting their voice and their vision, engaging individuals in telling the stories of their lives (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman-Davis, 2002). This methodology places itself within the larger field of qualitative educational research. The objective of portraiture suggested by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis is to secure the ‘essence’ of the subject and to ‘paint’ as vivid a reconstruction as possible of the culture, group or individual being studied. In *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis make a compelling case for a form of inquiry that “captures the complexity and aesthetic of human experience” (p. 4). The study of portraiture sees context as crucial to the documentation of lived experience and organized culture. Context, as defined by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis is “the setting physical, geographical, historical, cultural, aesthetic – within which the action takes place; it is used to place people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do” (p. 41). Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions – their authority, knowledge and wisdom (Hackmann, 2002, p. 51). Thus, we may sketch a portrait of Calabrian women gathered and telling stories, against the backdrop of a burning hearth, to capture a view of life that is shaped by the context of experience. The stance of neutrality in defining portraiture is not possible. The developing of a portrait involves the active association of the researcher and the person being observed in constructing the portrait itself. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis (2002) expose the classical stance of objectivity as illusory because the hand of the researcher is still ‘evident’:
We see the researcher’s imprint in the selection of the research questions, in the design of the study, in the data collection strategies and in the interpretation of data. There is no voice, no soul in traditional quantitative forms of inquiry, but the researcher’s hand – revealed in the conceptual orientation, the disciplinary lens, the methods and design (and probably personal disposition) – is certainly present and shaping the work (Lightfoot & Hoffman-Davis, 2002).

Wolcott (1999) would categorize portraiture as a participant-observation strategy, while Yin (1994: 99) labels it as a descriptive case study, since the case study investigator is encouraged to ‘tell it like it is’ (Hackmann, 2002, p. 52). Portraiture differs from traditional forms of qualitative research because the researcher’s voice is woven into the written document, called a portrait, which is created as a result of the researcher’s interactions with the participants in the research setting (Ibid., p. 53). Furthermore, Lawrence-Lightfoot argues that, in contrast to an ethnographer who listens to a story, the portraitist’s approach is a process of listening for a story (Ibid., p. 54). Portraiture can be a highly useful tool for examining an educational system’s organizational culture, since events frequently can have different meanings for different individuals. Then these varying perceptions can be fashioned onto the canvas of the institution’s portrait, in essence becoming a composite representation of various individuals’ beliefs regarding their organization (Ibid., p. 57).

Investigating human experiences through heuristic research and the methods of oral history and portraiture are valuable approaches to research in the field of curriculum studies. Oral history relies on story as a powerful tool for understanding experience in education (Dewey, 1938) and teacher knowledge. Qualitative research as a form of inquiry allows the researcher to ask socially relevant questions and develop theories with descriptive and explanatory power.
CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of Stories

Pier 21

“So what was it like Ma?” Leaving Calabria: the place you were born, raised, worked, spoke…” “Ah figghia (daughter), what do you want me to tell you? We didn’t have a choice but to leave. If we didn’t leave, we’d starve. After the war, we lived in ‘miseria’. We were lucky to find a piece of bread. And even though we didn’t have anything, we made the best of everything. We sang while we worked. We helped each other out. The sun was always bright in Calabria. It’s a beautiful place – sea, sun, stars and mountains. But we were always poor. I never thought I’d leave the place I was born. Who thought that? In life you never know!

“Your father and I were sad to leave everybody. We heard good things about Canada; but we still didn’t know what to expect. We were crossing the Atlantic Ocean to a place we didn’t know about nor speak the language. We had hopes; we had drive. We were looking forward towards a better future.”

“We left Calabria and took a train to the port in Naples. We didn’t know what happened, but the seats on the ship were all taken. We were then informed to take a train to Paris, France. There we had an elaborate dinner and boarded the boat to Canada. I was twenty and your father was thirty years old. Your sister was only ten months. This boat was from Greece “The Saturnia”. It was full of people of all cultures. I shared a room with two women from England. They spoke to me in English, but I just smiled at them. I didn’t understand them. They were kind to me. They would bring me food in the room we shared. I was sick to my stomach, all the way to Canada. I wasn’t used to the food. And I was a little nervous with the change. Your father didn’t seem to have a problem with it. He liked the food and trip.”

“We landed in Halifax: Pier 21. The first thing I noticed was that the sun didn’t look as bright as in Calabria. The sky seemed darker. At PIER 21, we stopped and were brought into a warehouse. It was full of people from all over the world. I was hearing languages, I never heard before. The officials took our passports. We were there for a while. This was Canada. After many hours, we boarded another boat to the St. Lawrence
River in Quebec. From Quebec we took a train to Montreal and then another train to Union Station. Canada was big. The houses looked like little church steeples. From Union Station, then, ‘cara mia’ (my dear) the rest is history. We sacrificed; we struggled; we worked hard. Without hard work, you get nothing. But, I didn’t know what to expect in Canada. I pushed myself to learn the English language. And I wasn’t afraid to ask if I didn’t know something. My first stomping ground into Canada was at PIER 21.”

Since the earliest explorers discovered the frontier land across the oceans, people from all nations have been drawn to the New World. Some have pursued curiosity or a thirst for adventure. Others have fled persecution and hardship. All have come searching for new lives with brighter futures than those left behind (Times Series Vol. 3 No. 1).

With its prime situation on the Atlantic seaboard, Halifax was a place of entry for immigrants from the time of its founding by the British under Edward Cornwallis in 1749. Populated by the first nations people who had lived off the land and water for centuries, Nova Scotia had been only sparsely settled in previous explorations by the French and British. But the newly founded Halifax was destined to attract many more immigrants to the colony.

Although immigrants began trickling into Pier 21 in 1924, it didn’t officially open until March 8th 1928. As large vessels docked in the deep waters of Halifax Harbour, authorized immigration personnel on the second storey would swing into action. First boarding the vessel to ensure its medical clearance, staff would then unload and inspect the baggage before leading the passengers into the reception area.

Hand luggage was stored in a series of wire mesh cages while the passengers were sorted, first according to family status (families, women and children, single men) and then according to criteria for landed immigrant status. Many arrivals were processed, granted their status and, within hours, were on trains at the nearby CNR station, bound to various destinations in their new homeland.

During this era it was very common for men to arrive alone, find employment, save their earnings and then bring their families over. Other passengers were detained for a variety of reasons including lack of documentation or money, and illness. Detainees were housed in the Pier’s dormitories until their individual cases were examined. The
cellblocks were used to detain suspicious passengers who required twenty-four hour supervision.

However, large numbers of displaced people didn’t begin arriving in Canada until 1947 – two years after the war had ended. Upon the conclusion of the Second World War the Canadian people and their government showed no immediate desire to open the doors to large numbers of immigrants. There are several reasons why this was the case. The government’s first priority was adjustment from wartime to a peacetime economy. One million Canadian men and women who had been employed in war industries had to find other work, and 975,000 members of the Canadian armed forces had to be absorbed into the postwar workforce. By 1946 Canadians were starting to relax a little about their economic security and it was becoming apparent there was an acute labour shortage in the country’s primary industries of farming, forestry and mining (Times Series Vol. 3 No. 1).

The final two decades at Pier 21 were the heyday and decline of the great transatlantic ocean liners. Immigrants from all across Europe including Dutch, Irish, Czechs, Italians, Greeks, Hungarians and many more boarded the huge vessels by the thousands in search of jobs, security and a better life for their families.

By the late 60’s more than half of all immigrants were arriving in Nova Scotia by air and the days of the waterfront immigration center were numbered. Canadian immigration officers were splitting their time between meeting ships at Pier 21 and meeting planes at the airport. As ocean traffic declined and new airport immigration centres were opened, it was decided the number of immigrants arriving by sea weren’t large enough to justify the facility and on March 8, 1971, almost exactly 43 years from its official opening, Pier 21 closed its doors on a significant and colourful era of Canada’s past.

For more than a century, Italy has been a major exporter of its people. While the emigrants have originated from every region of Italy, the immigrant flows have been dominated by peasants – mostly small holders and tenant farmers from the hilltop towns and villages of the south. The movement of Italians to North America has been part of a larger diaspora that has seen literally millions of people leave their hometowns for diverse locales around the world. Between 1876 and 1976, more than twenty-six million
Italians have migrated, temporarily or permanently, to countries outside Italy. The first major wave of overseas migration occurred at the turn of the century and, by 1915, more than fourteen million people had left home. While many of them were men on seasonal sojourns, there were also entire families that sank permanent roots outside Italy (Iacovetta, xviii).

It was Toronto that emerged as the single most important Canadian target for immigrants from Italy. While the earliest arrivals came in the late 1940’s, the first major influx of Italians arrived during the 1950’s. Between 1951 and 1961, close to 90,000 Italians, who entered Canada in these years, settled in Toronto. Another 33,000 Italians came to Toronto by 1965; and by 1971, 38,760 more had come. By 1961 the Italians had replaced the Jews as Toronto’s largest non-British ethnic group, and Toronto had replaced Montreal as the home of the largest Italian population in a Canadian city. Since 1941 the Italians had quadrupled their numbers in the City of Toronto; another 60,000 lived outside the city limits (Iacovetta, 1992, p. 3).

On migrating to Toronto, many southern Italians underwent a transition from being peasants in an underdeveloped rural economy to becoming proletarians in an urban industrial economy. For former peasants, and even artisans and shopkeepers who had once laboured in their own homes, the nature of the family economy changed profoundly on their arrival in Toronto. Here, men and women became immigrant wage-earners selling their labour power outside the home, and their lives, since they were forced to adjust and adapt not only to the occupational world, but also to the city’s other residents, including the Italian old-timers who belonged to the prewar community and the Catholic clergy, and to the institutions and social caretakers of the host society (Iacovetta, p. 5).

Paths are made by walking. Theses are made by questioning. My questions - long dormant – surfaced when I could not find a book on Calabrian folklore at the library (Boys and Girls House on St. George Street.). I remember leaving the library feeling displaced and wanting to know about these people of the shadows. That day, I started on a path. The rest came from walking. “We have come together to give each other support in the retelling and rebuilding of our life stories. I think that in a psychological sense we are all cultural orphans, all of us. But we are orphans who are determined to succeed. We are orphans who are not alone” (Feuerverger 2007, p. 69).
Researching and writing this thesis has taught me that human beings are resilient no matter where they live in this world. Also, as human beings, we are truly connected as we share our struggles, our joys and our stories to ultimately make sense of the world we live in.
Analyzing my family stories, the stories of southern Italian women and Calabrian folklore (stories passed on to me) has given me a deeper understanding of the values, and beliefs of the Calabrian culture. Furthermore, this research has given me insight into how Calabrian immigrants acquired knowledge. Moreover, the participants in this research all had extraordinary memories and relied on visuals in their daily lives to survive. As one participant mentioned: “Your memory is your computer. You lose that, you’ve lost everything.” Another participant said she did her shopping by relying on the pictures on the soup cans or packaged foods. And yet another participant mentioned she counted the stops on the streetcar to determine where she was going.

This research has made me aware of the diverse manifestations of acquiring knowledge and narrative through the spoken word, through memory – the passing of knowledge from mouth to mouth, human to human, breath to breath…till the very last breath, knowledge kept alive and then passed on…

Books weren’t a medium. Humans replaced books, papers, pen and computers. At home my mother told us stories. At school the teacher read to us. At home my mother taught through the spoken word and at school the instruction was written.

Two ways and two worlds…and this is what I’ve learned…. There are many ways to become….As Annunziata Maria Tedesco mentioned in her story: “When the first television came into our village, I was shocked to see women with such fancy dresses and painted nails…I had no idea people lived this way…. The television replaced our stories, but the “vecchia” (old woman) knows who we are!” As Grace Feuerverger (2001) reveals in Oasis of Dreams: “The significance of the border zone is perhaps in its power to give voice not only locally but also to those around the globe who dwell in between borders and in between identities” (p. 9). This place of in between borders has been my existing reality growing up between cultures and customs in Toronto.

To make sense of the two worlds I grew up in, I wrote the following poem:

*Two Ways, Two Worlds*

*Gira, gira tondo…*

*Ring around the rosy…,*

*They talk about turkey and roast potatoes at school,*
I have pasta broccoli and lasagna at home;
   We don’t have books at home,
At school there are many books;
Two lives I live,
One world at home,
And a foreign world at school;
At home we speak the Calabrian dialect,
At school I learn the English language,
Two worlds, two ways,
And this is the way life is for an immigrant;
You work, or you go to school,
There’s nothing in between…
You rise before the sun,
And work until your day is done…
Two ways, two worlds,
And this is how life in Canada has gone.
Do this, don’t do that,
Whispers, murmurs, voices,
Which way do you turn,
The journey is your own…

Follow the calling from your heart,
And follow the messages in your dreams…
Two ways, two worlds,
And the challenge continues, it never ends…
Work, work and more work,
That’s all you learn to do;
To make it,
You shake it,
And sometimes you fake it…
Two ways two worlds,
And no matter which way you turn, there’s no escaping;
Ups and downs,
And all around,
She’ll say this,
And he’ll say that…
Follow the throne,
Follow your own!
Two ways, two worlds,
And the only way to true happiness,
Is your walk towards home …
Two ways, two worlds….

When a story is told, it reveals the heart of the teller and invites the listener to their hearth where struggles are said and courage is cast…and where the wise old woman or man passes in the village…. 

The implication of this research is to bring further understanding and awareness to the various ways of learning. A place like Toronto with a multitude of cultures interacting abundantly with the human heart brings forward the various manifestations of knowledge from the four corners of the earth.

This research has been conducted mainly to give voice and to pass forward to the next generation the value of struggle, survival and stories in an uncertain world. As the people before them have crossed with a luggage wrapped in a rope, they carried their stories in their hearts and their village in their souls. With their luggage came their ancestors. And the rest is history as they made their way into Canada….

The stories in this thesis are for the next generation to keep the “paese” alive and their homes on fire! I draw upon my journal notes in this next section, and my memories of my journey to their homeland, to my own heart beat. Italy, their birthplace, their beginning.
From the land of the Shadows, I’m sitting on a mountaintop in Southern Italy, Calabria. In my deepest dreams, I never imagined I’d ever get here. I have knots in my stomach. My gut feels heavy. What will I find? What will I hear? What will I discover? Will I be ashamed or will I be proud of my family roots? My parents have told me grim stories of how they suffered in Italy. They were so poor – they had no shoes, they had one piece of clothing – they’d wash at night and wear again in the morning. My mother never went to school – and my father didn’t go to school past grade three. I can’t bear the
gnawing in my stomach any longer. I need to find out if there was only misery in Italy. There are women talking and singing in the olive orchards. The olive trees are whispering to me.

My first day in Calabria and the world is a different place. From the Rendi Train Station, I hopped on a bus, which drove me closer to the village where my parents once lived. I’m tired although my eyes are wide open. I’m silenced by the mountains surrounded by olive trees. Round and round we go. Finally, I reach the place where my grandmothers once lived. There, on top of a mountain, a village so old continues to exist. About 800 people live in this village (including the chickens and roosters) of San Nicola Da Crissa. Like a brick road, the streets of stone are cracked, narrow and winding. The homes are closely attached to one another, like a jigsaw puzzle. There’s hardly any space to breathe or move. The village is so small and so close that if anyone sneezes, everyone hears and knows all about it. Along Belvedere Street there is a general store with chocolates and cigarettes and a cheese shop with assorted Italian provolone.

As the road unwinds to the highest peak, people gather in the piazza: talk, laugh, sing, sell daily wares, watch plays, and drink cups of espresso or cappuccino outside the only café. The penetrating odour of village olive oil surrounds me everywhere I go.

In Calabria, I stay with Vittoria, my father’s cousin, a seventy-six year old woman – a widow with twelve cats. She isn’t popular in the village. People say she’s crazy because she became a recluse after her husband died. Vittoria is a medium built woman (about 5 feet 6 inches), tanned skin, brown, almond-shaped, piercing eyes and grey hair. She appears more modern than most of the elderly women in the village. Vittoria wears colourful purple, pink, and yellow dresses and her hands and limbs do not seem worn-out. In her younger days, Vittoria married a wealthy man. “Rocco never wanted me to do any cleaning. He wanted me to take care of myself and keep young for him.” Vittoria doesn’t have any children. I ask her if it is by choice that she doesn’t have any – she is silent – so I never ask her again.

The rooms are wide; the ceilings tall; the house reeks of olive oil. Cats and kittens of all shapes, sizes, and colors prowl from room to room. Palomba is Vittoria’s favorite cat: large, white and strong.
The rooster crows in the early morning. The flies buzz in the bedroom. Outside the window, the olive trees murmur. It’s time for espresso. As she stands by the stove, Vittoria tells me a story about my great grandmother.

“Fighia mia! Fighia Mia! My daughter! Why, everyone in the whole village knew Nonna Marianna.” Holding and caressing Palomba in her sturdy arms, she says: “Nonna Marianna was as strong as Palomba. When Nonna Marianna was alive, she was a midwife who delivered many babies and saved many women’s lives during labour. In those days, if you were poor, you didn’t go to school. School was only for the rich. You either worked the land or worked long hours as a servant. We didn’t even have medicine.” But Nonna Marianna, who was taught by her mother and her grandmother, knew all about herbs and she made her own healing potions for all the villagers.

‘Marianna! Marianna!’ People were calling her at all hours. Nonna Marianna was called to heal the sick, attend the dying and deliver the next generation. As she healed, she heard many people’s problems. She only had two children of her own. She felt she had a mission in life. Nonna Marianna was a real warrior. She even had consent from the Catholic Church to baptize babies as soon as they were born. And she did more: when a priest wouldn’t bury a woman who had a baby out of wedlock, Nonna Marianna would make funeral arrangements and give the woman a proper burial. A stocky, sturdy woman with tanned, olive skin, Nonna Marianna wore her hair coiled in a bun and black aprons over her long dark dress and ankle high black-laced boots. Her eyes were penetrating and her hands were always busy. I interrupt, “Did her husband mind her work?” She wouldn’t let her husband interfere with her work – she was often away for meals. She spent little time cleaning the house or cooking. Even when people paid her with a chicken or a kilo of pasta, she would give it away to poorer families. There were times, however, when she would cook for her husband: a special cod fish dinner, but when she was on call, she was on call!

If it weren’t for Nonna Marianna, I wouldn’t be here today. My mother laboured for many hours to have me. It was a difficult birth. Many women surrounded my mother’s bed – comforting and consoling her. In those days, there was only one doctor in the village and Nonna Marianna. Because my mother encountered tremendous difficulties and I didn’t want to “come out”, the village doctor suggested that my arm be
amputated to facilitate the rest of the body to leave the womb. “Si, if we amputate the baby’s arm, then there’s a possibility that the mother and child will be saved,” he said. Women wailed and wept. The walls turned grey. Then Nonna Marianna entered the room. “Doctor”, she said, “let me take a look for I have delivered many babies.” The doctor stepped aside. The room was still. Everyone held their breath. Nonna Marianna inserted her hands in the womb and positioned me (an infant) for birth. She did this several times until I was born. “Ha! Shouted the doctor, “The baby is dead!” “How could this be?” Nonna Marianna shook me: “the baby’s body feels warm”. She held me in her arms and I let out a loud cry. Nonna Marianna knew her business. Ah, there are many more stories about her heroic deeds and mission of Nonna Marianna. But as many have commented: “She was a simple woman, with a big heart and hands of gold!”

Walking and talking throughout this village, I could sense my great grandmother’s spirit. People haven’t forgotten her. Her life as a midwife lingered. The stories she told remained. The story of The Serpent Child (see appendix) was reiterated most often. I wondered why my great grandmother retold this particular story to the villagers? A princess marries a serpent for a husband. This serpent is cunning and demanding. She must comply with his manipulations or he will have her beheaded. After many attempts to appease her serpent husband, the princess cannot “take” anymore and leaves her rich husband and everything behind and begins to walk into the world on her own. She takes nothing with her, but a bag of gold coins. On her journey she encounters many obstacles and becomes poor, blind and armless.

In despair, this princess continues her journey and encounters an old woman (Divine Mother in disguise) and asks her: “What is the matter, Beautiful Lady?” The princess reveals everything to this old woman who comforts and consoles her: “Place your arms underneath this water fountain.” And as she does this, her hands grow back. Then the old woman asks her to wipe her face with this water and her eyes sight returned. The princess was transformed and then became more beautiful than ever. Finally, this old woman gives her a long, sturdy stick and advises her to always walk the straight path: “Ask this stick what you deeply desire and your wish will be fulfilled.” This old woman disappears and the princess continues her walk…. 
The Serpent Child

This tale “The Serpent Child” reveals the princess’ desire for wholeness. Without eyes, arms and money, this young woman is completely helpless. This graphically illustrates women’s plight in many cultures, where women are confined at home and prevented from doing what they want or need to do. Something similar happens in modern Western culture, where social pressures discourage adolescent girls from speaking up or asserting themselves. They are prevented from reaching their dreams; society chops off their arms and blinds them psychologically. This powerful image of cutting off girls’ arms is to make them “manageable” and “marriageable”, forcing them to fit unhealthy feminine stereotypes. Romantic rescue is only a temporary phase on a woman’s journey through life. The armless princess is healed when she plunges her arms into a stream of water. This tale reiterates an ancient link between water and the deep feminine. The Chinese notion of yin, the cosmic female principle, for instance, is tied to moist, fertile valleys, while the Celts associated pools, rivers, and springs with female spirits (Chinen, 1997, p. 107).

This princess experiences a death-rebirth process: in the midst of a hopeless situation, a woman finds new life. This story holds an implicit warning here: if a woman does not reach out with all her strength, even when it seems useless, her true self will drown; but if she perseveres, she will find healing and wholeness. Women must break free from these romantic conventions and find strength in their life experiences before they can gain full access to the deep feminine.

Back in the village in Calabria, I heard many stories of the doctor amputating many infants’ arms to save mother and child during labour. During many instances, my great grandmother intervened and with her intuitive knowledge prevented many children in the village from walking the world armless.

Nonna Marianna, I’ve learned, often told this story to the women in the village to rebuild their spirits, to teach them that life always has hope, even in the midst of deep tragedy. When one becomes blind, armless and penniless, they must “press-on” to find new life. “Courage! Never Give Up! There’s always a way…”!

Life, as we come to it and as it comes to others, is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in
terms of narrative unities and discontinuities….Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 18).

Bausch (1984) adds that narrative provides a kind of “knowledge energy” that has the potential to link generations of people.

Figure 6: Nonna Marianna ~ Midwife
NONNA BETTA: “Courage!”

The rooster crows as the sun rises higher in the sky. In Southern Italy Calabria, women are praying as they walk along the street to work. This morning I am walking to the olive orchards where women work and chant. The trunks of these trees are so old; the branches, so gnarled. Yet, the olive trees continue to produce oil. A soft wind is blowing through the branches and moist green leaves. The trees are chattering, bonding. I walk further and meet an old woman dressed in black praying the rosary underneath the trees: “Who do you pertain to, fighia mia (my child)?” I tell her my family nickname “Comare Betta”. The old woman, all bent and wrinkled, holding on tightly to her rosary beads, stretches out her bony arms and with a her worn-out hands, grabs and hugs me.

“Your grandmother and I were best friends. When she was alive, we worked and laughed together. Nonna Betta, your grandmother, was a kind soul. She shared whatever she had. If she had a loaf of bread, Nonna Betta would divide the loaf and give the bread to a poorer family. Ah Betta! We all cried when her husband died and she immigrated to
Canada. (Chuckling…) She stayed in Canada for about a month and then she returned to this village. She told me she wanted to die in Calabria – the place where she was born. One afternoon, while we were drinking espresso, in the kitchen of her house, your grandmother told me what Canada was like. (Chuckling…) Is it true that all people do in Canada is work? (pause). Well, that’s what your grandmother told me. She told me that the houses are all spread apart, the streets are wide and the ceilings are not as tall as the ones in Italy. Your grandmother felt the ceilings caving in on her and this is one of the reasons why she returned to Calabria. She also told me that the sky is grey in Canada and the sun is not as bright as in Calabria. And the pollution blocks out all the stars at night.”

“Early in the morning people work. Late at night people work. ‘Focco Meo! Focco Meo! (My Fire! My Fire!)’ There’s no time for naps in Canada. Your grandmother also told me about the time you took her to the train station and there were so many people coming and going and confusion and for the first time in her life she saw these electric steps moving and carrying people. ‘MAMMA!’ She cried. She told me she was afraid to stand on those electronic steps, so she sat on them. With her long black dress and her homemade black apron with pockets and pleats, she rode up the electronic steps at the Yonge Subway line. When she returned to Calabria, she looked as pale as a ghost. It was days before she regained the colour in her smooth, olive tanned skin. She told me she never wanted to leave again. For your grandmother, the sky in Calabria was covered with stars at night and the sun was bright during the day.”

The old woman began to weep. Still holding onto her rosary beads, she held my hand tight and said: “I’ll never forget, the day before your grandmother died. She prepared a banquet of food and invited the villagers. We ate spaghetti with chickpeas, fruits, sweets, drank wine and espresso. Till midnight we laughed and told stories. The next morning, we heard the church bell ringing and found out your grandmother had died!”

In Canada, when I first met my Nonna Betta, I was shocked! I couldn’t believe she was my grandmother. She had long, thick, black hair, copper tone skin and dark almond shaped eyes. She was about 5’2” with a medium build. She smiled often, with a face so natural and unwrinkled. She told me she had all her teeth. She took care of them
by chewing on a coffee bean everyday. She smelled like the hearth, where she often cooked her food.

She told me stories of how knowledge and skills were passed down through the generations. She told me how she knew to mix various herbs together and make natural medicines. Villagers would knock on her door to retrieve these remedies. She came from a line of midwives, and this information passed on to her. “Voice and writing provide a sensory metaphor for finding and situating knowledge” (Diamond & Mullen, 1999, p. 240)

“It’s important to have an open heart and a sharp memory,” she informed me, “without heart, you’re dead and without a memory, you’re lost.” My grandmother often spoke of her first husband. They were young, deeply in love and married after a short engagement. “He was “bellu” (handsome) and wealthy. I’ve never felt so much “amore” (love). When we got married, we were the happiest couple in the “mondu” (world). Our love was real. I’ll never forget…he looked like a movie star. Then after four months we were married, we both fell ill. My “amore” died within a week and I survived. No one can tell me any different. Villagers, who were jealous of our true love and happiness, put a wicked “ietatura” (curse) on us. My life was never the same. I moved back with my parents. I wore black for three years. I lost my desire to say, do and be. From time to time, I helped my mother, as she practiced her skills as a midwife. The elders tried to console my aching heart: ‘This is your destiny -- your star. You must live it…’. And my days went like this. Until one day your “nonno” (grandfather), while riding a stallion, stopped and stared at me from a distance. I didn’t pay much attention to him. I carried on with my chores. The nerve of this man, he then went to speak to my father for my hand in marriage. At first, I refused, and then I changed my mind and accepted. I wanted a life of my own. In three months we were married. And although I was content, somewhat, my heart was still buried with my first love.”

My Nonna Betta often spoke of her first love Antonio. “In love you find sole e sofferenza (sun and sufferance). In life you must fight for your happiness!” On the porch, while she drank her espresso, she often told the story of Fiorilla (see appendix) to all her grand daughters.
**Fiorilla**

There once was a king and a queen who had an only daughter named Fiorilla, who was very beautiful, but had the misfortune of losing her mother so young. Fiorilla’s father remarried a “wicked soul” who had an ugly daughter by the name of Trotrona. Fiorilla had many suitors, while Trontrona had none. Jealous of Fiorilla’s prospective future, the vile stepmother locked Fiorilla in a dark, desolate tower.

A prince from another land, heard about this beautiful princess Fiorilla and set out into the world to find her. When he arrived at the castle, the village witch warned this prince to marry Trontrona or he would be turned either into a chunk of marble or a sparrow. Spellbound, the prince flies through the sky to find Fiorilla and guides her escape from the tower. With nothing but rags, Fiorilla walks through the world to find and create a home for herself. She arrives at a fountain and washes her face, feet and hands. As she drinks from this fountain, an old woman sees her and says: “What are you doing here beautiful young girl?” In despair, Fiorilla reveals her story and then asks: “Good lady, would you give me advice?” “Alright,” says the old woman, “I will give you three eggs. Whenever you find yourself in a bad situation, crack open one of these eggs and see what comes out. And if you find that the three eggs will not be enough, and you find yourself in deep need, crack open this chestnut and walnut. Well then, have a good journey and good luck!” After many obstacles and perseverance, Fiorilla continues her journey. She eventually finds and frees the prince from all wicked spells and sinners. And after overcoming many mountains, they lived contented….

Unlike Cinderella’s passive beauty and unlike Marilyn Monroe’s vulnerable beauty, Fiorilla’s beauty is active and powerful. Fiorilla overcomes to become, and frees the love of her life with courage. As she wanders the world seeking hope and home, she regains courage and confidence; the old woman at the fountain teaches her that there is “goodness” in the world. One must be open to it. The old woman also teaches Fiorilla that the path is never walked alone – the universe always provides the necessary guidance.

I asked my Nonna Betta why she often told this story: “In life, courage comes when you find your inner truth. Once found, you’re never alone! Fiorilla suffers,
sacrifices and awakens with her newfound courage and frees both her and the prince. And life is like this. Without courage it’s difficult to continue.”

Women who make this journey return in wisdom, having gained access to the deep feminine and the true beauty of their deep self. As Polanyi (1966) says, “We know more than we can tell.” Bruner (1986) says narrative provides us with maps of “possible roles and possible worlds” (p. 66).
The rooster crows and I walk for miles to my mother’s village. The sun is scorching; the roads are winding; the fig trees along the way are ripening. I climb higher up the mountaintop aware of the sound of the crickets that surround me. The journey is silent, until I meet an old woman limping with a wooden cane, carrying an apron full of figs. We exchange warm glances. I stop and ask her if I’m headed in the right direction to “Vallelonga”, my mother’s village. “Ah, Si! Si! Fighia!” she comments. “Nachu pocu arrivi.” In a little while, you will arrive. Who are you related to?” she asks. I tell her my mother’s village nickname: “Caterina di Rumbulla” meaning “Catherine the chatterbox…” The old woman nods her head, grins and grabs my face to kiss me. “Oh, Caterina! Your grandmother and I knew each other since we were born. Povera Caterina (Poor Caterina), she lived a hard life – not much different then the rest of us.”

“When your grandfather died and she moved to Canada, we all missed her. She died in Canada. Your grandmother had heart and soul. She didn’t let too much bother her. ‘Che Miseria!’ (What Misery!). A day didn’t go by that Caterina didn’t drink a glass or two of red wine. Ah… she often said ‘a glass of red wine brings “saluti” (vitality) to your heart and soul.’ “SALUTE!”
“Some afternoons we’d drink, tell stories and laugh around my kitchen table. Ah, Caterina!” She married a man she didn’t love. She told me she married your grandfather Peppe because he owned a bit of land and to her mother this was a good idea. They never got along. All the villagers knew that. The man your grandmother was truly in love with, she was forbidden to marry. Her mother pulled her by the hair. She was not to marry a man who was born out of wedlock. Besides, the love of her life was immigrating to America. So to obey her mother’s wishes, she married a man with a bit of property, a chicken and a pig. The couple argued day and night. He was also shorter than her. He had one arm that was useless, so he worked single-handed all his life. He was stingy; he never gave her any money.”

“Caterina was a strong woman. She gave birth to ten children (two children died). She worked long hours for the ‘padrones’ (landowners) collecting olives and chanting with the other women in the orchards. Caterina was an independent woman: she argued constantly with your grandfather ‘Peppe’ about money. We were all poor, but she’d leave Peppe and all her children for months to find work in other villages. She’d work with groups of other women cleaning rich barons’ homes. When she had earned enough money, Caterina would then return to her family. This went on for years. The children looked after themselves. The older children looked after the younger children, while your grandfather murmured miserably to himself.”

“She did what she felt was right. Caterina had her glass of wine, that’s for sure. She would come back to the village and say to us: ‘A woman needs her own pocket money – ‘unu sacketu di soldi’. When you grandmother returned, Peppe wouldn’t talk to her for days. So she continued to leave Peppe with the children as she worked with other women in the olive orchards chanting songs and telling stories. CHE MISERIA!!!”

I then told her about Nonna Caterina when she came to Canada. Nonna Caterina never stayed at home. She drank her red wine and walked along Bloor Street with her navy blue dress and apron. She talked to strangers and didn’t think there was anything wrong with hugging or holding children she didn’t know. In the morning we drank espresso together in her bedroom. With her uncoiled long white hair and pink flannel nightgown, she’d say, “If you don’t like this cup, try this other cup” – “CAPPISHI?” “UNDERSTAND?”
“Si, Nonna,” I’d respond. Then we’d laugh, as she braided and coiled her hair. This old woman couldn’t stop laughing as she held her cane. “BONA! BONA!” (GOOD! GOOD!). Your grandmother knew how to live her life: A glass of red wine a day was her remedy. She didn’t let life wear her down. “Now you be like her!” Their story, yours, mine—it’s what we all carry with us on this trip we take and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them (Coles, 1989, p. 30, Orbit: Story Matters).

When I first met my Nonna Caterina, she was the most charismatic woman I have ever met. She had a way about her. She drew people to her, through a glance or a grin. She was naturally funny; laughter was the way she survived. My Nonna told me many stories. I’m grateful for documenting these treasures into print. One of the main threads in my Nonna’s life story is “if you don’t like this cup, take another….” My Nonna married a man she didn’t love. She told me that she couldn’t marry her true love because he was born out of wedlock. Her mother and the Catholic Church frowned upon this. “When it comes to matters of the heart, follow your own,” she’d say. “Only you know what’s good for you.”

One day, while we were laughing about silly stuff and drinking wine together, my Nonna began telling me this story “The Merchant and His Daughter” (see appendix):

**The Merchant and His Daughter**

There once was a mother and a father who had a daughter named Maria Stilla. The mother had a tooth of gold and so did her daughter. The mother fell ill and was dying. She called her daughter and said: “Figghia” daughter for your future, I will tell you this. If you find someone with a tooth of gold like yourself, get married.”

The mother died and the father, who was a merchant, after sometime called his daughter and he said to her: “Fighia mia” my daughter get married!” She responded: “I will get married when I find someone with a tooth of gold like myself.” Her father searched the four corners of the earth to find such a man, but didn’t have any luck. In despair, he returned home and ordered Maria to get married. Maria was adamant that she would only marry the man with a gold tooth as herself. To marry just any man, would not do. As the days went on, the father became more unbearable and impatient. So then,
Maria leaves her father and goes out into the world to find her fate. She takes only the belongings her mother left her and three dresses her father had given her.

Walking throughout the earth, she finds a palace. She is hired as a servant for this young handsome king. The king one day announces carnival. And there he would find his prospective wife. Whispers and murmurs spread throughout the kingdom. Many elegant and glamorous women attended this event. While doing her chores, Maria sets her mind to go to this carnival. At the last moment, she washes her face, combs her hair and puts on the dress her father had given her. When Maria attends the carnival, the king’s heart beats instantly, and he disregards the other women in the room. He dances with Maria all evening and gives her a gold chain, a gold watch and a gold ring. Before midnight, she escapes and returns to the palace in her rags.

Days afterward, the king grows depressed and ill-hearted trying to find this charming, spirited woman. He searches everywhere, without a trace. Then one day, while Maria was baking bread, she places the gold chain, watch and ring in the center of the loaf. She then serves the king this bread. He discovers that the servant Maria is the woman he was looking for all his life. He calls and discloses to Maria that he has a gold tooth, and it is only then that Maria consents to marry him.

As my Nonna advised me, no matter what – follow your heart. True happiness can only come from the heart. The Oxford Dictionary defines “heart” as the centre of thought, feeling and emotion. Also, “gold” is defined as something precious and beautiful. Love has always altered the universe. For centuries, societies frowned on romances between lovers of different classes, different races, and different religions. Yet lovers have always been willing to bridge the gap. My Nonna told me that in the past, marriage was often seen as a business or legal arrangement, a means by which one partner might acquire money or property or maintain a family dynasty. Sometimes arranged marriages led to heartbreak, but in other cases, both partners found some satisfaction and mutual benefit. Romeo and Juliet were not the world’s first or last “star-crossed lovers”. My Nonna Caterina survived to tell it.

Their story, yours, mine – it’s what we all carry with us on this trip we take and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them (Coles, 1989, p. 30).
Figure 10: Nonna Caterina
Figure 11: My Mother

MY MOTHER: “Have Faith!”!

We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts. They may be read, or chanted or experienced electronically, or come to us, like the murmurings of our mothers, telling us what conventions demand. Whatever their form or medium, these stories have formed us all; they are what we must use to make new fictions, new narratives (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 37).

My mother was my first teacher. She didn’t know how to read or write. But since I was born, she told stories. Chanting, tapping, telling and singing to rhymes and versus. Every evening, after washing up, we’d cuddle around her: “Tell us that story one more time.” And then the story would begin….The best parts were when we’d join in or when she’d “spook” us in the end.

At Mary Lake in King City, I’m with my mother. We’re sitting underneath an old oak tree. It’s a clear day, blue sky, over-looking the meadows, the cows, and we’re sitting by the barn drinking coffee. I turn-on the tape recorder and my mother begins her story. Today my mother is going to share her story with me. “Ma, today is the feast day of the Madonna of the Rosary and does this day remind you of anything?”
“Yes, the Madonna of the Rosary, was celebrated in San Nicola (my husband’s village) and they had a grand feast every year. Now, they continue to commemorate this feast here in Toronto because there are many people who have immigrated from San Nicola.”

“There are many memories regarding the Madonna of the Rosary. She is known to be so miraculous and powerful. When I was a child many things happened. Before WWII began, I had a dream of all these airplanes flying in the air. I was about five years old. This dream manifested – the planes, bombings and everything. I was always with my younger brother Vincenzo. He always had seizures. Zia Vincenza (older sister) took him to the village doctor. She picked him up and carried him there. I ran after them crying. In the forest, there were German soldiers. They called and spoke to me in German. I cried louder. It was a life of poverty. Little bread. We were barefoot with torn clothes. Soldiers often came for food. My father gave them some food. They slept on the hay in the stable. When they departed, they left us their lice. Lice, lice everywhere. We were all infested with lice. Our hair was cut short. My older sister cried. She wanted to keep her long hair. She had a boyfriend. We boiled all our clothes. What a tragedy. We didn’t have underwear or shoes. My older sister had a skirt made out of a curtain. The material was coarse. This hurt her legs. We made brooms from the leaves. We had a fireplace and a place to make homemade bread. We had a dirt floor, not a ceramic floor, like today. I remember as a child, when I was about two years old, my Nonna Maria Tucci (my mother’s mother) and my mother’s sister Zia Maria Rosa (spinster) they lived together. My mother and father went to work in the (campagna) countryside and they would leave me with my Nonna and Aunt. My parents lived and worked on the land of these wealthy landlords. They would have to give half of all their produce. They had a few chickens, cows, sheep and a little house. They planted and cultivated grain, wheat, potatoes and beans for the winter. There were times when the temperature wasn’t good and the crops were poor; however, we always cultivated enough for the winter. From there, we moved to another landowner in the village of Santa Maria. My younger brother Vincenzo (5 years old) and I (8 years old) were left alone. My parents and my older sisters (Rosanna and Vincenza) worked the land.”
“One evening, the little house we lived-in caught on fire. There were so many animals, for they transported wood at night in a cart. My father thought someone intentionally threw a flame during the night. There were flames all around us. Villagers nearby came to save us throwing buckets and buckets of water. We escaped through the windows. All the animals died.

“From here, we moved to another village nearby. There we had land and a few animals. I was eight years old. My mother and father got into an argument. My father was so protective of my older sister Vincenza, for she was very beautiful. He wanted her to walk many miles with him to the market place, to assist him in selling the cows. My mother, however, didn’t want this because he was an irresponsible parent. So my father let out his frustration by kicking my mother (who was pregnant) in the stomach. She miscarried the child and was ill for sometime. And this was life….”

“My younger brother and I remained alone often, in this little house, without food or anything. From time to time, my eldest sister Rosanna came to bring us bread. We never had a room of our own. Our one room house was passed down to my eldest sister Rosanna when she married. This was her dowry. That year, we remained without bread. There was another house across the road and I prompted my younger brother to ask for bread. We were both embarrassed to beg for bread. We were hungry. In time, my mother regained her health. However, I became very ill with pneumonia. We couldn’t afford to see the doctor. My mother sent my eldest sister to have a dress made for me, just in case I died. In time, I regained my health. It wasn’t my time yet. I guess this was my destiny. God helped me. My mother would say: “The chicken just laid the first egg. Go and have an egg. It’s good for you.”

“I was nine years old. I had regained my strength again. I couldn’t work in the countryside with my parents because my skin was too fair and delicate. My sisters weren’t as fair skinned as myself. I was fair skinned like my father. Poor man, he couldn’t work as much as he wanted to because he only had one working arm. When he was three years old, he fell into a pit of fire and burned his arm. He didn’t see a doctor. So, his entire arm became stuck to his body. He needed an operation. But he could not afford it. He was always limited in the farm work he could do. He would raise animals and then sell them at the fair or market place.”
“So because I was so fair, my mother made arrangements for me to live and work with a rich family: cooking, cleaning, serving. At the age of nine, my mother took me to a beautiful place called Vibo Marina to work for this rich couple with two children. I took care of these kids. They were very good to me. They had a fishing business. We ate fish everyday. I ate so much fish, I couldn’t stand it anymore. It was such a beautiful place by the sea. I saw all the boats come in and saw how they slaughtered the tuna fish. I stayed there for about three years. For my First Communion, they gave me an old, white dress to wear, on that Sunday morning in church.”

“After working as a live-in serving maid for this family, my mother agreed to send me to live with another rich family north of Vibo Marina. The husband was a school teacher in Milan. This woman had a beautiful big house. Part of the house was rented to university students. After hearing this, my mother took me away from there. I had become a young woman. She didn’t like the idea of me living and serving all these young, scholarly men.”

“My mother, then, took me to her village in Vallelonga. I was always obedient to whatever my mother decided for me. I never questioned my mother’s ways or asked her what she did with the money I earned. I never received anything for my hard work. I just did what I was told. Special occasions and holidays, I celebrated with the family I served. Every so often, my mother came to visit.”

“At the age of twelve, my mother decided to take me to serve at the Baroness’ house. I did all the chores except for the heavy washing, which was done by an older woman. Once per week she’d pick up the clothes and walk to the river to wash everything. I would wash the smaller items. I would meet my mother by the riverbank, while I was scrubbing the clothes on the rocks with a bar of soap. This baroness died young. She was 55 years old when she died of cancer. This baroness wasn’t generous. After working a full day of washing clothes for this baroness, my mother and I would be exhausted carrying and climbing all the hills and steps. This baroness would only feed us a tiny bowl of the leftovers. When she died, my mother had a dream (twice the same dream) of this baroness who said to her: ‘Caterina, you have to forgive me for not giving you enough food, when I was alive. Forgive me Caterina!’ My mother forgave her during the offering of the Holy Eucharist at the Sunday mass.”
“Another woman, Vittoria, in the village (a professor and friend of the baroness daughter) also dreamt that this baroness said to her: “The first olive oil that they press in my household, give it all away to the poor villagers.” So this professor went to visit the baroness’ daughter and told her about this dream. Now this baroness owned lots of land and olive orchards: village Lorianna Porella in Reggio Calabria. And so the daughter followed through with the message in this dream and the Baroness’ wishes.

“And so the days went by. My mother continued to work. While working, my mother was approached by this handsome, young man who asked her, if she had a daughter to marry. My mother responded: “No, all my daughters are married, except for one, who is much too frail and weak for marriage.” And this was true: I was thin and frail looking. Where I grew-up, they believed women had to appear strong and robust to confront many things in life – especially when raising a large family. ‘No, she’s much too frail to marry,’ my mother continued. So this tall, handsome young man persisted: ‘I would like to meet her.’ But my mother avoided this young man’s request. ‘Trust me, she’s not for marriage.’ The following day, this young man persisted and approached another woman in the countryside, who unknowingly happened to be my godmother. It so happened that it was my godmother who secretly arranged for this young man to come and meet me. They walked to the place where I lived and served. She called out from the window. She didn’t tell me the reason. I went out to see what she wanted. She told me that she was passing by and wanted to see how I was doing. She never mentioned anything about a young man. As we spoke, this tall, handsome young man stood observing from a distance.”

“The next day, in the countryside, this young man approached my mother: “I saw the frail daughter you speak of. I would like to marry her.”

“Several months later, I married this handsome young man. I left my job as a servant. Both my older sisters immigrated to Canada with their husbands and kids, for a better life. I soon discovered that my mother didn’t want me to marry this handsome man because she had already arranged for me to marry a man, by proxy, from her village who was already in Canada. Besides, this handsome man I married was from another village. When I married, I borrowed my neighbour’s dress. My mother managed to scrape a kilo of pasta with a bit of tomato sauce and a few confetti. We didn’t have wine or liquor. In
a year, I gave birth to my daughter Elisabetta. I was content with my life. I was married and I had a child. My husband was a hard working man. He cultivated the land and planted the trees throughout the countryside. In the meantime, my older sisters in Canada made arrangements to sponsor me into Canada.”

“And our journey continued….We left Calabria for Naples. In Naples, there weren’t any more places remaining on the ship. So we took the train to France and we embarked on a ship in Paris. The journey on this ship to Canada was unpleasant. I didn’t know where I was headed. We were a large Calabrese group coming to Canada. We stopped at Pier 21 in Halifax and then went on to Quebec. We brought with us the clothes on our backs and a luggage. Upon our arrival in Quebec, we took a train to Union Station.”

“When we arrived to Toronto, I didn’t like it at all. The sky seemed grey. The sun wasn’t bright. It days seemed dark. The houses looked like church steeples. So this is how it was. I had to get used to it because in Calabria there was too much “miseria” (poverty). And so my new life was now in Canada. We lived in a row house on College and Claremont Street with my eldest sister Rosanna and her family. My husband found work in construction. I found work in an automobile factory. We worked all the time. Matters began to change. My husband began to drink with his friends from his hometown, who lived nearby. Almost every evening he often came home drunk. We lived with my older sister and her family for a while. He’d walk into the house and argue with my sister Rosanna. She gave him heck for drinking. We then moved to a flat that we rented with another family. Maria Argenti and her husband also had a child. This flat had two bedrooms; we each occupied one room with our husbands and children. We shared the kitchen and the washroom. And this was life in Canada…”

“When I came to Canada, I spoke English, the way I knew how. We never had money. Bills were high. I needed medication for my kids. I went to the hospital and said: “Mia husbanda no worka. Io no monetta…” An inspector came to the house and asked about our finances. “Ia no hava nottinga…” “Where is your husband?” He asked. “Mia husbanda looka fora nova jobba…” I don’t know, without reading, writing and speaking good English, I push myself to go everywhere on my own.”
“Soon, I had another child, Vito Antonio. We saved two thousand dollars and bought a house on Gladstone Avenue near Bloor Street. The bills were high and we carried the mortgage payments on our backs. I continued working on the assembly line. I also rented the second floor, to a family, to help pay bills. Five years later, I gave birth to another child, Giuseppina, and then I decided I was going to raise my children, while I had a babysitting service in my home. Sixteen months later, I unexpectedly was pregnant again with my fourth child, Giuliano. Three of my children were born in Canada.”

“As my children grew, I sent them all off to work, before they were teenagers. I wanted them to grow independent and strong. I wanted them to learn to survive on their own. They had paper routes and worked at snack bars. I was always very frugal. I cooked and cleaned for everyone. I went to second hand stores: Scotts Mission and Salvation Army for clothes. My older sisters found me a place on Spadina where they gave away clothes and food. They even gave out vitamins for kids. There were people from everywhere at this place. One winter, my sisters and I returned to this place. It was freezing cold. We thought, how do we bring all this stuff back home? So we placed these huge garbage bags on our heads and went on the bus. We were used to this from back home. We carried our laundry and buckets of water on our heads.”

“The Scotts Mission was a big help. As my children grew, they learned quickly to work for their own things: shoes, clothes and school stuff. When my first-born daughter was 16 years old, she met a man from Cosenza, Calabria (who immigrated from Bergamo, Italy at age 20). He was madly in love with her. He pursued her, until they married. My husband wasn’t happy with this news. He had intentions for Elisabetta to finish school and go on to University. She did excellent in school and was the top student in science.”

“And life continued this way in Canada. As the years went on, my husband continued to drink. For 26 years, he drank, always. I don’t know how he managed to get-up at 3am every morning and go to work? However, I have to say, he always brought home a steady pay cheque. He drank about one gallon of wine a day. He liked his beer too. Thank God, I had my baby-sitting business at home. Little by little, we paid the house. After 26 years, living on Gladstone Avenue, we found a bungalow and we moved there. My husband wanted more land to plant trees, vegetables and flowers.”
“As time went on, I learned to approach life one day at a time: accept whatever and “what God wants. I never had much money in my hands. I accepted what my husband wanted to do: he paid the bills. I always made peace. How the day went, it went. Now most of my kids are grown and married. My eldest son’s wife died of a brain aneurism. Silvana was only 32. I raised their son, Nicholas. He’s a good boy. But deep down inside, I know he misses his mother.”

“In my life, now, I’m involved in a prayer group. We pray the rosary together. This husband of mine would come every so often to pray with us, but not anymore. We are a close family. I’m especially close with my two daughters. And now I have arrived at this point in my life. THAT’S ALL….”

“I want to also say that it was very hard for me to leave Calabria. It was sad to leave my mother and father. Everyone was sad. However, my mother went on and had another child (Antonio), when she was 50. My mother was exhausted of work. To raise a child at the age of 50. When Antonio turned 16, he too immigrated to Canada with us. Then, when my father died, my mother immigrated also to Canada. She loved being here. Ten years later, she died from a stroke, at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I miss her. I never had my mother close to me. “La vita e battaglia. (Life is a battle). You have to have tremendous courage and know what to do.”

Growing up in this chaotic Calabrian household, songs and stories always kept the hearth alive. Hope was always rekindled, as my mother often told her stories of The Divine Mother of Montserrat and her guiding light (see appendix).

What is retained from the past is embedded within what is now perceived and so embedded that, by its compression there, it forces the mind to stretch forward to what is coming. The more there is compressed from the continuous series of prior perceptions, the richer the present perception and the more intense the forward impulsion (Dewey, 1934, p. 182).

Out in the backyard, sitting on the porch with my mother, my heart is attentive, as she reveals the story of the Divine Mother of Montserrat. She reveals her knowledge and experiences.
The Divine Mother of Montserrat

“The Divine Mother of Montserrat was found in Barcelona Spain. On the Mountain of Montserrat, a shepherd who was tending the sheep heard music and noticed a bright light. He then called the villagers. They came and they then dug up this area. There they found a unique dark statue of the Madonna of Montserrat with a letter. In this letter it was stated that She wanted to be also known in the remote village of Vallelonga, Italy. So they removed it and carried it up the mountain. On their way, the statue became heavier and heavier. This was a definite sign to everyone, that this Madonna wanted to be placed in that designated area. How this Madonna got there, nobody knows. She lived in this mountain for over five hundred years.

“So they began to walk with this divine statue. As they walked, many wanted to keep her. Then they passed by a village called Capistrano (a village nearby 5-6 km from Vallelonga). The villagers in Capistrano wanted to keep her.”

“The Divine Mother responded: “I will dedicate this tree in Capistrano for everyone in this village to pray the litany.” People from everywhere came and prayed the litany underneath this sacred tree.”

“The procession for the Divine Mother lasted eight days. Flea Markets with animals, honey cookies, embroidered material, plates, gozzi (jars for water) – it was something beautiful. Villagers from every part in Calabria donated money and gold to the Divine Mother. Many villagers, before immigrating to Canada, donated and offered their olive orchards to the Divine Mother. When we immigrated to Canada, we heard that the priests of Vallelonga sold all la Madonna’s gold and replaced it with artificial gold. Personally, the Divine Mother of Montserrat has gifted me with many graces and miracles. I remember when I was fifteen years old. I was so sad. I had to work for the rich and I felt like an orphan because I didn’t live with my family. My family was so poor. And it had to be this way. Also, I couldn’t work in the orchards with my mother and sisters because I was fair skinned. One evening I dreamt of the Divine Mother who said to me: “Don’t cry. Your life will change.” When I woke-up, I felt consoled and comforted and held on to Her dear words. In fact, what she said came to pass. I got married, came to Canada and my life did change.”
“The second miracle from the Divine Mother occurred when I was pregnant with my first child Elisabetta. When I was pregnant and in labour, I got a bad cold. For five days and five nights I had this cold and labour pains. However, before this physical pain, I dedicated and prayed to Her for nine consecutive Saturdays. Valleglonga didn’t have a doctor. After five days in labour, the village midwife ordered that I be taken to another village for a cesarean.”

“As I was in labour (8:30pm), the midwife helped me give birth. My baby was born beautiful and looked as if she was two months. As my baby was born, I turn to the window in the bedroom and there I saw the Divine Mother with a group of children who were following Her. She turned and waved at me. I shouted: ‘There’s the Divine Mother!’ ‘Do you see her? Do you see her?’ I asked the wise women in the village to tell me about this vision. She said the Divine Mother came to tell me not to worry because She was with me. Another grace I received from Her happened in Canada. By this time, my first daughter Elisabetta was an adult and three months pregnant. She was worried during her pregnancy. This caused her to have high blood pressure, as she worried day and night. I then prayed to the Divine Mother and asked Her with all my heart: ‘Dear Mother, there isn’t any medication for this situation. Only You can do something.’

“During the night, my daughter Elisabetta dreamt the Divine Mother of Montserrat who went to her bedside holding her new born baby in her arms and said: “Here, look at your new born child; she is beautiful. When Elisabetta woke up, the fear she felt was no longer there. Our Lady of Montserrat came through the night to give her hope.”

“Another time, when I was feeling so sad, I dreamt of the Divine Mother in Valleglonga by the river. When I saw Her, I ran to greet Her. She embraced me and we prayed:

Maria di Montserrat,
Aprite le porte che sono serrate,
Io vi chiamo, e Voi mi rispondete,
Sono in scuro, e Voi sei di luce,
Sono inflita, e Voi mi consolate,
Questo grazia vi lo chiedo per carita.
Ma Voi per carita, mi la dette fare,
Oh Vergine Maria,
Con questi penne mia,
Trovatami la via.”

“Then you say a Salve Regina. I heard this prayer as a child. My mother sings this prayer….We did so many beautiful things for the Divine Mother. We also sang with a band. Throughout my life, the Divine Mother of Montserrat always came to comfort and console me, when I was feeling despair and when I needed her the most. She always came to tell me ‘not to worry’. We all have a cross to bear, but la Madonna provides in every situation. We have crosses because Jesus carried His cross too. Jesus did say: “Pick-up your cross and follow me.”

“Live life one day at a time giving thanks to God for everything. Always in union with God focusing on goodness.”

“My mother Caterina also had many miracles from the Divine Mother of Montserrat. She often dreamt of deceased souls who spoke to her. My mother Caterina once told me: “When we were children and there was so much poverty, she went to work and, one day, a woman in the village happened to be passing by. This woman had more and called my mother: ‘Caterina! Caterina! Come here’. She gave my mother a bowl of oil and a piece of bread. One day, my mother, where she worked, saw a piece of molded bread on the table and asked the woman she worked for: ‘What will you do with this bread?’ ‘No Caterina, that bread isn’t good,’” responded this woman. ‘Give it to me,’ asked my mother, ‘I’ll clean it and my kids will eat it.’ After sometime, this woman died. One night my mother dreamt of this woman who said: ‘Look Caterina, this is everything I gave you. And the green, molded bread is also here.’ My mother knew many things. You see, what you give is never forgotten. What you give, will come back to you.”

Women struggle to find their voice, to speak their truth, and to be heard. My mother struggled to find her way and her own voice, all her life. In childhood, she was taken away from her own mother to live and work as a servant for the rich. In many ways, she didn’t have her mother near her to guide her steps and journey. As a servant,
she was voiceless. She did what she was told and was never compensated for all her hard work. She worked without any questions or compensation.”

Indirect communication is sometimes the only means of expression possible for women. In fact, women often use storytelling and singing to express themselves when not allowed to speak up, as for example, in the songs of Scottish women working in old textile mills, Irish women chanting verses of misconduct at their husband’s wake or the spirituals of African-American women in slavery. Singing is powerful because it conveys strong emotions and bypasses logic. In many ways, singing is more basic than speaking. Long before babies understand words, they respond to the melody and rhythm of speech. Later in life, a stroke may destroy a person’s ability to speak, but the capacity to sing and remember songs often remains intact. Singing gives access to a deep, fundamental level of the self, so it is not surprising that many women include song and chant in their stories (Chinen, p. 140).

My mother survived through song and story. This fed her spirit and saved her soul. She grew up without a mother figure nearby, but however, she turned to stories of the Divine Mother for help and hope. Her stories of the Divine Mother of Montserrat have guided my mother’s life. Without this, she would have lost her way. Stories of the Divine Mother have kept my mother and many other Calabrian women alive. As Fredrica Halligan (2003) indicates: “In my own search for a unifying image for the divine source of all life, I find the image of Divine Mother to be especially resonant. I think of all the great goddesses who have been worshiped in various cultures, especially in pagan times. Then I think of Mary, Mother of Jesus, the most powerful and beloved of the saints in the Catholic tradition (p.104). As the Divine Mother of Montserrat is known as the “black” Madonna in the south, Halligan also shares a similar story: “I had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to one of the great Black Madonnas of Europe. I was visiting Zurich and I went into the mountains, to the tiny town of Eiseldyn, where the “Black Madonna” is housed. She was made of wood and stood only about four feet high. Because she was believed to be a powerful purveyor of miracles, this statue was once the object of warfare and pillage. She was carried several hundred miles into the mountains to escape enemy troops during a long-ago war. Then, history tells us, she was buried for a long period of time; that is when the statue turned black. When she was unearthed, in
her blackened state, she was found to have a greater-than-ever power to grant healing and other miracles” (p. 106).

Knowledge is basic. It is knowledge which enables us to understand the world and ourselves, and to exercise some control or guidance. It sets us in fruitful and significant relation with the enduring process of the universe (de Chardin, 1959, p. 27).

Figure 11: My Mother
ANNUNZIATA MARIA TEDESCO: "Get Your Own Key!"

Life itself exists of phases in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it – either through effort or by some happy chance. And, in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed…Here in germ are balance and harmony attained through rhythm. Equilibrium comes about, not mechanically and inertly but out of, and because of tension…Form is arrived at whenever a stable, even through moving equilibrium is reached (Dewey, 1934, p. 14).

Holding onto her rosary beads in her hands, Annunziata mentions: “They call me paradiso”. We laugh and then ask her to tell me her story. “Finally, Finally Dear, Precious, Divine Mother, someone wants to hear my story!!!!”

“My name is Annunziata Maria Tedesco and I was born in Reggio Calabria in 1927. I was one year old when my mother died and after eighteen months, my father remarried. My stepmother raised us like her own children. She cared and loved us like her own. We were raised in a village and we did whatever our parents taught us to do always working. As children we always said “yes” to our parents. We were always obedient. We harvested the land: planted the grain, planted the tomatoes and gathered the wheat. All nine of us children worked together in the village with my father. As we worked, we sang songs and prayed out loud thanking God for our health and the earth. We sang joyously, always content with our work. At the age of twelve, we woke-up about 4:30 in the morning and went to the market place to sell zucchini, tomatoes, and other vegetables. We carried our vegetables in a basket on our heads. And all the way to the market place we sang and prayed. About the age of fifteen, my father sent me to gather olives for a wealthy landowner. We called this kind of work “olivo quattro” because three quarters of the olives we gathered were given to the landowner and one quarter were for us. Sometime we worked twelve to fourteen hour days for a glass of olive oil. During rain or shine we always worked. There were no holidays. We were always barefoot; We didn’t have a car or a mule. We always walked for many miles, always working with our hands, arms and legs. We always walked barefoot; however,
there were times when we wore wooden shoes. Some of the places in Calabria where I gathered olives are: Contrata Draonetta, Contrata Grantevolli, Lovospiti di Rosari, Filomena, Piruni, Ferna. There were so many places where I gathered olives. By foot we always walked for many miles.”

“Early in the morning, my father always had a hard time to wake us up. He called us about seven times before we could wake up. We were always exhausted. Sometimes he would say: “My dear children, my heart aches to wake you all up from your sleep. However, you need to go to work. I wished that I could work for all of you, but as you know this cannot be.” ‘Si, si Pa’, ‘another minute,’ we always repeated. In the end, my father always lost his patience with trying to get us up in the morning. And our life continued this way.”

“Once too, the landowners called everyone in the village and told us to vacate their land. The land would be sold to another wealthy landowner. We were all worried. Nine children and nowhere to go. I remember my father saying: ‘Fighi mie preghatti, preghatti, preghatti!’ (My dear children: pray, pray, pray!) I got on my hands and knees and asked God: ‘Dear God, why all of this. I wish for my father’s sake that these landowners lose their land. We have worked very hard on their land and now they are sending us off. Why all of this Dear God? Even though the land belongs to them, we still pay to live in our house. Why Dear God? Why? Dearest God, grant me this grace; we have worked too hard!’ We were forced to move to another village where we could cultivate the land.”

“In time, the land that we abandoned, grew thorns and weeds on the surface. The harvest was scarce and crops did not grow like they once did. Most villagers immigrated to Canada, United States, Argentina, Switzerland and England. God granted me my wish. The landowners did not prosper. All the wells where the water once poured endlessly dried up. I thank God for sending me this grace. When I turned sixteen, I worked as a maid for a wealthy lawyer. I was still a single woman and therefore I could work for another man. For seven years I cooked in the kitchen. I cried almost everyday. All the maids had a supervisor who scolded at us constantly. She was a beautiful looking lady, but she had a vile heart. I was a thin young woman, who always walked and worked.”
“At twenty-three years old, I met a man in the village and married him on the 21st of January. My husband Carlo stayed one and a half years in Italy and then he immigrated for the next one and a half years in Toronto. His mother didn’t want Carlo to get married. She did many things to prevent him to marry me. She preferred Carlo to live with her for the rest of his life. But, after some convincing, she consented to our marriage. He was twenty-six and I was twenty-three.”

“In Piamonti Calabria we experienced the Depression. Food and work were scarce. My father had a bit more food than some other homes: pasta, tomatoes, potatoes, and beans. My mother-in-law always made vegetarian pasta dishes – spaghetti with beans or sometimes spaghetti with potatoes. We rarely ate meat. Meat was prepared for special occasions. Because we all worked long hours, the food we ate did not give us enough energy. Carlo worked hard in Piamonti as a miner and was feeling weaker by the day. We both knew that there had to be a better life than in Calabria.”

“My older brother told us about going to America. We asked our cousin who lived in Canada to sponsor us. My father also mentioned that if we left Calabria, at least we would find work in America. America, I was then told, was the place to make money and buy your own home. So it happened, we planned to leave Calabria. After eight months of our request to immigrate, my husband Carlo left alone for Canada. It was easier, then, to immigrate. In Canada they called for workers. Before my husband left, I discovered that I was pregnant. When I told my husband this news, he said: ‘Annunziata, I did not want to leave you alone in Calabria pregnant.’ ‘Why Carlo?’ I asked. ‘If they find out that you are pregnant and I am immigrating to Canada alone, the officials may cancel my claim.’ So, he went to Rome. And even though I was pregnant, Carlo was eligible to leave Calabria. When Carlo left to Canada, he felt weak and exhausted. For fifteen days he felt ill and when the ship arrived to Halifax he booked himself in a nearby hospital. After a week he took a train to Quebec and then to Toronto. He remained one and a half years in Toronto. Carlo left me pregnant in Calabria. And on the same day that I gave birth to a beautiful, healthy baby boy, I received a phone call from my cousin in Canada. Carlo died of an illness that I knew nothing about. I was married for a short time. I became a mother and a widow at the same time. This was my fate. I continued life with “dolore e sacraficiu” (pain and sacrifice’). I could not explain
to another human being, the pain I felt. I worked with “blood and guts”. There is no price for pain. With courage, I raised my son with blood, sweat, tears and amore. There are many other stories, but I can’t tell you.”

“After seven years I decided to immigrate to Canada. Because there was nothing in Calabria, I had to go on with my life and make a place for my son and myself. I was hoping to receive some kind of pension in Canada. But what kind of pension – Carlo only worked about five months in Toronto. My brother-in-law (Carlo’s brother) sponsored me to immigrate. From the time I made the request, I waited seven years before I could immigrate to Canada. Like Carlo, I too was sick on the ship to Pier 21 in Halifax. When I arrived in Toronto, I wasn’t eligible to receive anything – no family allowance or anything. A few months later, the immigration officers discovered that my husband had died and that my deceased husband’s brother had sponsored me to immigrate. I was not aware that this was a sin. Since my sponsor was not my husband, they didn’t deport me. Instead, my entire family in Calabria who waited years to immigrate to Canada, were all suspended from immigrating, until I remarried again.”

“I was in my thirties when I immigrated to Canada. After two and a half years later, I met a widowed man without children at St. Agnes Church. On my wedding day I thought my fate had changed for the better. But this was not so. I encountered more problems with my second husband. He wasn’t sensitive and loving like my first husband. This was my destiny.”

I never had control of my own life. Many women did not have a choice. We struggled, we feared. Especially during our wedding night. Women were afraid to be left alone with their husbands. There was once a young woman in the village who after spending an evening with her husband, experienced internal bleeding and died. Her husband wasn’t a gentle man. And this misfortunate story had an effect on all the women on their wedding day. Women were afraid to be left alone with their husbands. When my older sister married, she too was afraid to be left alone with her husband. She practically begged me to stay with her. Sexuality was not talked about. Women were embarrassed to talk about intercourse. Sex was something done to produce children. We feared what we did not know. We learned from a whisper here and there.”
“From my experience life is discipline. It’s all about how you organize yourself. If you’re used to taking a nap in the afternoon, you will always take a nap in the afternoon, until you break the habit.”

“I have to say this: I feel sorry for young women today who decide to marry and have children. Especially when the marriage does not work out. Families experience constant battles: financial, work, women who prefer to work rather than stay home, men who are never at home, children tossed from one baby-sitter to another. Dear God, I hear the word marriage and I could feel a fever coming on. I don’t want to hear about it anymore. Marriage, forget it!”

“In Italy we worked hard. In the evening, we prayed the rosary, shared stories about poverty and survival. That’s all we knew about and we were happy. All I want to say is that I lived an angelic life in Calabria. I worked and prayed. I was not aware of all the evils existing in the world. I thought that everyone lived a life similar to mine. My aunt and uncle returned to our village in Calabria, after many years of living in New York. Their child was killed by a train and because of this tragedy returned to the village life. They brought back with them a black and white television. This was the first and only television in the village. I was shocked! By watching television, I realized that life was different all over the world. I discovered that not all families were like mine. I learned how we all live different lives. Like the programs on television, we all have our own interpretation and vision of things.”

“November 29, 2010 makes fifty-one years that I have lived in Canada. I gave birth to three more children: Lucia, Rosa, and Rita. Unfortunately, I had two miscarriages. While my husband worked, I raised my children. I fed them, clothed them, sang to them and loved them. My husband wasn’t a bad man. Because I didn’t work for several years, I didn’t have my own money. I had to rely on his pay cheque and whenever he decided to give me money. I felt like a prisoner in my own home. When a woman doesn’t have her own “sustanza” (sustenance), she is lost. Remember what I am telling you and don’t forget it!”

“Before I arrived to Canada, there was a woman who lived in our village, who could for see the future and read people’s cards. With a regular deck of Italian cards, she saw our destinies. This lady didn’t want any money for her deeds. She was known
throughout the village as having a special gift from God. She had vision like no other person. A gift that can only be given by the Divine. I went to see her for some advice. At first, I hesitated as she pulled out the deck of cards. But with some encouragement from my friend, who was with me, I then agreed. I was afraid to hear anymore bad news. She comforted me and told me that she would only give me advice and was only there to help me. We all have our own destiny she said. What is meant to happen will happen. Like the pages of a book, we live out our lives – page by page. We take the good with the bad and we turn the page to the next chapter. Be not afraid. We all have our own book to live out. Courage will help you to the end of your book, until you’ll be rewarded with another. Life never ends. You could only go on. Like the changing seasons, we too have our own cycles. We are no different than what we see around us.”

“When she read my cards, she advised me: ‘Annunziata, be careful. Your son Joe does not have a tragic life. However, until he is twenty-one years old, he is destined to drown. Be extra careful.’ You could imagine how I felt. I lost my first husband and that was all I needed to hear – my first-born destined to drown. I immediately turned to God for help. Why God? Why this? She tried to comfort me. ‘After twenty-one years of age, the spell will be broken and he will no longer be destined to drown,’ she said. ‘Don’t worry, just be aware, be aware,’ she added.”

“So it happened. When I left Italy to come to Canada, I boarded on a ship with my son. As I sat on the top deck, my son couldn’t stay still. He began to fidget and move around the deck area. God was looking after us that day. Just as I glanced for a few seconds into another direction, my son almost fell into the deep waters from the top deck. Fortunately, a man who saw my son slip, instantly pulled him back and saved him from drowning. ‘Signora,’ many people called out, ‘Signora!!!’ Your son nearly fell into the water. You could imagine how I felt. I didn’t have a stomach anymore. Finally, we arrived in Halifax at Pier 21. So for twenty-one years, I was extra cautious and prevented my son from learning how to swim. He couldn’t understand why I didn’t want him to learn to swim. He wanted to be like most of his friends and swim in pools. I kept this from him. But after his twenty-first birthday, his destiny of drowning passed him by. I then realized that the misfortune occurred on that ship deck to Canada. I believe in destiny. I believe destiny. What will happen will happen….”
“Another time, and I’ll never forget this, after my shift at Shopsy’s (cooking and cleaning), I was standing waiting for the bus. All of a sudden, I found myself screaming out loud and not being able to relax. When I went to see the doctor, he told me that I had a nervous break down. All those years of one misfortune after another. My world caved in; I was in the dark. My body broke down. As I lay on a hospital bed, I could hear people around me, but I could not see them. For a short while, I lost my sight. ‘Annunziata, Annunziata wake up! Wake up!’ The doctor was helpful. He asked me how long I lived in Canada. He even asked me who I lived with. I told him about my past and I revealed to him about my cramped living conditions at that time. ‘Oh, no, no,’ he said. ‘Annunziata, you need a key of your own.’ That evening I stayed in the hospital on Bathurst Street. My body was cold. I could only hear voices. The following morning, a nurse came in to my room and she mentioned to me that I would be admitted to Queen Street Hospital. Everyone knew about Queen Street; this was the hospital for crazy people. Tears rolled down my face. Dear God, why this? After sometime and many tests later, as my body learned to relax, my vision was restored. My back was sore; I was injected with needles. I believe that the doctor at Queen Street was sent my way by God. After many tests he said: ‘Annunziata, there is nothing wrong with you. All you need is a place of your own – your independence and your own key. You'll be okay.’

“I left the hospital and stayed at home for two more weeks. I was alone in the house with the landlord who worked temporarily. However, one morning, while I was resting in my bedroom, someone entered into my room. It was the landlord. And what was he doing in my bedroom? Fortunately, I felt him coming towards me and I instantly pushed him away from me. I ran to the phone and called my sister-in-law, Stella. Why did I ever leave Calabria to arrive in a land where I encountered one tragedy after another? I felt alone. When I got off the phone with Stella, the landlord apologetically said: ‘Signora, forgive me; I was only joking!’ ‘Leave me alone,’ I responded. ‘I don’t want to hear about it. Leave me alone.’ Immediately, I left the house and went to Stella’s house.”

“When Antonio arrived home that evening, I told him about the landlord and that I refused to live in that house. Antonio did not want to move. He told me that because of my nervous break down, I made-up the story. Then he went on to say that I was a
married woman and that I didn’t need to worry. ‘Annunziata,’ he continued, ‘there is no need to move.’ Raged like a rabid dog, I took a stand for myself. You have to have courage in this life! Courage! I’ve had it!!!! I told my husband that if he did not want to move, I would pick-up and move on my own. I will make my way. God is with me. That’s all! And God did help me find my way. I left and found a room for rent on Gladstone Avenue. The landlord, a kind woman, helped me tremendously. In time, my husband joined me and my life continued in this way.”

“E questa e la mia vita in Toronto. And this is my life in Toronto. My life has been a continuous battle. God has been with me throughout this battaglia. All I have to say is that as a young single woman in Calabria, all I knew about was work – a simple life. I will never forget my first husband Carlo. He was the man I loved. But I have to say one last thing, that throughout my battaglia in this life, I always prayed to God. It was God who carried me! I would like to thank everyone who reads my story (mille grazie). Have faith in God and continue on….”

The olive trees whisper. The fig trees murmur. It’s time to walk the path where words were spun into wisdom and where Calabrian women lived…Once Upon A Time…

Alice Kane (1979) once said: “Fairytales teach us about justice.” The following stories passed-down to me from Calabrian elders manifest the diverse ways of knowing and awakening a particular purpose or ultimately seeking the truth or justice.

Sitting in her garden, Annunziata teaches me many stories. However, the one she holds most dear and close to her heart is the story of the Divine Mother of Providence (see appendix).

**Divine Mother of Providence**

There once was a handsome, young prince who was depressed and sad and didn’t want to leave his room. His mother was worried and therefore called the best doctors to see her sad son. The doctors advised the mother to find a beautiful, young woman for her son. They prescribed “love” to be the cure to his ill state.

The queen knew a wealthy merchant who had three beautiful daughters – the youngest was the most beautiful. He approached the merchant and offered that the daughter who would bring joy and happiness into her son’s life, would become his princess.
The first daughter went to visit this handsome, depressed prince. When she entered his room, she greeted him and instantly threw a glass of water at her...cursing her with negative words and wishes. So she went home crying.

Then the second daughter went to visit this handsome, depressed prince. As soon as she entered his room, the prince treated her the same as the first daughter. She too went home crying and screaming.

The third daughter, then, went to visit this handsome, depressed prince. She had a gentle way about her. And although he was rude with her, he responded without sending her away back home crying.

Well, the Queen was overjoyed. Her son finally found the solution to his emotional, depressed state. A feast was held with all splendor and the prince married the merchant’s youngest daughter.

They continued to live there days, until the merchant’s daughter noticed this prince leaving the bedroom during the middle of the night. One night, the merchant’s daughter followed him to wherever he was going. The prince went down a narrow winding staircase to the palace dungeon. There, his wife noticed him talking to a dark woman who was ugly to look at (her face was deformed). The wife overheard him say to her: “I’ll be leaving for a short while, but I will return.” However, this dark woman seemed upset, as she heard this news. “Don’t worry, he continued… “Call upon the Divine Mother of Providence for strength and courage, when I’m not here.”

The prince, who was truly in love with her, quietly returned to his bedroom. His wife, in the meantime, quietly and quickly returned to bed assuming she was in a deep sleep. The prince returned to bed, while the dark woman held onto the encouraging advice of the prince: “Call upon the Divine Mother of Providence whenever you feel discouraged.”

So then the prince did leave the palace for a while and the dark woman was devastated. One evening, when she was all alone, the dark woman began to pray and call the Divine Mother Providence for strength and encouragement. She began praying with all her heart.

As she lay there in bed, she noticed by her bedside a woman with a beautiful, white dress and with specks of gold. This image shone and glittered like the sun.
dark woman couldn’t believe what she was seeing. She felt stronger and more peaceful inside.

The dark woman continued to pray and call on Divine Mother of Providence to return. The dark woman, on her hands and knees prayed with all her heart: “Madonna Mia, I know I’m a sinner, I adore you; awaken the man whom I’m madly in love with to feel the same way about me!” On her hands and knee, she pleaded and prayed to Divine Mother of Providence.

Two doves appeared then, tied together with a gold thread. The dark woman, in amazement, was transformed into a beautiful woman. Her heart opened and her feelings of jealousy dissipated into thin air. The dark woman awoke and was headed towards a life of love.

Annunziata revealed to me how she believes the Divine Mother gave her strength during the dark times in her life, to overcome death and depression. Many tragedies took over her life. However, she attributes her survival to the spiritual, divine strength of our Divine Mother. Marion Woodman (1982) reminds us: “One of the problems women have today,” is that they’re not willing to find the river in their own life and surrender to its current. They’re not willing to spend time, because they feel they are being selfish. They grow up trying to please other people and they rarely ask themselves, Who am I? Rarely. And then life starts to feel meaningless because they live in terms of pleasing, rather than in terms of being who they are” (p. 17). All her life, Annunziata “did the right thing” rather than following her own inner wisdom and heart. In time, this caused her to have a nervous breakdown which even blinded her temporarily. Her blindness helped her see. In her psychiatrist’s words: “Annunziata you must have your own key,” encouraged her to see further possibilities and an alternative way to live.

Alone in Canada as a single mother, Annunziata decision to move out on her own and have “her own key” to her own place, enabled her to continue. She revealed how her spiritual life and praying daily sustained her and kept her spirit alive. “Spiritual life is like a moving sidewalk,” the Christian contemplative Bernadette Roberts (1981) said. “Whether you go with it or spend your whole life running against it, you’re still going to be taken along. Whether you commit yourself utterly or throw in the towel, eventually you’ll be swept away” (p. 118). For Annunziata and many Calabrian women, a spiritual
life of prayer is an integral part. Meinrad Craighead (1986) expressed it this way: “Prayer is about repetition. But then life is about repetition. Breathing is repetition. I mean life itself is repetition. And that prayer should be repetition – how could it be otherwise?” (p. 131).

Like Annunziata, a woman’s task is to reclaim her true self and take her rightful place in the world. In the process, a woman learns to heed her inner voice and gaining access (“to her own key”) to the wisdom of the deep self.

“We are concerned with possibilities, with openings on alternative realities, with moving through doorways into spaces some of us have never seen before. We are interested in releasing diverse persons from confinement to the actual, particularly to confinement to the world of techniques and skills training, to fixed categories and measurable competencies. We are interested in breakthroughs and new beginnings, in the kind of wide-awakeness that allows for wonder and unease and questioning and the pursuit of what is not yet” (Greene, 2001, p. 44).
Figure 13: Annunziata Maria Tedesco
Oral narrative is a powerful way of validating one’s own life to oneself and to others. What may first be fleeting memories gain significance when they are told out loud (Barton & Booth, 1990).

I’m at Mara’s house in her kitchen. There, she is “whipping-up” several Comp avi drinks. We’re talking; we’re laughing. Mara is enthusiastic to reveal her truth.

“Cheers to everyone! We didn’t have television. We listened to the radio for the first time when my sister got engaged to a guy. He bought a radio for her. And that’s the first time we heard the radio. We also had a record player that you had to turn to play. A bunch of us got together on a Saturday night or Sunday night and start dancing. We’d teach each other what to do. On weeknights what we usually did during the wintertime we’d sit around the fireplace – weave and embroider. And someone would say a story. And that’s our evening. And that’s how we passed the time. During the day, some went to work on the farm, but my sister never went. What my older brother knew about
gardening, I knew to do too. And that’s how it went. I enjoyed the open field, the fresh air which you cannot find here. But I don’t have a bad memory from out there. We weren’t rich people; we were working people. But we had all that was necessary. Anything I can say about there, it’s beautiful. I wish who doesn’t know, to go there and see, even today. Now it’s more modern. At the time it wasn’t. It was beautiful. Around the fire in the evening, my father or my neighbour’s father would read a book or they say a joke – and we’d have a good time. We’d have a fantastic time. One night ten to fifteen people would be at my house. Another night we’d go to our neighbour’s house and we’d all sit there. And we’d all do our work. And the father would tell a story or read a story. Once in a while the men went out and the women stayed around the fire weaving. The whole family was always together. We’d listen to the story of Cinderella (which would be for an eternity) and all the parents knew the Cinderella story, the Wolf and Riding Hood. When we were kids we listened just like that. We waited for the nice end. And we all wait to see what the end was. And how my father used to tell it, it was fantastic. Fantasy stories. People would dream or they would get hurt. This saint would go here to make something over there. This was something people invented. They had a big fantasy. Especially when you were in the mood. When you start you never stop. And sometimes you’d say things that are not true. I realize it today when kids here believe in what do you call it – “Babbo Natale” (Santa Claus). So they told us stories like that. And we believe when we were kids. We didn’t have Santa Claus in Calabria. I think, the first time I saw a Christmas tree, I was almost fifteen years old. And it was a neighbour who did it and all the kids ran there to see that Christmas tree and we dreamed about it. They only hung a couple of candies and that’s it. We had La Befana. The story of La Befana is fantastic. La Befana traveled the world. She is still looking and searching for Bethlehem. Every Christmas, she travels the world to fill everybody’s stocking. If you are good, you get something nice (fruit, sweets). But if you are bad, you get a big surprise of rotten potatoes or charcoal. Everybody should behave. I remember one night, and we believed it, both my sisters got all nice things. I got one little nice thing and charcoal because I misbehaved. I went to my mother and went to my father – but that’s life. But they still love me. They know I don’t mean any harm, you know. A lot of things during my time what I was doing, no girl was supposed to do.”
“First one, I talk to guys. Or if someone said something to me, I answered back. And I go out; I went to see a movie with friends of mine. Sometime we’d go without my parent’s permission. Once there were three of us girls. So, it was a daytime on Sunday, we went to see a movie, but our parents didn’t know that. When you do something that you’re not supposed to do, everything comes out. When we getta home we said we went for a walk. And a guy came by and he said, “Mara, how did you like the movie?” My parents found out and I got it that time. I really got it. Really bad.”

“Another story about the bike – it’s a simple story, really. I think I was seven years old. We rented the farm and we had a donkey and an old bike. And I rode the bike all by myself. It was me and another woman, older than me who rode a bike. There was another woman before me, but she got a “big name” too. I wanted to do what you could not do. And I went ahead to do it. So you’re not supposed to talk to this person; you’re not supposed to go there. So I went there and I talked to this person. So even when my brother came here, I said I’m the youngest in the family. And I want to boss around everybody. I don’t mean harm. I love my family. They do love me too. That’s the way I am. I just do it! You know, when you can’t do something, you’re more eager to do it. So that’s me.”

“I immigrated here when I was twenty. That was tough!!! I missed everybody. I didn’t know anybody here; I couldn’t speak the language. When I hear people talk and I couldn’t understand, I go crazy! I wanted to go to school and then I got pregnant with my son, I could not go. I have three guys to take care of: there was my husband, his brother and my father in law. In the meantime, I thank God we lived for two and a half years with a Jewish lady. She couldn’t speak Italian. When I needed something she tried to talk to me. But I couldn’t understand. In my mind I said, before the year ends, I have to know. So really, before the year ended I didn’t know everything, but I could understand about fifty to seventy-five percent. Then I’d hear a story, this and that and that. Now I could read in English, but I can’t write it.”

“When I came to Canada we rented a flat upstairs between Dupont and Bloor. There was a mixture. If you wanted something Italian you had to go to College. Anyhow, this Jewish lady tried to help me in every way. I lost contact with her about ten years ago I didn’t see her. But she was a fantastic woman. She knew I wanted to learn.
She had a little girl. We’d sit together in the back yard and she’d pick up, for example, a stick. A ‘stick’, say Mara ‘stick’. And I kept saying it over and over. She’d pick up a glass. She say, ‘glass’. ‘Glass’, Mara, say ‘glass’. Over and over I say it. Believe me, Pina when the year ended I was understandable and I could understand. Believe me Pina, maybe I came to this point because I wasn’t shy. I made mistakes. I make mistakes today. I never went to school here. Sometime the way I talk I make grammar mistake, and if I see a funny expression on people’s faces, I BITE THEIR HEAD OFF! I say you can make a funny at me, when you can speak Italian the way I speak English. Some say ‘you’re right’. Others say, ‘I don’t need to speak Italian in an English country’. But you can’t tell me off because I understand and I will bite your head off! See, it’s funny! I didn’t struggle with the language. I fight! I fight! I always fight!”

“I went to work two and half years after I came here. I worked in a factory. First, I earned fifty cents an hour. Then, I had to fight with my father-in-law because he didn’t want me to go to work. Then I had to fight with my husband because he didn’t want me to go to work. No, damn you! If I want ten dollars, I have to ask you all the time. I don’t want that! So I went on my own. I found a job, worked there for few months and than I worked where they make kids clothes. I worked for two years on piecework. I got a couple of times a fight with my boss. One day he said, ‘Franco, you come here.’ He always called me by my last name. I said ‘Yes’. I said to myself, what did I do wrong? So I went in. ‘Franco, I need somebody; I think you can handle the job.’ I said to myself, did I understand right? We just had a fight the day before about some price. So, I take the job. I’ve been in the place for twelve years like my own house. It came a point when I didn’t want to say that. When I was work in piecework, I made more money than my husband, but not for long. But I worked hard. Anyone who works on piecework knows what that means. My dream was to open up my own shoe store. I started with scraps – with nothing. I worked for years without pay. And today I still run a shoe store after twenty-six years. And I enjoy every single minute. You have bad times and you have good times. That’s it. That’s life! I’m a business woman if you could put it that way.”

“In my life, my two kids give me the most joy. They are fantastic. That’s my life! At first I wished for a daughter. My sister has a daughter, when I was in Calabria. I
got so attached to that little girl. So, when I was pregnant I was hoping for a little girl and than a boy came. I was disappointed at first, but then I accepted it. Then with the second one I didn’t care if it was a girl or a boy. As long as it was healthy. Now I have a little bit more brains. I’m not disappointed at all. I’m disappointed because I want to see them married. I’m old. Let’s see a grandchild to fool around with my dog Pay Cheque.”

“See my story, it’s simple. Easy….Everybody’s life is complicated. My worst complication was when I got married. Precurra (proxy), how you say “prearranged”. When I came here, I didn’t know my husband in an intimate way. That was bad. We were friends. We’d write back and forth when I was in Calabria and than I came here and married him. That was bad. That was hard for me. That was the time when a lot of people did it. If I go back, I’ll never do it again. I have no complaint about my husband, he’s a fantastic person, but that time you didn’t know what’s here. That was bad. That was life at that time. Some were poorer than others. I always worked both in Calabria and in Canada. I heard other woman from Calabria who told me they went to sleep hungry sometime. We had everything in my house. I don’t remember being hungry. When my sisters and brother got married they moved to Australia. They sent me things from there.”

“I was born with “guts”. I guess so. I’m a fighter. I’m the one who keeps everybody “up” in my family. Even if inside me, I die, I don’t show; not to them – no way. I don’t have bad kids. If you treat your kids right, you can learn from them. And my kids learn from me. Exactly! I can’t stand when people my age and older put the younger generation down. I don’t like that. I never did.”

“So, stand for your rights. No matter who, don’t take it – any shit from anybody. And whoever say, if you’re Calabrese or not, if you hear bad story of Calabrese, there is good and bad in every province. And whoever says the Calabrese are weak, they have something coming. Talk to me and then we see who is weak and who’s strong. I got all my strength from my mom and my daddy. And I love them very much. That’s the end of my story. And a happy one. That’s it! Stand for all your rights and don’t let anyone put you down. Be strong and happy!!! And that’s advice coming from a Calabrese….“COMPARI!!!!”
After many meetings and Comparis’ in Mara’s kitchen, she told me many stories. One story which was very popular, when she was growing-up in her hometown was the story of the Divine Mother of the Grotta (see appendix). This story continues to be popular, because they say, it’s a true. So Mara, what do you have to say about this Divine Mother? What makes Her so special to you?

_Divine Mother of the Grotta_

Five hundred years ago, if not more, two Calabrian merchants from sea received a miracle from the Divine Mother of the Grotta. Therefore, they wanted to cultivate a statue of this Madonna. They found themselves in Calabria at Maggiore Marina and Maggiore Superiore and these merchants traveled far away by boat, in those days, to find a sculptor to create this statue of the Divine Mother. They traveled by boat to find this sculptor, who would make this statue.

After sometime, these merchants returned to the sculptor to retrieve this statue. They didn’t have communication methods, we have today. So when they arrived, the sculptor apologized and said: “After we first met, I became gravely ill and haven’t recovered. I’m sorry, I haven’t been able to complete your statue. I commenced the base of the statue only. These merchants responded: “Then may we see what you have completed?” The sculptor didn’t want to show these merchants his unfinished work. But the merchants insisted to see it.

Well then, the sculptor got up from bed and went to show these merchants the unfinished statue. When the sculptor opened the door to his workroom, they found the statue in its completed form. They couldn’t believe what they saw. The three men immediately fell to the ground on their hands and knees, with tears rolling down their cheeks. This was truly a miraculous statue. The merchants placed this statue on their boat and traveled to Tradore Marina. When they arrived at this place, the boat wouldn’t move forward or backward. So the merchants embarked and landed. They took down this statue. However, the Village of Bombile, Village of Condaiani and the Village of Ardore Marina came together to discuss who would have this statue. The villagers argued to have this statue. So then, an authority came forward and told the villagers that this statue was miraculous and it didn’t belong to anyone. He had an idea to place this
statue on a cart and it was up to the Divine Mother to decide where She wanted to be placed.

And this is the way it was. The cart headed in the direction of the Village of Bombile. Nobody said anything. Everyone celebrated a procession for the arrival of the Divine Mother in the Village of Bombile. They placed this statue in the village church, locked the doors and everyone made their way home.

However, during the night, the Divine Mother left the church. The following morning, the priest, who arrived to celebrate mass, didn’t find the statue. He alerted the villagers, who went searching for this statue. They found the Divine Mother in the depths of the mountains and returned this statue back to the church. They locked the church doors tightly.

But it so happened that during the night, the Divine Mother again vanished from the church. In the morning, the priest was shocked to see the disappearance of this statue. Finally, they have found this statue in the mountains and again returned it to the church. This also occurred the third night. For three consecutive nights, the Divine Mother disappeared from the church. They then realized that the Divine Mother wanted to live in the mountains. This was a difficult place to get to.

So the villagers devised a plan. They began to dig and cultivated a grotta for Her. Soon, they built a church near la grotta. The villagers were concerned because they didn’t have running water in the church. However, this Divine Mother provided for the villager and a spring of water surged. This church is five hundred years old. There are 144 steps down to the grotta. This May 3rd (day the Divine Mother of the Grotta is revered), there was an earthquake disaster in this area. There was damage in this area; however, Her statue remained intact.

She has performed many miracles. She has healed people from illness and answered many women’s prayers while their husbands were at war.

A relative of mine (Giuseppe Guariere) who lives in Montreal and became ill, was told by doctors (after a big operation) that he didn’t have long to live. One evening, Giuseppe dreamt of this Divine Mother who said to him, you will not die anytime soon. And this is how it happened. He didn’t die and he regained his health. Giuseppe then wanted to give reverence and homage to Her on May 3rd.
Mara then revealed her true belief in this Goddess. She told me that before coming to Canada, she went to the grotta in the mountains, where this Goddess lives. She lit a candle and prayed to la Madonna Della Grotta for the grace to continue her journey and the courage to open-up her own shoe store, one day in Canada. Mara also mentioned that she really “looks-up” to this Madonna because “She’s a good Madonna who looks after things. But to tell you the truth, I like Her because She takes no shit!”

After several years of working in the sweatshops on Spadina Avenue, Mara’s wish came true. She opened-up her own shoe store. She attributes this, to all her hard work, but also to the Divine Mother of the Grotta, who encouraged her to persevere and find a way. Many of the great shrines to Mary in Europe, as well as in the South and Central America, were built upon sites that were originally dedicated to the pagan goddesses (Halligan, p. 105).

“Anyone who tries to move toward the state of being fully himself knows that whenever a new step toward fearlessness is made, a sense of joy is awakened that is unmistakable. He feels as if a new phase of life has begun” (p. 16).

Figure 15: Mara Franco
"The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2)."

“I don’t have any stories! I don’t have any stories to tell you! I’m an old woman who never went to school. When I lived in Calabria I worked all day, and in the evening I’d recite the rosary with other villagers who lived nearby. We’d also share stories, but who could remember them now. It’s been a long time. I forgot most of the stories when I arrived in Canada. Everything was different. Everything was new. Life was a little better, but we still had to work hard. Without sacrifices you get nothing. When I first married my husband in Calabria, he was drafted in the army during World War II. As a result, I spent a few years by myself working hard to raise my children who were also
very young. It was a time of war. And everyday a messenger from the army would come to the village and announce who was dead and who was still alive. Everyday we’d gather in the piazza and my heart jumped. For several years I lived in fear; fear of being a widow; fear of being alone for the rest of my life. Everyday I prayed and lit candles throughout the entire church for La Madonna (Divine Mother) to grant me the graces and blessings in life: ‘Please Dear God, Madonna Mia, not my husband!’ I’d pray. I’m a poor woman with children and need a partner. However, one morning the messenger arrived to the village with his dead and alive list. As he read out-loud the names of the soldiers who were dead at war, he also called out my husband’s name. ‘AIUTO! HELP ME! HELP ME SOMEONE!!!’ I cried out. ‘AIUTO! AIUTO!’ I cried and cried some more. Why my husband? Why? I pulled my hair, coiled in a bun and pounded my hands on the ground. I couldn’t believe what I heard. I didn’t want to believe what I heard. I was destined to be a widow. The women in the village comforted me. They held my hand and embraced and escorted me home to my children. For weeks I thought my life was over. And in many ways it was. The fear of waiting and knowing had left me. I had nothing to wait and look forward to anymore.”

“That afternoon, I went to church and on my hands and knees I prayed with all my heart to La Madonna of All Graces: ‘Please Madonna Mia, please grant me a miracle. I am a widow with three small children and have no bread to give them. Give me a sign and tell me what to do. I need your strength. I need your courage. Illuminate my mind. Give me strength. Madonna Mia! Madonna Mia! Madonna Mia!’ After I prayed and prayed the rosary, I felt a serenity in my heart. For dinner neighbours nearby offered me their bread and so it was, I fed my children. That evening, in my one room house, I rocked both my children to sleep. During the night, I had the most magnificent dream that lifted my spirit and soul. I dreamed that a woman so divine, so extraordinary came to visit me, while I was sleeping and covered me with her mantle. As she comforted and consoled me she said: ‘Don’t worry Maria Rosa, your wish is granted.’ When I woke up the following morning, I felt as if, La Madonna, for who I lit all the candles the day before, had stayed with me all night and had given me Her source of strength. With Her mantle on my shoulders, I carried on with my life. I lived each day with faith. I fed my children with “speranza” (hope) knowing that tomorrow is a new
day. To live, the heart must go on. Forward….forward….forward….have curragio (courage) move forward.”

“So that dream gave me courage to move on. And I did…slowly, even though it was hard…Three days later, the messenger of war arrived once again to the village. Everyone gathered as usual around and listened to the horrific news. I didn’t attend. I remained in the fields gathering olives with my children. I continued to work. All of a sudden, I heard someone call my name: ‘MARIA ROSA! MARIA ROSA! We just heard your husband is ALIVE! He returned from war! He’s alive; he’s just wounded!’ How could this be? I thought. I held my hands up to the air and looked up to the big, blue sky and cried out with joy: ‘OH MADONNA MIA DELLA GRAZIE, I WILL FOREVER WORSHIP YOU UNTIL THE DAY I DIE!!! GRAZIE MADONNA MIA FOR THIS INCREDIBLE MIRACLE!!!GRAZIE!!!’ And with Her mantle, La Madonna has guided me throughout my life! Never lose hope. The heart must go on. So have faith and keep going in life no matter what happens. Have hope always!”

Maria Rosa continues to tell me how she really doesn’t have a story: “This isn’t a story; this is life”. Maria Rosa, like many other Calabrian women have revealed their extraordinary experiences with the Divine Mother. They never questioned the reality of their life transforming experiences. This was all part of life. The seen and unseen worlds were one. Author and theologian Carol Christ (1991) has observed that stories shape experience, and experience shapes stories, or to put it another way, the stories we tell and are told mold our perceptions of reality. For many and varied reasons, women’s experiences have remained unspoken (Christ, p. 7). Stories of heroic women from Biblical times, wise women from ancient Tibet, and idealized saints are no longer adequate. What we need are stories from spiritually mature women in our time and culture who are demonstrating the sacred in today’s world. We need to hear from women we can relate to, women like ourselves who fall in love, raise children, run businesses, speak from pulpits, commute on freeways, work for peace, and go through divorce. We need to hear directly from these women about the unfolding of the sacred in their lives in their own words, in the language of their own hearts (Christ, p. 8).

Eating a homemade biscotti and drinking espresso, Maria Rosa tells me a story of the Divine Mother of Tindari (see appendix) she heard from the elders in her village,
growing up in Calabria. She also mentions that many women were reminded of this story, especially during difficult times.

**Divine Mother of Tindari**

“In June 1981 I went to Italy. My sister took me to this place to visit the Divine Mother of Tindari (Black Madonna). A person told me that there is a place with a cathedral in this Madonna’s honour. There is a story about a mother who went with her child to visit this Madonna. When this person entered the church and saw this Black Madonna, she insulted Her: ‘I traveled all this way just to see a woman darker than myself.’ All of a sudden her child vanished. Everyone was alarmed. In time, someone found this woman’s child by the sea at the bottom of the mountain. In despair this woman turned to this Madonna and asked Her to save her child who had fallen from the mountain deep into the sea. When the villagers went to the sea, they found the child safe and sound. The waves had pulled this child back to shore.

This sand in this sea is soft and velvety. This is a beautiful story. The Madonna wants people to pray to her. The Madonna wants people to adore her. With the Madonna, everything is possible.”

Maria Rosa, like many other Calabrian women, held on to stories of the Divine Mother for help and hope. They have revealed how these stories have given them a spirit to survive and overcome. As Simone de Beauvoir (1992) observed, we must prefer to fathom rather than flatter ourselves. And to fathom ourselves we need not only the courage to follow wherever the questions lead us, but the willingness to let go of the certainty of thousands of years of traditional teachings to enter the unknown territory of our own experience (p. 10). Furthermore, Grace Feuerverger in Oasis of Dreams (2001) expresses the following: “Their sense of rootlessness, as well as their struggle to find voice, meaning and balance in their new lives, can be regarded as a metaphor for the postmodern urban condition” (p. 9).
Figure 17: Maria Rosa
“That stories appear so often supports the view of some theorists that narratives are one of the natural cognitive and linguistic forms through which individuals attempt to order, organize, and express meaning. Narratives convey the ways that individuals attempt to arrive at a meaningful understanding of significant events in their lives (Mishler 1986, p. 106)”

I’m at Nunzia’s house. She is making the tomato sauce in her garage. As she is jarring the tomatoes, she begins:

“Gli nonni (the elders) shared stories around the fire. We heard romantic stories. When I arrived in Canada, I forgot all the stories I once heard. I had to work and raise five children. Although I wanted to come to Canada, I liked Italy. I didn’t understand the language. And nobody knew what we were saying. I was thirty-one years old when I immigrated to Canada. In Italy, I raised my children, worked the land, baked bread, and
gathered grain, wheat, olives and grapes. It was a life of work. I always worked. Once I immigrated to Canada, I saw my mother again after eighteen years. My brothers and sisters immigrated to Argentina. I met my husband in the paese, (village). I was fifteen years old and he was twenty-two. At the age of eighteen, I married him. Within ten years, I gave birth to five children. I was always busy.”

“Then the war happened. I got married during World War II. In August, I will celebrate my birthday. I’m getting old. My husband and I got married and then he had to leave to war. He left for fourteen months. Before he left, papers were settled regarding the bit of land owned – just in case he didn’t return.”

“As a child, I always worked. I was seven years old when I started working in the olive orchards. I helped my family gather olives and feed the animals. I always worked. Not here. Here you go to school for a hundred years. But in Italy, when you were seven or eight years old, you helped out on the farms and fields. However, I did go to school for two years. I passed with good marks every year. I couldn’t continue because I had to help with the family farm. Besides, I had no intentions of becoming a professional. After the third grade, you had to pay for your education. And who had the money?”

“My husband immigrated to Canada three years before I did. When he arrived in Canada, he worked in a factory assembly line and then he found a job in construction. Once he was settled, I immigrated with my five children alone. When I arrived in Canada, it wasn’t at all what I heard or visioned it would be like. I was happier living on a farm. I have a garden here that reminds me of my home in Calabria. I plant what I like. Every year I cultivate and harvest the land. All I’m missing are the animals. When my husband and I first bought this house, we went directly to the backyard to inspect the soil and size. If the yard was decent, then we inspected the insides of the house. We were both content with the yard, so we bought the house.”

“In Calabria and here in Canada, I was known by those who knew me as ‘the lady with the golden hands’. Because we worked long hours in the scorching sun always doing physical work, our backs and muscles often ached. Several women, like myself, were known throughout the village to feel painful parts of the body and know which parts to massage. It’s like this, I can feel where the pain is and then with my hands I massage this area. Not everyone in the village knew how to do this. This I believe was a gift from
God. In the evening, after working long hours all bent and scorched, we rubbed each others’ backs with olive oil. I healed many broken bones. I sense and feel. I know the human body. Only women knew how to heal aches and pains. I never saw a man do this kind of healing in my village. Throughout the whole village, there was only one doctor. Very rarely did we go see him. When a woman gave birth to a child, she was assisted by a midwife with natural birth. After ten days of motherhood, the women were expected to return to work in the countryside. Women were strong. We didn’t have a choice. Women had vision. Women were healers. Women were discouraged from going to the village doctor. If anyone in the village discovered that a woman went to the doctor, for one reason or another, the word would get around and she would have a hard time trying to find a husband. Rumors would spread that she was too ill and weak and not fit to be a wife. A woman had to be strong. Even if a woman could not bare children shortly after she was married, all the villagers would wonder what was the matter with her. A married woman was expected to have children. We never took medicine. We made and boiled syrup. Our illnesses were cured by brewing natural remedies such as: garlic, cammomile plants, olive oil and syrup.”

“Gypsies traveled throughout our villages. They were awful. If you were smart you stayed away from them. These gypsies came from all over. They knocked on people’s doors for food or money. When I saw them, I would throw breadcrumbs at them from the balcony of where I lived. I wouldn’t go near them; I was too afraid. They put curses like the “evil eye” on innocent people. Fortunately, there were women in the village who knew how to remove the “evil eye” “mal occhio”. In their hearts and minds they would repeat certain words and prayers to remove all evil spells and curses. Women who knew how to do this would pass this secret to other women on the strike of twelve on Christmas Eve. If a woman passed on this wisdom before or after Christmas Eve, the spell would be broken and the woman who revealed the wisdom to another, would lose all her power to cast away malicious spells. A ritual took place on Christmas Eve to initiate the wisdom of the “mal occhio”.

“Men in the village often left their children and wives to work for five to ten and even twenty years in Brazil, Argentina and the United States. Husbands often sent money to their families. My father, for example, left our family when I was seven years
old. He never wrote or visited. After twenty-two years while he was away in Argentina, he wrote a letter to the family. By this time, I was married with three children. I didn’t know my father. My mother and brother left to meet my father. My father didn’t want to return to Calabria. He mentioned in the letter that he didn’t know anyone anymore in Calabria. In the letter, my father also mentioned that he spoke Spanish fluently. I never saw or heard from my father again.

“English is difficult to comprehend. I never learned it. I had to work, raise children, cook, clean, maintain a clean house and be a housekeeper for boarders. I only learned a few words. When I arrived in Toronto, I lived on College and Dufferin Street. Many Italians lived in this area. My husband didn’t learn how to speak English either. It’s a difficult language to learn. I was always too busy.”

“In Calabria we didn’t have television and have the electronics we have today. Every evening around the fireplace, my grandfather always told us stories about life. Stories with lessons. But the best time was when he told us stories about Cinderella (Cenorentolla) or Little Red Riding Hood (Cappocetto Rosso). He also told funny tales and sad tales. Stories for the old and stories for the young. Stories about the stars, the moon and the sun. He told us stories. One poem he told us that I will never forget, I would like to share with you:

“Luccio, Luccio, Luccio Lino
Sei forse un stellino,
O servi alla lamppadina,
Si no il bambini vanno giu.
Luccio, la veddi un pocco di vicino,
Si voli in po vicino non vi veddo piu.”

“When I was in Calabria, I knew more poems and stories. My favourite were singing to le romanze.”

“When I was a child, we played ‘muciatella’ hide and seek. We played with sticks and rocks. On Sundays we all went to church. Throughout the year we also celebrated the feast of La Madonna di Carmine and the feast of St. Joseph. In Calabria I always went to church. Although, when I arrived in Canada, I didn’t have a desire
anymore. I left the church. Maybe I have become lazy. Or maybe because, to tell you
the truth, I prefer to live on a farm.”

As she continues to stir the sauce and jar the tomatoes, Nunzia tells me her
favourite story “Gold Hen” (see appendix). She tells me the importance of this story to
encourage people to confront their demons and break their spells.

**Gold Hen**

There once was a king who had a daughter, who’s name was Gold Hen. It so
happened that the wife had died and after a short time, he remarried a woman who wasn’t
that good-looking, and she was so jealous, because her stepdaughter was younger and
more beautiful than her. In the court they had a fountain out of gold. Everyday this step-
mother, full of vanity and envy would go to the fountain and would ask it:

“Gold fountain, beautiful fountain,
Is Gold Hen more beautiful than me?”

The fountain responded:

“Dear Queen, princess Gold Hen is more beautiful than you!”

Hearing this response everyday, the queen felt her anger and envy grow and she
didn’t know what to do to become more beautiful than her stepdaughter. One day, after
hearing this response, she couldn’t take anymore and she called two trustworthy soldiers
and ordered them to take Gold Hen on top of a mountain, have her walk thirteen days
outside the village and to leave her there all alone. What brutal things jealousy can make
someone do.

The soldiers took Gold Hen, as they were ordered; They then took her to a
deserted mountain and abandoned her without remorse. Gold Hen, aware she was
abandoned, tried to find courage and she began to walk. At a certain point, she saw a
house and walked in. Not seeing anyone and finding everything ready, she prepared a
meal, fixed the beds and then she hid to find out what would happen. All of a sudden,
she saw arrive thirteen dwarfs arrive: they saw all their dinner prepared, their beds fixed
and their place looked spotless.

“We have been betrayed!” they said. And they began searching the entire house – climbing up and down the stairs. Step by step they saw a young girl hiding, who was
more beautiful than the sun. They asked her what she was doing on top of this mountain

93
because nobody ever went there. Then they said: “Now that you are here, stay with us and you could be our mother.

Now let’s return to the stepmother. The same morning that Gold Hen was taken away from her house, it seemed like a thousand years since this vain and vile went to visit the fountain. She woke up, however, earlier than usual and went down to the fountain. The Queen then asked the fountain the same question:

‘Gold fountain, beautiful fountain,
Is Gold Hen more beautiful than me?’
And the fountain responded:
“Dear Queen, the princess,
Gold Hen is more beautiful than you, And she can be found with the dwarves.”
The queen turned green and shouted with vindication after the same music and response from the fountain. She expected to hear a more favorable reply. Thus, to be vindictive, she thought of sending an old dwarf woman with a poisonous ring and recommended her to put it on Gold Hen’s finger and be done with her once and forever. The old lady went. She arrived at where Gold Hen dwelled. The dwarves were not around. The old woman tricked Gold Hen and put the poisonous ring on her finger. Gold Hen instantly turned into marble and fell on the ground. That same morning, the stepmother returned to the fountain and asked the usual question. This time, the fountain responded:

“Oh Queen, Princess Gold Hen has been poisoned.”
The queen was finally consoled and let-out a cry of joy. In the meantime, the dwarfs returned home and on their way found Gold Hen on the ground and turned into a marble statue. They began to feel distraught because they loved her. But one dwarf said to his friends: “This doesn’t look natural; let see what we could find.” They searched and searched her and they found the ring on her finger. Quickly, they removed this ring from her finger and Gold Hen came to life again. With great joy from all the dwarves who surrounded her danced and celebrated, like chicks with their hen. Then they asked her who gave her the poisonous ring?

As Gold Hen was telling them about the old woman, the queen, who could not sleep as she was overjoyed, went to the fountain and sang the same song. The fountain
responded: “Dear Queen, Princess Gold Hen is more beautiful than you.” So angry she was spitting blood, she said in a loud voice: “To hell with these dwarves and who created them!” But then noticing that with swearing nothing was solved, she thought about going herself to the dwarves, to see things with her own eyes, because with the old folks, you couldn’t arrive at anything good. With this in mind, she boiled a canister of apples, pears and other fruit in the oven and she put poison. And with this beautiful stuff, she began walking towards the mountain.

In the meantime, hearing the story of the second old woman and the deceit of Gold Hen, they told her: “If someone else comes here, do not go down, and wait until we arrive because we are more aware of the ways of the world and we understand what to do.” The words were lost into the wind. The queen arrived, one day disguised as a fruit vendor and began to sell as soon as she saw the dwarves leave: “Who would like apples? Who would like beautiful cooked pears? Oh, how sweet they are! She kept on selling and repeating the same words. Finally, Gold Hen’s mouth was watering because she just loved sweetened fruit and however called the fruit vendor: “Good lady, how much do you want for them?” The woman responded: “Have a taste of one first and see if you like them, and then for the price, we will negotiate; you’ll just pay for the one you like.” Gold Hen, without suspecting anything, took a little bite of one: the pear was poisoned and fell on the ground for it was painfully strong. After a short time, she died. “Ah, finally!” said the queen with a maligned shout. And she left before the dwarves arrived.

When the dwarves returned, they found her again on the ground, but this time without remedy because they noticed immediately she was dead. With nothing else to do, they placed her in a coffin and every morning they mourned her. These poor dwarves truly mourned her with their lamenting and their sorrow. Thus, a month went by, and during this time, they had invited a king’s son. After dinner, this king’s son was searching for their house and saw this beautiful young woman dead in a coffin and said to the dwarves: “You have to give her to me and take her back to the palace. The dwarves who grew fond of her didn’t want this and said: “Prince, what do you want her for? She is already dead. Leave her here with us; at least we’ll mourn her.” The prince replied resolutely: “Nothing; whether she is dead or alive, you’ll have to give her to me!” And he took her away. He placed her in a carriage and went. On the way, because of the
movement in the carriage, Gold Hen, who appeared dead, vomited the poisoned pear and returned to life again feeling as if she was in a deep sleep all that time. As soon as she became herself again, the king’s son said: “You are my bride!” “Before I give you a response, I have to go to the dwarves and thank them and then we’ll see,” said the princess. Then the prince gave the coachman orders to return to the dwarves and with great consolation, they saw God Hen alive again. The princess thanked them for everything, and told them that the prince asked to marry him. “Yes, yes!” cried the dwarfs with all their heart. They knew the prince was a good man. “This is beneficial for both of you”. Gold Hen accepted and the dwarves had a feast for this beautiful couple. Afterward, they returned to the palace, and when it was time, they got married with a big celebration of kings, dukes and counts. Gold Hen’s father and stepmother were also invited without them knowing it was their daughter’s wedding.

They had a beautiful dinner and after everyone ate and drank, said the bride to the guests: “Now I would like to tell you a story. But first we have to lock the doors so no one may leave. While the guest were waiting to hear this strange story, the stepmother who had a clean shirt, but a dirty conscience, took a closer look at the bride who looked more beautiful than the sun, and realized she was her stepdaughter, whom she thought was dead and said to herself. “Uh, this is bad for me! They will kill me! I will tell the prince, I have a strong need to go out for a bit, this way I can escape.” She asked the prince, but asked her to step out after the story. And without anything more, he began to tell the story of his wife and stepmother. At a certain point, the queen who realized that they were talking about her, said in a frazzled way: “Open the doors for me because I am dying and I can’t take it anymore!” But the king’s son continued his story till the end. Gold Hen approached her father, kissed his hand and said: “My father! My father!” Then she turned to the stepmother and said: “And this is the woman who sent me off with the soldiers on top of the mountain and then did everything to kill me! And I, a poor innocent soul, what have I done so bad to her?”

Her father, who mourned Gold Hen’s death said: “And what do you wish, dear daughter, figghia mia (my daughter) be done to this evil woman?” The daughter didn’t want to say. But encouraged by all present said: “For all the evil she has done to me and continues to do, she deserves to be dragged by the tail of a horse throughout the world.
But I will leave it up to you!” So the drunk got what they deserved and the Queen died a miserable death. And so, the bride and groom were joyous and content, and we were left with nothing instead.”

Nunzia tells me that she brought this story to Canada and never wants to lose it. She mentions that this story is about “becoming aware of the spells that hold you back. Once you know, you are free and there is nothing to fear anymore.”

If women persevere in their journeys, despite the fear, heartache, and cultural backlash, the stories promise an immeasurable reward – women awaken to the true self and the deep feminine within, and in the process they wake up the whole world (Chinen 1997, p. 249).

Nunzia advised to “wake-up break free!” As Brother David Steindl-Rast reminds us in Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer (1984), “The more we come alive and awake, the more everything we do becomes prayer. Eventually, even our prayer will become prayer”(p.146). Nunzia continues her private practice to heal wounded bones: “Wake Up!”

“Connected knowing builds on the subjectivists’ conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1988, pp. 113-114).”

Figure 17: Nunzia Ruffo
VITTORIA (PILEGGI) GALATI “Sing your own song…."

The capacity to awaken us from our stock responses and to create the “wide-awakeness” that Maxine Greene (1978) talks about….The artist recontextualizes the familiar so that it takes on a new significance….Artistically crafted work also has the capacity to put us in the shoes of those we do not know and thus to foster empathic understanding….In such works, we are dealing with constructions, and where there is construction artistry is always possible, even in doing research (Eisner, 1998, p. 151).

Sitting with Vittoria, on her balcony, she is singing and humming to songs she has “made-up”. She tells me that words, melodies and music are just inside her. “It’s a gift I have. When you have a gift, you have a gift. And no one can take it away from you because it’s inside you.” We’re drinking espresso, as she reveals her tale.

Vittoria taught herself to read, write, drive, play guitar. So Vittoria, where did you learn how to sing and play the guitar?” “God gave me this gift. From when I was born, I had this.”

Vittoria begins to sing. “Io tengo na guitara…sorridi anche tu…Bella Vucci! I was born in 1928 Jan. 30th. A midwife assisted in my birth. I’m the eldest from my brothers and sisters. In Vallelonga, as soon as the sun rose, you were up. We returned home with the (terra) soil on our faces. When I returned home from working a day at the
in the countryside, I would wash up and underneath a fig tree or olive tree, I would sing and play my guitar. I sang underneath trees and underneath the balcony past the cemetery.”

“The next morning, the villagers would say: ‘Vittoria, we applauded you yesterday listening to your music.’ I sang from my heart. I always sang and played my guitar. There wasn’t one wedding in the village, that I didn’t go where I didn’t sing (‘Tegnu la guitara…..’). You think we had guitar school in the village? Nobody taught me how to play. I worked during the day in the countryside and then in the evening I sang and played the guitar. VOICE! VOICE! A beautiful voice!”

“When I first met the man I married, I didn’t like him. He was a womanizer. He came after me. It was a small village. When he came to my house, that was it. In about ten days we were married. This was my DESTINY! I believe in destiny. I once saw him pass by where I lived. He said: ‘Signora do you have a glass of water?’ ‘No, I don’t think so,’ I responded. ‘You just wait. One day, I’ll be drinking from your breast,’ he responded. After one month, we were married – a couple. My husband is dead now. God wanted him. There is such a thing as destino! Everyone has his or her own destiny. This was destiny for him to die before me. And for me to continue living today. I always worked. The Madonna in Vallelonga (Madonna di Montserrato) was from Spain. A priest brought her from Spain. She has granted many miracles. Madonna Mia always helped me. I always sang to La Madonna. I never wrote anything. I made up songs from memory. The days and years pass….I once won a trip to Italy. Nobody believed it, but I knew in my heart I’d win. I was 19 years of age when I married. My husband was 22. I came to Canada in 1952, alone. THANK GOD! I like Canada. In Naples I took a boat for 8 days and 8 nights to Halifax, Pier 21. I got sick on the boat. I didn’t like the food. I recall a horrible dream I had on the boat coming to Canada: A crow came and said to me: ‘When you arrive in Canada, you will find your husband dead.’ And when I woke up, I began to cry and cry and cry. When I arrived at Union Station (Toronto), I couldn’t see him. I was worried. Until I set eyes on him, I was ‘dying’. I believe in dreams. Dreams are real. Dreams tell you things. This is all part of destino appearing in a form of a dream. Sogni veri…”
“My husband was already in Canada before me. I was happy to come to Canada to meet up with my husband. I then called my brothers to immigrate to Canada. I thank La Madonna!”

“My mother wasn’t even fifty years old, when she died. She left all of us kids orphaned. We were young. She died of cancer. I couldn’t have children. So, I adopted a little girl. When I came to Canada, it was winter time. I was mesmerized by the illuminante, colorful lights on the Christmas trees. Beautiful! All the lights were beautiful.”

“In Canada, I made up songs. I went to a music station on College and several of my songs were recorded. I sold my records on College Street. I sang while I worked during the day; I sang when I returned at home at night. I always sang. I came to Canada and I sang. I even sang on the boat coming to Canada. The Atlantic Ocean heard me sing my song.”

“My husband didn’t want me to work. So I stayed at home. The people I lived with on College Street always asked me to baby-sit their kids. I was fed up. When my husband came home, I told him tomorrow I’m going to find a job. I found a job. I would get $40.00 a week. Madonna! I worked on Spadina Avenue pressing clothes. I wasn’t going to stay at home and baby sit. I was going to work and sing. With my money, we did the shopping and we went to the cinema. It’s a longa tima…My husband” is dead. I miss him. Passato! Passato! I don’t sing like I used to…. I miss my husband.

Ciao Vittoria and grazie for the espresso. Like the Nightingale, continue to sing your own song – your way and no other way. But before I leave, she sings verses of a song and tells me one of her favourite tales “The Talking Doll” (see appendix).

Storytelling has the power not only to entertain, but to teach, to heal, and to transmit traditions and family lore from one generation to the next (Bob Balwin, 1995, p. 32) article: “The Lost Art of Storytelling.”

The Talking Doll

There once was a husband and wife; they were merchants and had one daughter. This daughter, one day, went into the store, picked-up a piece of fine cloth, and made a doll. She prayed so much that the doll began to walk. Again she prayed and prayed so much to God that the doll even began to talk. She kept her in her house. And every time
this girl arrived at home, she would take the doll for a walk. One day while the girl was teaching this doll, her father called for her quickly. The girl left to help her father and left the doll alone. In the meantime, the doll saw the chest open and by putting one foot forward, she walked to the street.

As soon as the people saw her, they took the doll to the king because this was extraordinary: a doll that walks, talk – if you think about it – it’s not easy to find – and the king believed very much this gift. But the merchant’s daughter, when she returned home from her chores and saw that her doll was not there, she began to cry and was so distressed. Her father, seeing his daughter all depressed, he said: ‘Figghia (my daughter) don’t cry because you will make another doll more beautiful – don’t cry like this!’ But she replied: ‘Nothing father, because my doll spoke!’ ‘Give me your blessing, because I want to search the world until I find my doll.’ Worried, her father tried to convince her otherwise and comfort her. But they were words in the wind; she had her mind set. Anyhow, he gave her his blessing, kissed her with tears in his eyes and saw her leave alone on her journey into the world.

Making her way into the world, the girl searched the four corners of the earth. A man, on the way, informed her that the king had this special doll. When she approached the king, he refused to hand over this doll. He makes her a proposition: “I have a crazy son. If you are able to make him well again, I will return this talking doll to you.” Hopeless, she found the courage to continue. She encountered a witch who wanted to deceive this girl and eat her up. While the witch was asleep, this girl found a way to escape this witch and reverse the spell of madness in which the king’s son was under. When the girl returned to the king, his son was healed. Overjoyed, the king had given this precious doll to his brother, who had lost his son.

On her journey, the girl made her way to the king’s brother’s palace. When she arrived, he refused to give her the doll and made her a proposition: “Beautiful little girl, your doll is there underneath the bed. But if you want it, you must first find my son, which I have lost. I will give you eight days. Hope that it goes well or else you will end up in the dungeon underneath the palace.”

After eight days, the girl returned to the king’s brother without his lost son. He then threw her into he dungeon. All alone and hopeless, she heard sounds from the
dungeon walls. She began to did the ground. She found a narrow winding staircase. She climbed down and found the king’s son, who was captured by a group of witches. The girl found a way to rescue the king’s son and returns to her dungeon. The king is thrilled and thus, the girl marries the king’s son and lives contented for the rest of her days.

‘They celebrated with sleep and song,
And we were left with vacant hands.’

Vittoria chants to the verses in the end of this story. “This story has stayed with me because, when you lose something, you must find it, or a part of you will be lost forever. Cappishi…?” Vittoria tells me that you have to “sing your own son” no matter what. “What song are you going to sing, if you don’t sing your own? And another thing, nobody can tell you, what song you should sing. My music has saved my life.”

It is told that all creation was accompanied by sound or word said aloud, a sound or word whispered or spoken on the breath. The speaker of such “sound words” may or may not have known or comprehended their meaning. Singing is considered to issue from a mysterious source, one that enwisens the whole of creation, all the animals and the humans and the trees and plants and all who hear it. In storytelling it is said that anything that has “sap” has singing. The creation hymn produces psychic change. The tradition of such is vast: there are love-producing songs in Iceland, and among the Wichita and the Micman. In Ireland, magic power is called down by the magic song. In one Icelandic story, a person falls in the ice crags and severs a limb, but it is regenerated through the singing of song (Pinkola Estes, 1992, p. 160).

In almost all cultures, at the creation, the Gods give the people songs, telling them that to use them will call the Gods back at any time, that song will bring to them the things they need as well as transform or banish those things they do not want. In this manner the giving of song is a compassionate act that enables humans to call the Gods and the great forces into human circles. Song is a special kind of language that accomplishes this in a way the spoken voice cannot (Pinkola Estes, p.161).

The song, like the drum, creates a non-ordinary consciousness, a trance state, a prayer state. All humans and many animals are susceptible to having their consciousness altered by sound. Certain sounds, like a dripping faucet or a car horn, can make us anxious, even angry. Other sounds, like the ocean’s roar or the wind in trees, fill us with
good feeling. So when there is song in a tale, we know that the gods are being called upon to breathe their wisdom and power into the matter at hand (Pinkola Estes, p.161).

I finish my espresso and hug Vittoria before I leave. She informs me that “people always sang, it didn’t cost anything. A song and a story is for everyone (rich or poor). We sang working in the fields, we sang at home, we continued to sing in church, on Sunday morning. …and one more thing -- don’t forget to sing… Ciao!”

Dewey (1938) observed, “Everything depends on the quality of the experience,” its agreeableness or disagreeableness, and its influence on later experiences” (p. 27).

Figure 18” Vittoria (Pilleggi) Galati
As a woman, I want women who have felt themselves outside history to be written back into history, in the words of Evan Boland, ‘finding a voice where they have found a vision…’ (Robinson, 1990, p. 15). While brewing espresso in her ceramic kitchen, Rita was retelling stories of the power of prayer and faith in her life: “My life hasn’t always been easy. There were some hard times, but my faith saved me.”

“First of all, my mother sent me to junior kindergarten. As I grew, my mother sent me to school to a seamstress to learn how to sew. There were eight kids in the house. I went to school to learn to sew, embroider with my sister. We also had sheep which we took care of. After sometime, I married. In 1954, I met my husband and married. I was 34 years old. We married by proxy. In those days that’s what happened. I immigrated to Argentina. My mother had died a year before I married. I lived in Argentina for 12 years. I had three children. In 1966 we immigrated to Canada. My brother gave us room and board. We lived with my brother for about 7 years. My husband and I both worked. My husband didn’t like it in Canada.”

“When we first came to Canada, it was hard for us to adjust to the cold weather. Also, I always worked as a seamstress at home (both in Calabria and Argentina). In Canada, I had to get accustomed to sewing and working in a factory. I got used to it. There are more amenities in Canada. I like Canada.”
“My husband returned to Argentina for several months to sell the property we had. But, I have to say, my heart is and will always be in Sant’Onofrio, Calabria. I was born and raised in Sant’Onofrio. My family always worked. My father was a veterinarian and invented many different tools for the farm. In Sant’Onofrio they called him ‘doctor’. He knew about different diseases and cures. He knew how to cure the animals. He also knew about human ailments. People in the village came for help at our house. My father often helped the poor families in our village. One brother was a barber. My other brother was a shoemaker.”

“Villagers passing by called me ‘Donna Rita’… My family didn’t work in the countryside. There were three grades: operai, musai, contadini. Operai (workers), musai (someone who looked after the sheep/shepherd) and contadini (someone who worked in the countryside). We had sheep. My father and the shepherd would use the wool to weave. My sister and I would weave and spin the wool on the spinning wheel.”

“My mother would make her own linen material. I enjoyed weaving. From one side to the other we wove the material my mother cultivated. In those days, my dear, we wove all our material. We worked beautifully with material. We wove our bedspreads. My mother did everything.”

“In those days, we had to get our water at the river. My family didn’t work in the countryside. We were (operai) workers. I come from a lineage of business workers. My father was the village veterinary. My father’s brother was a tax collector. However, on my mother’s side of the family, they were somewhat wealthy. Vincenzo Facciolo (mother’s father) owned lots of land. He would tend the land. My grandfather (father’s father) had a general store.”

“Love was different in those days. If my father or older brothers didn’t approve of the man who wanted to marry me, than it wasn’t a go. Usually, the village matchmaker would come to my house and speak with my father for a marriage prospect. We couldn’t even walk with a man, while we were on the street. My father would interrogate us. My father sold the animals at the village fair. My brother was a shoemaker. My family had HEART. People would come to see my brother the shoemaker and ask him to make them shoes. They would say: ‘please make me a pair of shoes and I will pay you next year.’
“After WWII, many people in Calabria were in starvation. ‘Mamma’ they starved. We cooked on the hearth. We ate minestra and fish. In the summer, the bread person made white bread. In the winter we had whole wheat bread. They made bread three times a day. My father would go to Vibo Valentia to pick up sugar and pasta in bulk with horse and buggy.”

“Another brother was a blacksmith in Vasano. He married a woman from there, and there he worked and lived for the rest of his days.”

“My father was a veterinary and blacksmith. My father and brothers would make horseshoes and other farm tools. All my brothers learned this trade as a blacksmith. However, my father sent my brothers to learn to become a barber and shoemaker also. My father went to Rome to find-out the family tree. The D’urzo family were orphans who immigrated form Rome to Calabria. There are so many D’urzo’s. My father gave his research of the family tree to his nephew Fortunato D’urzo (a professor). There were families in the village named “L’urzo”. They changed their names to “D’urzo”. My family knew everyone in the village. We were well known. Everyone in my family were entrepreneurial (seamstress, barber, shoemaker, blacksmith, veterinary, weaver). In those days we made everything. As a seamstress, I designed my own patterns. We spent hours sewing. We had about five hours sleep. We sewed with the (lumi) oil lamp. Sacrifices were big back then. We didn’t have light or water in the house. This was the life back then. Washrooms were outdoors.”

“I married at 34. I didn’t want to get married. I was married to God. I would attend church frequently. This was my DESTINY. My sister and I never considered matrimony. My mother died at 53 years of age. Before she died, my brother who was in the U.S. of America called to sponsor my sister (Domenica) and I to immigrate there. My mother would say: “iativinde” go to the U.S.” However, we didn’t want to go. My mother died young. I was so enamored with God and to pray. My sister Domenica was about to marry. Then she changed her mind and didn’t want to. I was like that too. We had so many prospective matrimones. I didn’t want to marry because I was older. My mother was tall and my father was short. My father was a smart man. He was a big-hearted man. People paid him with things: cheese, oil, food and items. He gave to families who were poor. He would say to my mother: “Felicia, prepare a plate
for that poor family”. We bought our food in bulk. We didn’t starve. We always had food. We had everything. We made everything too. Twice a year we killed a pig. Whenever someone came to the house, my father took out salami, olives, bread, everything.”

“During the war, they knocked on our door asking for food. After the war everyone flew to different places: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Australia. My husband was a prisoner of war. After the war, my husband’s father died at the age of 50. My father-in-law died of a broken heart. They went bankrupt. People in the village didn’t have the money to pay for anything. My husband was Sicilian. When my husband returned to his village after the war, his mother and sisters cried on his shoulder – they were so hungry. He was a carpenter.”

“I’m Margherita (Rita) Solarino born 1920 May 12 in Sant’Onofrio in Calabria. Questa e la mia storia. “Ti viu bella…(you look well)”. In life we confront many things. Do the sign of the cross and let La Madonna Divine Mother guide you…”Capisci?” (understand).

Rita made another pot of espresso coffee. She opened the fridge and took out several chocolate almond biscotti and placed them on the kitchen table. While we dipped our biscotti into the boiling coffee, she continued to share a story about perseverance which she often told her kids and grand kids.

**Divine Mother Di Polsi**

“Another story and this happened in 1771 is about a Duke and Duchess who were married for sometime and couldn’t have children. The wife turned to the Divine Mother Di Polsi and asked her: “Divine Mother, grant me this grace to have a child. This is my husband’s greatest wish – to have a child. If You grant me this wish, I will give You as much gold as the child weighs. In time, her wish was granted and the duchess conceived a child. The duke and duchess didn’t forget their promise to the Divine Mother Di Polsi. After three days they brought the new born child and gold to the Divine Mother. On their way, the duchess noticed the child dead, in her arms. They were devastated. They purchased a tiny casket, and placed their child in it. The duke wanted to return home. However, the duchess firmly insisted to continue with the journey to see the Divine Mother. When they arrived they found the church of Divine Mother of Di Polsi
(Franciscan convent in Astramonte Calabria) located on top of a mountain over-­looking the sea. The priest opened the church and decided to celebrate a mass in honour of the deceased child. They opened the casket and placed it on the alter. While celebrating the mass, the child, all of a sudden woke up, and let out an enormous cry. He was dead and then returned to life. You could imagine the joy the duke and duchess had. The Divine Mother Di Polsi had granted them their WISH. Thus, they left all their gold to the Divine Mother. They left behind their child’s little casket and returned home. If you visit there today, this little casket is still in place. NEVER GIVE UP! PACE E AMORE A TUTTI!!! PEACE AND LOVE TO EVERYONE!”

Figure 20: Rita Solarino
CHAPTER FIVE

Passing On the Village

Figure 21: Paese

“In the end, all that matters is your story. This is all that will remain in this world” (Calabrian Old Folks). “To hope is to create a communicative space in which dislocation and marginality, suspicion and fear can be transcended through open dialogue” (Feuerverger 2001, p. 188).

I’m an Italian-Canadian woman who lives with her ancestors. They are with me everywhere I go. I’m an Italian-Canadian woman who has heard stories in my mother’s womb and forever after, since the day I was born. I’m an Italian-Canadian woman who has lived a dual life, attentive to the whispers and chants of those who lived before me in the village, and in touch with the urban story in Toronto. I’m an Italian-Canadian woman with her ear to the ground but playing her own drum. With each sound and vibration comes an awakening and a call to the emergence of the Calabrian Story.

I’m an Italian-Canadian woman who lives in Toronto, but continues to hear voices across the Atlantic Ocean calling, telling… “we have lived before you…” My grandmothers are still with me. Their stories have never died. Their spirit and their tales continue to linger wherever I am. They are with me when the sun rises and remain as the
sun sets. They are with me in the moonlight. Their stories twinkle through the stars – their spirits sparkle through the night.

I’m an Italian-Canadian woman who stood underneath the olive trees and heard the whispers and chants of her grandmothers: “We’re still here; we are with you. We have passed-on and engraved our stories…. “Press On!” “As a woman and a midwife in the village, I couldn’t give up. Too many lives were at stake. They needed my wisdom, my knowing for survival.”

“Carry on with courage!” Life is full of trials and tribulations. When the days are dark and the nights never end, turn your face to the sky and release a big sigh. You’re not alone in this life. Know that you are guided, protected. When you find yourself in a place where you don’t know what to do or where to go, stay still. In the silence you’ll know the truth and instruction from the depth of your heart will come.”

The rooster continues to crow: “Dear one always follow your heart. If you don’t like this cup, choose another. Don’t ever settle for what you don’t want. When everyone or everything is against you, stand firm and choose what you deeply desire. Before you try to make anyone happy, look to yourself and fill your cup with joy and happiness first. You’ll regret it, if you don’t. At all cost, choose the cup that agrees with you. Don’t follow the counsel of the ‘know it alls’. Nobody knows, but yourself, what only you desire. So continue your journey, ‘bella’ with your own cup and your own heart.”

I’m an Italian Canadian woman who walks in faith: “believe in the Divine Mother. She will hold you and uplift you. She is everything….”

“When the old man died his body and belongings disappeared. What was left of him, was his story” (Wolkenstein, 1989, p. 34). “After many misfortunes, what will keep you sane in this life, is your own key. You must have your own key to make it in this battlefield and find your way home.”

“Tick, tock, no time for talk. “Don’t take no shit!” “Never lose hope!” “Break free! Break free!” “Your gift is inside you…."

I’m an Italian Canadian woman with her own beat, drumming to the chants of her grandmothers. Their spirits and stories are with me forever. They are in my attic; they
are in my basement. A village of spirits live with me always – calling, murmuring, telling….I’m an Italian Canadian woman…. 
CHAPTER SIX

Awakening

Our ancestors never leave us. Their spirits linger. We are made-up of all that was and is. Our ancestors never leave us. When you hurt, they hurt. When you’re content, they are too. Your life is lived with your ancestors. Through the sun, the moon and the falling rain, they speak. Through the still night, they whisper…they come to reveal “the truth”. They speak. Be still – listen. Bodies decay, voices remain, we are a link to this endless chain.

I am an Italian Canadian woman who resides with her ancestors – awakening. Like Briar Rose, I have been asleep for a hundred years. After a long dormancy, I awake in my tower without the prince and a “happily ever after” conclusion. In the midst of four brick walls, I awake to the mystery and reality of my own existence and adhere to the drumming of my own heartbeat. It’s been with me forever; it must know where it’s going. I trust it. I’m awake now, and I realize that I just can’t remain still. I need to do something. I yearn to awaken everything around me – the world is waiting….

Ann Cornelisan (1976) who researched Calabrian communities for over twenty years, observed Calabrian women as “Women of the Shadows”. “These women are silent survivors who are not seen” (p.22). Thus, writing this thesis has been significant, for this reason mainly. All participants have revealed their innovative ways as “silent survivors” both in Calabria and in Canada. This way of being has been passed on and continues to be a generational landmark. Gabaccia and Iacovetta (2002) have also noted the following: “We remain fully aware that women radicals constituted a small minority of Italian women around the world, but take delight nonetheless in highlighting the many defiant peasants, workers, and seasoned radicals our contributors discovered” (p. 2).

This significance of writing this thesis continues with the urgency of giving voice to Calabrian women, as these “silent survivors” have altered my existence with the transcendence of their knowledge:

Nonna Marianna

Ciao, I’m Nonna Marianna. I’m the midwife in this village. Everything I know, I learned from my mother. Many babied I delivered with these
hands. Many nights I stayed awake. There is a village doctor. He bothers me. He no nice to me. So, he went to university and I didn’t. But I was the one who saved that woman’s life.

**Nonna Betta**

Hello, I’m a Nonna Betta. It’s a miracle, I woke up this morning. In life you don’t know. Did I expect my first husband to die, after four months we were married? This is why you have to have lots of couraggio in life. What are you going to do? Couraggio…

**Nonna Caterina**

Salute! I’m Nonna Caterina. I drink my wine everyday. Stella e Maria drink too. I didn’t marry for love. Everyone in the village told me: “Oh, he’s a saint. He even has a little bit of property! The man I really wanted to marry, he didn’t have two coins to rub together. He was even born out of wedlock. I had many fights with my mother. She even pulled me by the hair. So, I didn’t marry for love. Look where it got me? Cara, follow your heart!!!

**Mother**

I’m Domenica. I don’t know how to read or write. I live with this Baroness. I cook, clean and take her kids to school. She too much! I feel alone sometime and I cry. Thanks God I have my faith. I turn to la Madonna di Montserrat. She helped me all the time.

**Annunziata Maria**

La Traviata! La Traviata! Me Annunziata. Life is like la traviata. Sometimes it’s good. Sometimes it’s bad. I work hard as a cook. But I have my own key. You want to be happy, find your own key. Traviata! Che Traviata!!!

**Mara Franco**

Cheers to everyone! I’m Mara Franco. I work down on Spadina (piece work). I work very hard, but I take no shit! I fight with my boss all the
time. I tell him where to go. One day, he call me: “Mara how would you like to be supervisor?” I laugh….This is what I get for taking no shit!

Maria Rosa

Ciao, I’m Maria Rosa. Speranza! Hope! My husband died in the war. I have three kids. Everything is on my shoulder! Without speranza, I’m finished.

Nunzia Ruffo

Hello, me Nunzia. You have a headache or something no good in your life? I’m sure someone gave you the evil eye. Go to Comare Tina. She know how to remove them.

Vittoria

Hello I’m Vittoria. I worked all day picking olives. Now, I wash up, take my guitar and sing. They ask me, Vittoria where did you learn to sing and play guitar? Myself. I was born like this. Everybody is born with something!

Rita Solarino

Here, take a biscotto. I’m Rita Solarino. Ah fighia! Daughter! La vita e una battaglia! Life is a battle! Never Give Up! Never! Here, have another biscotto!!!

I am an Italian Canadian woman with Calabrian roots. My mother never went to school and neither did all the women who lived before me. For this reason, this thesis has become extremely significant to write. I’m the first woman in my family to attend university. “The pen is mightier than the sword.” And I have lived to write about it. They are no longer “unseen survivors” or “woman of the shadows”. Since the writing of this thesis, they have become “woman of the light”.

Awakening the Calabrian story has been a process. As these stories were imbedded in the womb, the gestation and birth occurred in its own time. It was time to include and give Calabrian women a sense of place and acceptance. Hence, Helen
Barolini in “An Anthology of Writings by Italian American Women” discovered the following: “Italian immigration to this country was predominantly by people who were not wanted or valued in their land of origin, then found they were not wanted here when they aspired to more than their exploitation as raw labour. Some of this still sticks in the Italian Canadian psyche regardless of material success. But, by and large, the women have a commonality. They are women who, with rare exceptions, had never been authorized to be authors – externally nor internally”(p. 4). Researching this thesis has reinforced this reality.

Self-denial was the psychological preparation among peasants for survival in regions of Calabria where “la miseria” was the norm of life and there was no chance of a better one. Therefore, one denied oneself aspirations and one’s children education because both were futile. When the poor did leave Calabria to better themselves in this country, they brought their ways intact, including the old “miseria” mentality (Barolini, 5). Writing this thesis has encouraged me to reclaim my true self and take my rightful place in this world. This thesis has constructed a stage and a place to heed my inner voice. Only the person who is fully awake can wake the world. Waking demands a struggle. We are taught to blend in with the tradition of our elders and our ancestors, and not to change “the system”. There is pressure to develop a false self that will fulfill the expectations of society, a pressure that would lull us to sleep. But there is another part of us that demands that we stand for being true to our essence, to love fully and without reservation, and to overcome the demons that would overpower the authentic self. If women persevere on their journeys, despite the fear, heartache, and cultural backlash, the stories promise an immeasurable reward – women awaken to the true self and in the process they wake up the world. Every experience changes us in small ways and large.

I’ve grown by writing this thesis, and what I learned from writing it has become a part of the necessary journey this thesis describes. As Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta (2002) observe: “family, work, and struggle were important sites in the formation of Italian immigrant women’s complex and transnational identities. Furthermore, identity formation does not occur in a vacuum, but is the product of complex negotiations, including between how ‘outsiders’ saw or wished to shape the Italian women they observed or addressed, and how the women, the ‘insiders’, saw themselves. Italian
immigrant women developed their identities in contexts that both appealed to their maternal qualities and imposed certain obligations or constraints on how they were expected to behave (349).

Cutting through generations of educational repression, has made the research and writing of this thesis more prominent. Being the first Calabrian Canadian woman in my family history to attend and graduate from university, has altered forever and expanded borders, boundaries and ways of being.

Epp, Iacovetta and Swyripa (2004) in “Sisters or Strangers” have concluded the following: “Immigrants, in particular, carve out their Canadian experience with ongoing mindfulness of their lives in another country and continent. Canadian historians of immigration have been reluctant to fully address the pre-immigration lives of immigrants as formative of who they are and how they negotiate their lives in Canada. And even more so, how relationships with a ‘homeland’ and a past lived elsewhere influence individuals, families and communities well into post-migration generations. One’s woman’s experience of becoming ‘Canadian’ might be very different from another’s, and as such, questions of difference are so important to understanding immigrant women’s lives as are questions of commonality” (p.6).

I often ask myself the question: “What happened to me, that I didn’t fulfill a life like my older sister and cousins who all married, had children and “live happily ever after” in boundaries of un-contemplation? What happened to me, that the “fire in my belly” sought the story and not the haven? What happened to me, that my ancestors wouldn’t let me be? And what happened to me, has set me, my ancestors and humanity free. I live with my ancestors, who will always be a part of me, but I have extended the borders to be me. An awakening has happened. And the immigration continues….

“Like birds, words are winged. Moreover, they are ancestral spirits, awakening memory. They can also be compared to Angels, messengers of the Divine Mother” (Daly, 1987, p.xvii).
Figure 22: Walking through stories

And as Grace Feuerverger revealed in Teaching, Learning and Other Miracles (2007, p.151):

“At the end, it will always be about love!”
“This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man”
References


The following folktales have been passed on from my mother, grandmothers and Calabrian women who have Emigrated from Southern Italy. These tales which were told to me have been translated from the Calabrian dialect into the English Language. Like folktales from all over the world, these gems which have been passed on to me by word of mouth contain woven threads of the wise old villager.

**The Talking Doll (A Pupa Chi Parra)**

There once was a husband and wife; they were merchants and had one daughter. This daughter, one day, went into the store, picked-up a piece of fine cloth, and made a doll. She prayed so much that the doll began to walk. Again she prayed and prayed so much to God that the doll even began to talk. She kept her in her house. And every time this girl arrived at home, she would take the doll for a walk. One day while the girl was teaching this doll, her father called for her quickly. The girl left to help her father and left the doll alone. In the meantime, the doll saw the chest open and by putting one foot forward, she walked to the street.

As soon as the people saw her, they took the doll to the king because this was extraordinary: a doll that walks, talk – if you think about it – it’s not easy to find – and the king believed very much this gift (ludunu). But the merchant’s daughter, when she returned home from her chore and saw that her doll was not there, she began to cry and was so distressed. Her father, seeing his daughter all depressed, he said: “Figghia (my daughter) don’t cry because you will make another doll more beautiful – don’t cry like this!” But she replied: “Father my doll spoke!” “Give me your blessing, because I want to search the world until I find my doll. Worried, her father tried to convince her otherwise and comfort her. But they were words in the wind; she had her mind set. Anyhow, he gave her his blessing, kissed her with tears in his eyes and saw her leave alone on her journey into the world.

Walking and walking she arrived to a city and everywhere she went she asked: “Good Christian, have you seen a walking doll? “Yes, yes”, said one man, the king has it! Quickly she went to the king and said: “May you give me my doll that they have
given to you?" “Figghia (my daughter)” said the king, “I have a crazy son. If you are able to make him well again, I will return this talking doll to you.” This isn’t good for me thought the young girl. But for the love of her doll, she found courage to continue walking in search of a remedy. She walked and walked until she found a door. She thought, should I knock or shouldn’t I knock? And she decided to knock. Out came an old lady and this young girl said: “Nanna, o nanna (grandmother) do you recognize me for I am your granddaughter?” The old lady replied: “Yes, yes, I recognize you; stay there.” But the old lady thought in her mind: “Stay here dear granddaughter because will fatten you up and eat you. She was (la draga) the witch.

The girl noticing that the old woman had a wicked look on her face, she said: “You always brew here, grandma: and don’t you every rest? “Ah figghia! (ah, daughter!) said the old lady: “I have to always brew, because I want to make the king’s son crazy, and day and night I’m living this life.” The girl replied: “And don’t you ever sleep?” “Rest awhile for I will help you.” “Well here then,” responded (la draga). “Return to this place. But for this to work well, don’t do otherwise or else the king’s son will get better.”

When the witch was asleep the girl took all her things and ran and ran to the king to tell him that she has healed her son and for him to return her doll. The king, all sorrowful, told the girl that he could not give her the doll because his brother had it; and he will write a letter for him to return the doll. The king wrote the letter and gave it to the merchant’s daughter and said: “Here’s the letter; take it to my brother.” In this letter, the king wrote asking his brother to return the doll to her because of her virtuousness. He also wrote that this girl had great virtues and she was good to help him find his son, who was taken away and robbed by (li fati) witches.

The merchant’s daughter, with the letter in hand, began to walk to the king’s brother’s palace. She walked and walked until she arrived and saw the king’s brother. Quickly she gave him the letter. The king’s brother read the letter and said: “Beautiful little girl, your doll is there underneath the bed. But if you want it, you must first find my son which have lost. I will give you eight days. Hope that it goes well or else you will end-up in the dungeon beneath the palace. She gained some courage by saying to herself:
“You need patience!” And she departed. She searched and searched and when the eight days were up, she didn’t find the prince. She returned all discouraged to the king’s brother telling him that she didn’t have much fortune finding his son. The king’s brother all angry and distressed regarding had her locked away in the palace dungeon with a little bit of light coming from the tiny window.

This girl cried about her problems, her bad luck and destiny. She thought about how she saved the king’s son from his madness how she wanted was her doll back – the doll she made with her own hands, and how she ended-up in a dungeon with hardly any light and air. World of assassins! She thought with bitterness. As she was pondering, she heard a lullaby; she became more attentive and holding her breath she heard rocking and a bit of noise. They were singing this song:

“O son of the king,
Because you were so handsome,
We took you away,
And now we rock you:
Ninna-nanna, ninna-nanna!
Passes the bird and drops his bread crumbs,
And our little boy falls asleep.”

“Sleep, sleep, sleep some more because in a little while we will come!” The girl listening to these words told the king’s brother that she was capable of finding his son and would need a bone. The king’s brother sent her a bone, but also warned her that if she would find his son, she would be released from the dungeon and compensated in a way that she would be content.

When the girl heard this message, she regained strength and with the bone she began to dig the ground. Digging and digging she cultivated a deep hole and when anybody was looking, she climbed down. She found herself in a room. She saw a baby-rocker and in it the king’s brother’s son. She informed him that his father couldn’t rest nor find peace for his loss. She also told him that she had arrived just in time to liberate him. The king’s brother’s son responded: “If my father wants me back with him and he truly wants to liberate me, he must give orders to kill all the roosters. This is the only way I can escape this prison and be liberated from these witches (fati).”
“Fine! ” she said. “Don’t worry, I will take care of matters and soon you will be out of here.” As soon as the king’s brother heard of the girl’s request in order to liberate his son, he couldn’t contain himself, he was so happy. The merchant’s daughter was liberated from the dungeon and all the roosters in the kingdom were killed. This order was delivered and the king’s brother’s son was released from the clutches and spell of the witches (fati) and returned home.

When the merchant’s daughter saw him coming, she approached the king and said: “Now that your son has returned, you must give me back my little doll!” The king’s brother replied: “Not only will I give you back your doll, but I will give you something more dear to your heart. Because of your noble virtue, I will give you my son to be your beloved husband. Soon I’d like you to marry because I’m becoming an old man and my days are numbered here on earth.”

The girl was all content of his proposal. They made preparations for their wedding. The girl also wrote to her mother and father telling them that she found her doll and also her beloved – the king’s brother’s son. When her parents received this letter, their hearts were consoled and they sent her many blessings and were somewhat sad because she was far away and they wouldn’t make it in time for her matrimony.

After a few days, the young couple married with much merriment and celebration. The king’s brother wanted a massive celebration for the liberation and matrimony of his only son.

“They celebrated with sleep and song,
And we were left with vacant hands.”

“Storytelling is a meaning-making process.” (David Booth 1994, p.96)

The Merchant and his Daughter (U Mercante e La Figgia)

There once was a mother and a father who had a daughter named Maria Stilla. The mother had a tooth of gold and so did her daughter. The mother fell ill and was dying; she called her daughter and said: “‘Figghia (my daughter) for your future, I will tell you this. If you find someone with a tooth of gold like yourself, get married; but, if your father wants you to get married, go tell the confessor.” The mother died and the
father, who was a merchant, after sometime called his daughter and he said to her:
“Figghia mia (my daughter) get married!” She responded: “I will get married when I
find someone with a tooth of gold.” The father went searching into the world and
couldn’t find such a person. He returned to the village and he said: “Figghia (my
daughter), you have to get married!” “Wait, because I have to go to the confessor at the
church to tell him.” The confessor said to her: “Figghia (daughter), tell your father to
find you a dress like the sky. This would be impossible to find, and you won’t get
married.” She arrived at the house and her father asked her what the confessor said to
her. “The confessor told me to tell you to find me a dress just like the sky.”

The father searched the entire world and couldn’t find it. In his desperation
went to the devils and told him everything. But the devil wanted first, three drops of his
blood. The father then brought the outfit to the daughter and she said: “Hold-on because
I have to go to the church to tell the confessor.” She went to the confessor and told him
that her father brought this dress, and wondered who gave it to him.” “Figghia
(daughter), said the confessor, he speaks with the devil! Tell him to buy you two more
dresses, one resembling the earth, and one like the ocean and all the world. She went
home to tell her father. Again, her father went to the devil and asked him for the dresses.
He gave it to him but, he wanted six drops of his blood, this time. He brought the
dresses to his daughter. She then said: “Hold on father because I have to go and tell the
confessor.” The confessor said to her: “Figghia (daughter), look it, your father is
speaking with the devil.

“Let him be! Buy yourself (peddi di crapettu) several pieces of goat feet, gather
the belongings your mother left you, the three dresses your father gave you, and go on
your way into the world.

And she departed all alone, and nowhere to go. She passed by the king’s palace.
A servant came down and asked her if she wanted to be a servant for the king and
inquired as to what can she do. She told her that she knew how to do a bit of this with a
bit of that with chickens and rabbits (sulu canigghia pe gaddini). The servant asked her
for her name. She replied: “Betta Pilusa. What and ugly name! Basta! (That’s enough)
Not knowing how to do too much, they put her to work in the chicken coop. Three days
before carnival, the king called for her and said: “Betta Pilusa, for these few days of
celebration, go away from here because my girlfriend will be arriving and I don’t want her to see you because we are going to have fun.” Betta Pilusa replied: “Why don’t you let me stay and have a good time with you also? I would like to see your girlfriend.”

The king made arrangements for her to go away and to return after six days. The first day of the carnival, Betta got all dressed-up with one of the most beautiful, most magnificent dresses, and in the evening she went to where the king was. The king, when he saw how elegant and beautiful she looked, he fell in love with her instantly. He left his girlfriend and he began dancing with Betta. At the end, the king removed his chain of gold from his neck and gave it to her. Then he released all the prisoners to keep guard and keep watch as to where this beautiful girl was going. As soon as she climbed down from the palace, all the prisoners followed her trail and chased after her carriage. This girl noticing all these followers, begged them to leave her alone and threw money at them. Several followers were relentless. But, after awhile, they grew weary and left her alone.

The following evening, Betta Pilusa put-on another dress more glamorous than the night before and went to the palace. The king, when he set eyes on her, left his girlfriend and began dancing with Betta Pilusa. They finished their dance and he gave her his gold watch. She was on her way home and the prisoners, who were keeping guard for the king, followed her path again. But from her carriage she threw money at the prisoners to distract them. And again they let her be and returned to the palace scornful. The king told the prisoners that tomorrow was the last festive evening and if they didn’t find-out where this mysterious woman lived, he would have their heads chopped-off.

The third evening, Betta Pilusa arrived wearing the third magnificent dress. The king, ignored his girlfriend and danced with Betta Pilusa all night long. At the end of the dance, the king removed his ring and gave it to her. She departed as before and the prisoners followed her but she threw buckets of money at them from the carriage distracting them from seeing where she was going. The king who was so depressed, fell ill. He was missing the beautiful, elegant woman, whom he had met. He asked his servants to make (lu pane di Spagna) Spanish loaf of bread. In the morning, Betta Pilusa, when she arrived, asked the maids: “May you give me a little bit of dough so I could
make a small loaf of bread?” With this dough, she went-on to make a small loaf of bread. Inside this loaf, she placed the gold chain, the gold watch and the ring. Every gift the king had given her. Then she went to the kitchen and asked the cooks to bake this loaf. When all the bread was cooked, all the Spanish loafs for the king was burnt. But Betta Pilusa’s loaf of bread was just right. Well then the servants asked Betta: “Betta Pilusa will you do us a little favour and give your bread to the king because the bread we made is all burnt. Betta gave them her loaf to give to the king and returned to tend the chicken coop.

She put-on all three dresses; one over the other. Then they went to give the bread to the king. As he began slicing it, he noticed his gold chain, his gold watch and his ring. All excited, he called his servants. They were afraid the king would scold them. They thought he found a hair or something undesirable, in his bread. So the servants mustered-up courage to approach the king. He then asked: “Who made this loaf of bread?” They all responded: “Betta Pilusa!” The king ordered to see her at once. Wearing all three dresses, she went to see the king and told him her story. She told him her real name was Maria Stilla and she had a gold tooth. The king revealed that he too had a gold tooth and was searching for the same.

Now that I found her, I will marry her,” declared the king. They arranged a matrimony and a grand wedding. And this is how Maria Stilla became queen:

“She remained content and joyful,
and we were left with nothing in hand.”

“The old tales are Truth, dressed in Story. They demonstrate, in an enjoyable and non-didactic way, what is acceptable to society and valued by it.” (Norma J. Livo: Bringing Out Their Best: Values Education and Character Development Through Traditional Tales (Appleseed Quarterly, Winter 2004)

**The Bread and the Fish (Lu Pane e La Pisci)**

There once was a mother and a daughter who were poor and would beg. One morning, this mother went begging and found a tiny piece of bread and a fish. She went home and said to her daughter: “Here (figghia mia) my daughter take this bread and this fish. Save it here until I return; if I find more, we will eat it. For things to go well, do not give it to anyone!”
After she left, the daughter went to see the old man’s daughter, who was Saint Joseph and he said: “Would you do something charitable (carita) for me because I’m famished?” “We too are looking for a charity (carita). My mother found this morning only a tiny piece of bread and a fish.” The old man said: “I will be happy even with half, as long as you give me a little something!” “My mother, when she arrives will kill me, if I give this to you!” Thus, the old man convinced the girl to give him the tiny piece of bread and fish.

Later on, the mother arrived home all concerned because she couldn’t find anything and said: “(Figghicedda) little daughter go and get the bread and the fish and we will eat them God Willing.” “Mamma”, said the daughter, Mamma, I gave it to an old man who was dying of starvation and because he persisted and wouldn’t let me be. Her mother picked up a rod, which she used for cleaning, and like a mad dog, began beating and cursing her daughter: “Curse (smalidittu) the bread and the fish!

Curse the bread and the fish!…I found it and others have it to eat it. What a curse (smalidittu) this bread and fish.” After she beat her up, she still wasn’t satisfied and threw her out of the house without remorse. “Get out of my house. Go away from her and find your own bread!”

This poor child went on her crying and all alone into the world. She didn’t know where to go. She walked and walked until she arrived to a forest and saw many roses. “Ah, how beautiful they are!” She had a few buttons (guttuni) with her. So she began to pullout these roses and she made herself a crown, a necklace and a bracelet from these buttons and roses. She placed the crown on her head, the necklace around her neck and the bracelet around her hand. Then she felt tired and fell asleep underneath an oak tree. This day, the king’s son went hunting into the forest and saw this girl sleeping. He stared at her. As she slept, all the roses around her turned into gold and while she slept, she also became more beautiful than the radiant sun.

The prince fell in love with her instantly. He woke her up and said: “I’d like you to be my bride?” “Can’t you see I’m poor. How can I be with you, if you are the prince?” “Don’t worry about it, if this is the reason. I want you and you must be my bride.” The girl agreed and the prince took her to his royal palace.
After a while, when all was ready for the wedding, they got married. After three days, they prepared a dinner for all the poor. All the poor people attended even her mother. After they ate, the princess introduced her husband: “this is my mother!” They called her forward and the princess said: “You are my mother!” and she threw herself onto her and kissed her. The mother, who was a mean-spirited woman responded: “Curse (smalidittu) that bread and fish!” And she repeated it over about ten times. The prince, couldn’t take her insults anymore. So he called four soldiers and made her pay for everything she did. He ordered to have her head chopped off at the center of the piazza. There they buried her. In time, where she lay lifeless, grew a sleeping willow. With every wind that blew by, the leaves would fall and the tree would say: “Curse the bread and the fish! Not even death will put me to rest!”

“If you really read the fairytales, you will observe that one idea runs from one end of them to the other: the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition, an idea which is the core of ethic, the core of the folktale.” (G.K. Chesterton (16) “Stories in the Classroom” p.69).

The Miracle from St. Joseph

There once was a mother with two children: one boy and one girl whom she loved. This mother died and the children remained with their father. After a year, the father re-married their aunt. In good time, this aunt gave birth to very ugly daughter. But, this aunt couldn’t stand the sight of these kids, especially because the girl and boy were good-looking and her daughter was ugly as is the dark. She always was in war with her poor husband telling him to kill these beautiful children. Soon the father, to satisfy his wife’s wishes, took these disgraced kids into the deep forest and chopped-off their arms and returned home to show his wife. He didn’t have courage to kill them. So he left them in the forest all alone and returned home to his wife who was thrilled to see the children’s bloody arms.

In the meantime, the two children, who were now armless and abandoned in the forest cried in desperation. They didn’t know what to do. All of a sudden, Saint Joseph appeared: “Why are you crying children?” He asked compassionately. They told him their story, of this and that. Then the old man said: ‘My dear children! Don’t worry and don’t be afraid of me. Come with me!’
He took them down a path where he showed them a water fountain: “Wash yourselves!” He said. The children washed did as the old man instructed. As they washed their hands in this fountain, they grew back newer, and healthier than before. Still not satisfied with His blessing, Saint Joseph cultivated a beautiful palace furnished with all their wishes, and so the old saint assisted them. One day St. Joseph said to the boy: “What would you like to become?” “I ,” responded the boy, “would like to be a shepherd to watch over my sister.” And St. Joseph made him turn into a shepherd and the girl he made her more beautiful than before.

One day it was raining and the king went out hunting. He didn’t know where to find shelter, however, he saw a beautiful palace and so he asked for permission. Down came St. Joseph. He opened the door and invited him in. Staring at this girl who looked more radiant than the sun, instantly fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. St. Joseph agreed to this matrimony because he was a good partner. The king returned home. He gathered his clothes, took out the carriage, and made invitations. The shepherd, spoke with the king and with St. Joseph.

Making all the preparations, the king took them to his royal palace, which was in the same village she once lived. They sent invitations to everyone in the kingdom both rich and poor open to whoever wanted to attend. The shepherd wanted to be transformed into a handsome young man, as he once was. And St. Joseph made him happy. St. Joseph held a grand wedding celebration and gave the couple His blessings. He then completed his miracle and vanished.

In the midst of the crowd, there was also the father and step-mother of these two children. The children recognized them instantly and without hesitation, told everyone present about how they were abandoned in a forest without arms and left to die. All the well-read people studied and investigated all the facts regarding this case and agreed to a death penalty. For three days and three nights they were tortured with fire and then they were slowly lured into the pit of the fire and burnt to death. Their parents paid a price for their brutality – thrown and burnt into the ardent flames. The couple instead, “they remained happy and content, and we were left with nothing instead.”

“To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in the private heart is true for all men – that is genius.” (Jack MacGuire 1998, p. 20).
The Turkey (La Nia)

There once was a king and a queen. This queen, in a short time, died. Her son lived-on and remained orphaned together with his sister who was a little older. The poor father was so heart-broken that he cried all the time. He survived another year and then he too died. He had a brother and before he died, he recommended him to look after his children. The uncle promised him the world. But as soon as the king died, he thought about taking the crown for himself to reign the kingdom. He was a tyrant of a king and everyone cried out. He then placed his orphaned nephew and niece at the bottom, in the dungeon (quartinu) and when the boy turned ten years old, his uncle let him out and sent him to guard the workers in the fields. Living this kind of life everyday, this young boy grew. He was about 17 years old, and unaware that he and his sister were children of a past king. They didn’t even know that the present king was their uncle, and they thought that he kept them in the dungeon (quartinu) as a kind gesture.

However, with the arrival of Christmas Eve, a good old woman, who knew the circumstances thought: “Tomorrow is the Night Before Christmas, and those poor kids are abandoned. If their father was alive, good soul, they would have had all the food and entertainment. The old king did many great things and I have many fond memories. I live with my turkeys (nii) and with my ducks and I too would like to have a Merry Christmas. I will now get one of my (nia) and give it to these children because they deserve to have a Christmas too…But how can I give it to them?

From the front door I certainly can’t enter because there is a guard and he won’t let me pass. Well then, I will call her from the bottom window. In fact, the morning of Christmas Eve, the old woman woke up, picks-up the fattest turkey (nia) and from the window begins to call: “Young lady, young lady! Today is Christmas Eve and I would like to give you this turkey (nia). Eat it with your brother with all my love! The young lady said: “Thank you, thank you, good woman: and I, what can I give you? I have absolutely nothing to give you!” And she didn’t want to take it, saying she didn’t have anything to cook it in. But the good old woman begged her to take it.

In the morning, her brother, because it was a holiday didn’t have to work today in the fields and was working on the bookkeeping for the king. In the meantime the sister took this turkey (nia) and placed her in a dark room so no one can see her. Then she
returned to her room. The turkey (La nia) left all alone began to dig and dig and dig until she arrived at a cavern (catarrattu) with a staircase. At dusk, her brother arrived as usual and food was passed down to them. As they were at the table eating, the sister said: “My brother, don’t you know? This morning an old woman gave me a turkey (nia) with all her heart.” “And where did you put it?” asked her brother. “I placed her in that extra room in the dark; later on I’d like to dead or alive because I only had a bit of food to give her.” After they ate, the brother felt tired and went to sleep. The sister went to check-up on the turkey (nia) in the dark room. She enters and sees a deep hole leading to a stairwell: “This wasn’t dug-up; maybe it was the turkey (nia) who dug it up. She got closer and as she saw the stairwell said: “I will climb down!” And she climbed down. She climbed down and saw a king’s uniform with a helmet, sword, and belt (corazza). The crown was the only thing missing. When the young lady saw these things she couldn’t stop questioning: “And who do these things belong to? Whoever they belong to, they belong to, but I will take them.” And she brought them into her room.

It was already night time and dark. In the morning, when she woke up, her brother still had book keeping to complete for he was always precise in his calculations and he wanted to take them to the king. The sister instead, after she tidied up the house, she took out the things she had found. While she was looking at them, her brother walked in. As she arrived he said: “Who gave you these things?” “Don’t you know? The turkey (nia), whom I told you about, dug a deep hole and there was a stairwell leading to a cavern. I climbed down and saw all these things.” “But these things belong to a king!” said the brother. “Oh brother, put this uniform on to see how it look on you. Put it on! Put it on!” The young man, however, began to put it on and his sister was helping him with the helmet and sword on the side.

Since it was Christmas Eve, at 12 noon the musicians sang for the king from the balcony of the palace. Listening to the band and to get a better view, the sister opened the door and the crowd seeing this young man all dressed up as a king began to shout: “This is our king! This is our king! Hearing these loud voices, the palace guards began to stand on guard. The voices got louder and the entire court began to scream: “What is going on? What is going on? People from all over were arriving and they too began to shout: “Evviva!” The voices grew and grew and it seemed like a babilonia. The king
also heard and went down to speak with the people. But the crowd who despised this king for he was a tyrant, wanted an end to him and began to punch and throw stones at him until they killed him. They did so much to him until he finally died like he deserved. They took the crown and placed it on the young man and held a feast with fireworks.

He became king and began to govern with justice and everyone was content and they liked this new king. Every Friday the king served all the poor at the palace. Poor people from all over would arrive, and the king promised to serve them. One Friday when the king was almost done donating, an old woman approached him with a young woman of about 12 years old. “With a mournful voice she said: “Your majesty, can you donate to a poor old woman because God will bless you. The king was staring at this young woman who was very beautiful and said: “Good woman come here every Friday. And distance yourself from everyone else, so I can see you.”

The two women left blessing him. But the king grew melancholy because it seemed like a 100 years before the arrival of the following Friday, to see the old woman and her daughter. Finally, Friday arrived. One by one the king looked at everyone, until he saw the two women standing further away from the crowd. He called them to him and he gave them more money than the week before and then he said to the young woman: “Remove your clothes because they are ugly. I will have new clothes made just for you. The following Friday, put your new clothes on, and I will give you more money. You have everything to gain. And so, as soon as the young woman returned home, she bought a beautiful cashmere dress, a pair of new shoes and had many clothes made from head to toe just for her.

The following Friday, the two women returned to the palace, and the king gave them more money than usual--for the young woman to buy more clothes. This king, however, was already in love and felt melancholy. His sister became aware that her brother wasn’t as talkative or active, as usual. And one day, as his sister noticed that he grew depressed, asked him: “My brother what is the matter?” The brother responded with a deep sigh: “Oh nothing. I only have a headache.” He didn’t want to reveal his aching heart.

When the following Friday arrived, the young woman wore a linen dress and looked like a rose and the king gave her even more money than the week before. The
king even more in love now, said to her in a quivering voice: “Come earlier next Friday.” Couldn’t resist this passionate feeling, he told his sister about this poor young woman whom he was in love with. “I would like her to be my bride,” he said. “But because she’s so poor, you may not be happy, and this is why I’m so depressed.” This coming Friday I asked her to come earlier so you may take a look at her from the balcony.” His sister who cared for him deeply comforted him and waited for the following Friday to arrive. On Friday, the young woman arrived earlier than everyone else. The king came down with his sister and his sister approved of this young woman and didn’t say a word. All she said was: “Do as you wish.” The brother was so happy with his sister’s response that he gave the young woman 100 dollars to buy whatever food and clothes she wanted and that he would provide for whatever else she wanted. He also asked her not to go begging with the old woman because she was going to be his bride. The king continued: “I will prepare everything for the wedding and in several days we will marry. You could imagine the joy this young woman felt when she heard such discourse. She went home feeling all content and waited for the wedding day. In the meantime, the king was making preparations for the wedding and when everything was ready, they finally got married.

The king said to his sister: “It’s true that I will get married; but you and I will always be the same, and you be the boss.” After the wedding, the king’s wife, went from rags to riches and was becoming a snob. She was jealous that her sister-in-law was the boss and she had all the keys of the place. Gradually, this wife began to convince her husband to go against his sister. She constantly reminded the king, until she convinced him and he asked: “My wife, what would you like me to do for you?” She responded and said: “I want you to take your sister into the forest and kill her. And to be certain that she is dead, I would like to see her hands and shirt covered with blood.” The husband couldn’t say “no” and consented. The following day, the king took away the sister’s keys and accused her falsely. The king ordered for the sister to be lured into the forest and be killed, as his wife consented. At twelve midnight she was taken away by the guards. “What do you want from me?” she asked. “We have orders from your brother,” said the men. With this she, didn’t say another word.
In the forest, the men couldn’t kill her: “This poor young woman has not done anything wrong to us! I will not kill her and neither will I,” agreed the men. “So what will we do because we have to show the king’s wife her hands and shirt?” reflected the men. The men were against doing this. Thus, they asked her to remove her shirt which they covered with blood from a dog and they chopped off her hands leaving her in the forest. Then the two men returned to the palace and said to the king: “we killed your sister and here I have brought you, her shirt and hands.” The king began to cry and called out: “My dear sister you were so happy that I got married and now because of my wife, you had to die!” The king regretted what he did and thinking about all they shared, he cried-out: “My sister! My sister!”

In the meantime the sister was in the forest struggling to survive. It so happened an Englishman, who was all dirty was passing by in his carriage and hearing all this lamenting he approached her. He saw her wounded and asked her who hurt her. She replied: a ferocious animal ate her hands. The old Englishman wrapped her hands to stop the bleeding. Then he picked her up and placed her in his carriage. As they rode off, the man said to her: “I’m an old Englishman and I have a wife without children. You can have a happy life living at my house.” She felt consoled hearing these words and as they continued to speak, they arrived at his house. This dirty man called the doctors and they constructed a pair of hands made out of wax.

This princess was about 20 years old and although she had a lot of pain, she kept herself fresh and beautiful like a rose. One day she was on the balcony and a king from another kingdom was passing by and fell in love with her. The dirty Englishman accepted this king’s proposal to marry this princess, but warned him that she had hands made out of wax.

This didn’t matter to this king and he married her anyway. He took her to his palace and after several months she was expecting a child. Thus, the king was called to war and was away from the palace for awhile. In the meantime, the princess gave birth to two beautiful children: a girl and a boy. The ministers, however, who didn’t appreciate being governed by a woman wrote to the king telling him that his wife gave birth to two dogs.
Then they took this princess and her two children to a deserted shore. The princess was left alone and handless. She cried and cried and all of a sudden, an old man appeared and said to her: “Beautiful young woman, why are you crying?” The princess told him her story. And after this mournful story, this kind, old man, who was St. Joseph, made a bassin of water appear and said: “My good daughter; wash your hands in here!”

As she placed her hands in there, her own hands reappeared again. This kind, old man then brought them on top of a mountain, where there stood a house. As they entered he said: “You may stay here for now. There is nothing else you shall need. I will not abandon you.”

Well the king who returned home from the war was distraught not to see his wife. He asked for her whereabouts, but he was informed that she left by night with her two dogs, which she had given birth. Thus, this king would not rest and he began to search for her throughout the countryside. In the meantime, the brother of this princess regretted deeply for killing his sister, grew a long beard and would never again leave his house. And because his wife was the cause of this injustice, he had her thrown into a dungeon. One day the ministers, they convinced him to leave the house and go for a walk. When they were in the countryside, he walked away from these ministers and lost his way. Walking, walking, he came across a mountain where his sister lived with her two children. And it so happened that even her husband who went from countryside to countryside searching for her found her at this place. All of a sudden, it began to rain and pour. The sky began to open. The two kings, didn’t know where to go for shelter. Out of the blue, the old man came forward and said: “Come with me, good people; I know a house nearby in which you may find shelter.” And he guided them to this house. He opened the door and asked him to climb the stairwell.

Seeing the old man, the princess immediately recognized and trusted him: He said to her: “Because it’s raining, there are two noblemen who need shelter and would like hospitality.” “With pleasure!” she responded who was preparing meals for her children. “However, we too would like to join you,” said the old man. When everything was ready, they all sat at the table and ate. They had almost completed their meal, when the old man turned to the two little children: “My dear children, now I would like you to tell us a beautiful story, so this way your voices will be heard.”
So then, the little girl, who was more witty, began to tell her mother’s story from the moment she was brought into the forest to the time she married. The brother who was listening to this story said to himself: “This sounds like my sister!” When the little girl completed her story, the little boy began and he told the remaining story of when his mother married the king until she encountered the kind, old man who took her on top of the mountain to the house where they were staying. The king, listening to this story said to himself: “Well then, this woman must be my wife! And are these two little children—my kids? But how could they have written that she gave birth to two dogs? Mysterious!” They finished telling their story and went to sit with the old man.

The old man turned to the noblemen and said: “And did you not realize that this is your story, and that the woman you thought was dead and the other lost is present with you right here?” With this story, the two kings, who didn’t resent each other, asked for reconciliation. Then the husband picked up his children and with tears in his eyes, embraced them. At this gathering, St. Joseph was assisting happily: after many trials, He blessed them all. He blessed her brother with the awareness of making an error and reconnected them again. And He blessed her husband with the hope of finding his wife and children.

And as a sign of all the blessings they received from St. Joseph, his rod vanished. After everyone reconnected again with joy and celebration, St. Joseph said: “Now that my part has been done, I will give you My Holy Blessings.” As he spoke, he disappeared also. Everyone was shocked by this experience. Then the brother said to his sister and husband: “Now that our worries are over, let us go together to my house to be reacquainted and closer in this union. They all agreed and began to walk. On the way, the brother asked his sister: “When we arrive, what is it that you would like us to do to my wife who is locked up in the dungeon?” “I forgive her,” replied the sister. But he said: “it will not be an injustice for her to die in this dungeon for all the evil she has done!”

The husband then asked her the question: “What would you like us to do with those who took you to the shore (spiaggia) and abandoned you?” “They deserve to be thrown into a burning fire pit lit up for three days and three nights. And this came to pass for the wicked princess and the ministers. And as for the woman who was saved from
many trials and tribulations, well, she lived contented for the rest of her days with her husband and children and was respected by everyone in the kingdom.

“We all have a basic need for story, for organizing our experiences into tales of important happenings.” (Dyson 1994, p. 2)

**Bad Luck (Mala Furtuna)**

There once was a mother who had three daughters, who couldn’t find anyone to marry them. In desperation, one day, the mother called an old woman and said: “fix-up some kind of spell for matrimony, because my kids have two thousand liri and they also have a hope chest.” The old woman asked the mother to see how her daughters sleep at night and then to let her know. When night arrived, these kids were sleeping and the mother entered their room to see how they slept. And she saw that one slept with her arms crossed; the other with her hands together, as if she was praying, and the youngest with her hands behind her head. The following morning, when the old woman arrived, she told her. Immediately, the old woman responded: “Uh! Is that how your youngest daughter sleeps? And then she’s the one who brought bad luck to her sisters. Give her the two thousand lire and her hope chest and ask her to leave or else she will bring a curse to all the house.” The mother, all sad (dispiaciuta) did what the old woman advised, and her poor daughter was asked to leave and make her way into the world. The old woman, however, didn’t have fault, because two days later the other two sisters found good partners and got married and lived joyful and content. The younger sister, in the meantime, walked with a painful heart, thinking about her bad luck (sventura). She walked and walked, until she came to a forest. She saw a tiny house who where selling wine, and she said to the owner: “May I lodge here for one evening because I’m poor and disgraced?” The owner agreed for he had a good heart and he locked her in the wine cellar. At night, Bad Luck arrived and spoiled all the wine.

In the morning, the winemaker (cantineri) came and saw all the wine on the ground and shouted: “This for me! This for me!” He beat the girl up. The poor girl gave him heroine thousand lire to be set free and left. After a day of walking, it became dark and she found herself at a clothing market. They gave her lodging, as a good will gesture. During the night, Bad Luck arrived and cut all the clothes into pieces. In the morning when the merchant arrived, and saw all this damage, he began hitting this poor
miserable soul. To leave her alone, practically dead, she gave him 500 lire. All beaten and bruised she left and walked and walked to a village and a crystal shop. It was already evening and she asked to be lodged. The owner locked her in the crystal shop and he went home. At some hour, Bad Luck entered and broke all the fine crystal appearing like an earthquake. When the owner arrived and saw all this damage, he picked a rod (vestuni) and hit her everywhere (undi vegnu vegnu du mulinu). To calm him down, she gave him her last five hundred lire and her hope chest. She was left wounded. She thought about her sorrows and began to walk. Walking, walking, walking, she saw a great palace who was inhabited by gay people. Not being able to go on further, she asked them if they needed a servant. The noblemen agreed and the following day, they sent her to the marina with a round loaf of bread (cuddura) and to called out: “Oh my owners fortune! You will see that it will appear angry; but don’t be shocked. Instead you will respond that at the moment you don’t want anything good to happen, because you don’t know what to do with it.”

The servant girl went to the sea e began to call: “Oh fortune of my owner!” Then Fortune came out of the water all angry and said: “What do you want?” Finding courage she said: “My nobleman has sent me to bring you this loaf of bread and to tell you not to send him any good for now because he doesn’t know what to do with it.” And to benefit from this situation the young girl asked: “And what is my Fortune up to?” Fortune relied: “Your fortune is still asleep!” “And what will it take to awaken it?” Tomorrow when you bring me the loaf of bread, bring one also for your Fortune; and don’t forget because it’s for your benefit!” She returned to the palace, she told the owner and then said: “Nobleman, tomorrow, if you don’t mind, give me two loaves.”

The following day, she returned and brought two loaves of bread (cudduri), one of grain (grazzu) and the other of nuts (di n’autru). She arrived by the shore and called: “Oh Fortune of my owner!” She came out and asked: “What do you want?” “I brought you the bread (lu pani). Hang on to it! And this other loaf, if you don’t mind, give it to my Fortune.” And she returned home. In the meantime, the Fortune with the warm bread touched the face of the young girl’s Fortune who awoke and was still half asleep. The young girl’s fortune picked-up the bread and asked the other Fortune to leave. But the other Fortune said: “Aren’t you going to give her anything? Her Fortune went and
opened the chest: Here is some silk. Bring it to her!” The following day, he gave the girl the silk and displeased with such a small gift said: “And what do I want this for? Cause if I had to ask my nobleman for some silk, he would give me bountiful.” “Fine!” responded the Fortune; save it because you may need it one day.”

The servant returned home all disappointed and she gave the silk to the nobleman, to hold-on to it. But he didn’t pay any attention to her. One day the king announced that he was searching for some silk to make a dress for his son’s fiancé and would pay gold for it. Thus, the nobleman sent the servant with his silk and said: “Go because you will get about an ounce of gold, and it’s always better than nothing.” She went and they measured the silk on a scale and it was a good weight. Then the king said: “Stand back and we’ll measure the silk once again.” She stood back and the scale came down and it was the precise weight. The king who was speechless said: “Where do I have all this gold to give you? It’s better if I give you my son as your husband, if you would like?” She responded that she was content and she then married the king’s son. A feast was celebrated with all splendour and they married joyful and content for after all they were two good-looking youngsters.

After sometime, she became pregnant and her husband said to her to make a little girl with a gold apple in her hand and a little boy with a gold star on his forehead. But fortunately, before her time to give birth, her husband was called to war and had to leave. In the meantime, the princess gave birth to a little girl with a gold apple in her hand and a little boy with a gold star on his forehead. But her mother-in-law who was evil and couldn’t stand the princess because she was once a servant and also because she wanted her son to marry a princess with royal blood, spoke with the nanny to tell the princess to give the children to her. When the queen held the children in her arms, this old woman without heart had them put into a box and gave orders to the servants to throw them into the sea.

These children were now floating at sea and a sailor saw them and picked them up. Then, having compassion for these poor innocent, abandoned souls, he took them to his wife and they adopted these gracious kids whom they raised as their own children. Their actual kids feeling resentful because these two found children were given more food than them said to their parents: “Why are these two mules getting better treatment,
and better quality food than your legitimate children?” With these comments, the two adopted children were offended: “You think we are mules? Let’s go!” They got their blessings and journeyed into the world.

Walking, walking on the path, they were confronted by St. Joseph and after their greeting, the good old man gave them a wand (virga) of gold with the power to make wishes come true. Well then, they both commanded and wished for a palace situated in front of the king. And this wish came true. A magnificent palace covered with jewels appeared. The king, however, had returned from the war and wondered about his wife and kids. His mother showed him a pair of kitten’s feet and a pair of puppy’s feet and they told him that his wife had them killed. This king who was waiting for big things, believed his mother and resented his wife. He ordered her to live underneath the staircase and whoever climbed the stairs to spit at her. In the morning, however, the king awoke and saw this splendid palace. His eyes were bothering him so he went to wash his face. Again he went to look at this beautiful palace, and once again his eyes were bothering him. And he said all enamoured: “Uh, what a beautiful palace! How magnificent!” His mother went out to look at this palace and recognized her grandchildren. “This is bad for me! My son will kill me!”

She thought and thought and called an old woman and ordered her to tell her about the talking bird perched on top of a fountain where the witch (draga) lived. When her brother wasn’t home, the old woman went to see the young girl in her magnificent palace and to convince her how her palace would be more complete with this talking bird. When her brother returned home, the sister looked worried. The brother who loved his sister dearly, immediately noticed: “What is the matter my sister? What is the matter….?” “I want the talking bird that is perched on top of the fountain where the witch (draga) lives.” To make his sister happy he replied: “Don’t worry dear sister because I will go and get it for you!” And he went.

On his way, he is confronted by St. Joseph, who asked him: “And where is the king’s son going?” “I’m going to the witch’s (draga’s) place to pick up the talking bird for my sister.” St. Joseph responded: “Beware of the many humans who were turned into marble and who will be luring you. Do not turn around or else you too will turn into marble (marmuru). Then go and pick up the bird from the top of the mountain.”
He walked and walked and finally arrived to the witch’s (draga’s) place. They were making statues: “Handsome young man, come here. But he moved forward without turning around. He went to the fountain, picked up the bird and brought it home. Imagine the joy the sister felt! They placed this bird on the balcony. Their grandmother saw and said: “Uh, they brought the bird!” She called the old woman again to convince the young girl that she was missing ribbons (li coraddi) that danced, and the witch (la draga) had them on top of the cabinet (l’armariu). The old woman put this bug in the girl’s ear (Gold Apple). When the brother arrived he saw his sister frowning. His sister (Gold Apple) told him that she wanted the dancing ribbons (coraddi). Not to make her unhappy, the good brother left and on the path he met St. Joseph. “Where is the king’s son going?” he asked. “I’m going to the (draga’s) because my sister would like the dancing (coraddi).” The old man responded: “And why are you going? Don’t you know that you will put yourself in danger?” “It’s nothing! I don’t care: I have to go because my sister desires this.” “Well then, have a good trip! When you go there, you may not return.” He went. The statues were calling him and he turned around. Instantly, he turned into marble.

The sister was waiting and waiting. When she noticed that the brother didn’t return, she imagined something happened and feeling guilty she went to see what happened. On the path, she saw St. Joseph who immediately asked: “Where is the king’s daughter going?” She replied: “I’m going to find my brother.” And she told him the story. St. Joseph said: “your brother has been turned into marble. But if you go, take this bamboo vase and place the dancing (coraddi) quickly in here.” Then He gave her a tiny piece of bamboo and said: “Figghia mia (my daughter) look for a vase in the cabinet (l’armariu); take it with you. With this tiny piece of bamboo, coil it in this vase for it contains an ointment which brings things to life. I’m warning you, however, that when you go, the statues will call you. To your benefit, don’t turn around, or you too will be lost.” The young girl thanked Him for all his advice and continued walking until she arrived. The statues were calling her, but she did not turn around. She arrived where the witch lived, placed the ribbons (coraddi) in the vase, picked up the other vase from the (l’armariu) and then passed to where his brother was and covered him with this ointment.
He was transformed into a human. Then she covered all the other marble stones with this ointment, and they too became human. Imagine what joy and contentment!

When the brother and sister returned to the city, they returned to their palace and the king one day invited them for dinner. The two youngsters agreed and they brought with them the talking bird. As they were climbing the stairs, the king told them to spit at the woman, who was there mother. But they refused, however, invited this woman for dinner and giving her a beautiful garment to wear, or they would leave. After dinner, the talking bird said: “Tell us a story?” The king responded: “You tell it, so I can hear how you speak.” So then the bird began to tell the story about two children, how they were born, how their grandmother threw them at sea, how the sailor rescued them, thus, he went on to tell the life story of these children. Towards the end of the story, these two children removed their handkerchief (the brother from his forehead and the sister from her hand) and they revealed to everyone his gold star on his forehead and her gold apple in her hand. And they said: “We are your children. This poor woman is our mother and this other, who is sitting at the table is our evil (l’assassina) grandmother.” The king couldn’t stop embracing his two children, who had grown into two beautiful young people. He was also content to find out that his wife wasn’t vile. The king asked for forgiveness and treated her dearly. And since the old queen was the cause of these problems, the king had her tied to a horse and dragged throughout the entire village, until she died. The husband, the wife and the children remained joyful and content, as it always happens, after a misfortune (sventuri) – contentment seems much sweeter.

The kitchen table is where we take comfort, where we take stock, where we can shed tears, vent our anger, tell secrets, crack jokes, feel fear, commiserate, and connect; a place where our souls and our spirits can be destroyed or take wing. The kitchen table is not a neutral place, and not always a safe one – sometimes the reflections of ourselves or the lives we make are unsettling” (Neilsen, 1998, p. 138)

Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru)

There once was a king who had a daughter, who’s name was Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru). It so happened that his wife had died and after a short time, he remarried a woman who wasn’t that good looking, and she was so jealous, because her stepdaughter was more younger and more beautiful than her. In the court they had a fountain out of
gold. Everyday this step-mother, full of vanity and jealousy would go to the fountain and would ask it:

“Gold fountain, beautiful fountain,
Is Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) more beautiful than me?”
The fountain responded:
“Dear Queen, princess Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) is more beautiful than you!”

Hearing this response everyday, the queen felt her anger and jealousy grow and she didn’t know what to do to become more beautiful than her stepdaughter. One day, after hearing this response, she couldn’t take anymore and she called two trustworthy soldiers and ordered them to take Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) on top of a mountain, have her walk thirteen days outside the village and to leave her there all alone. What brutal things jealousy can make someone do.

The soldiers took Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru), as they were ordered. They then took her to a deserted mountain and they abandoned her without (misericordia) remorse. Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru), aware she was abandoned, tried to find courage and she began to walk. At a certain point, she saw a house and walked in. Not seeing anyone and finding everything ready, she prepared a meal, fixed the beds and then she hid to find-out what would happen. All of a sudden, she saw thirteen dwarfs: they saw all their dinner prepared, their beds fixed and their place looked spotless.

“We have been betrayed!” they said. And they began searching the entire house climbing up and down the stairs. Step by step they saw a young girl hiding, who was more beautiful than the sun. They asked her what she was doing on top of this mountain because nobody ever went there. Then they said: “Now that you are here, stay with us and you could be our mother. Now we’ll go back to the stepmother.

The same morning that Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) was taken away from her house, it seemed like a thousand years that the vile land vein queen went to visit the fountain. She woke up, however, earlier than usual and went down. The queen repeated the same words:

“Gold fountain, beautiful fountain,
Is Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) more beautiful than me?”

And the fonti responded:
“Dear Queen, the princess, Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) is more beautiful than you,
And she can be found with the dwarves.”

The queen turned green and shouted with vindication after the same music and response from the fountain. She expected to hear a more favorable reply. Thus, to be vindictive, she thought of sending an old dwarf woman with a poisonous ring and recommended her to put it on Gold Hen’s (Xiocca D’oru) finger and be done with her forever. The old lady went. She arrived where Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) lived. The dwarfs were not around. The old woman tricked her and she put the poisonous ring on her finger.

Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) instantly turned into marble and fell on the ground. That same morning, the stepmother returned to the fountain and asked the usual question. This time, the fountain responded:

“Oh Queen,
Princess Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) has been poisoned.”

The queen was finally consoled and let out a cry of joy. In the meantime, the dwarves returned home and on their way found Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) on the ground and turned into a marble statue. They began to feel distraught because they loved her. But one dwarf said to his friends: “This doesn’t look natural; let see what we could find.” They searched and searched her and they found the ring on her finger. Quickly, they removed this ring from her finger and Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) came to life again. With great joy from all the dwarfs who were surrounding her they danced and celebrated, like chicks with their hen (xiocca). Then they asked her who gave her the poisonous ring?

As Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) was telling them about the old woman, the queen, who could not sleep she was so overjoyed, went to the fountain and sang the same song. The fountain responded:

“Dear Queen,
Princess Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) is more beautiful than you.”

So angry she was spitting blood, she said in a loud voice: “To hell with these dwarves and who created them!” But then noticing that with swearing nothing was solved, she thought about going herself to the dwarves, to see things with her own eyes,
because with the old folks, you couldn’t arrive at anything good. With this in mind, she boiled a canister of apples, pears and other fruit in the oven and she put poison. And with this beautiful stuff, she began walking towards the mountain.

In the meantime, hearing the story of the second old woman and the deceit of Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru), they told her: “If someone else comes here, do not go down, and wait until we arrive because we are more aware of the ways of the world and we understand what to do.” The words were lost into the wind. The queen arrived, one day disguised as a fruit vendor and began to sell as soon as she saw the dwarves leave: “Who would like apples!

Who would like beautiful cooked pears? Oh, how sweet they are! She kept on selling and repeating the same words. Finally, Gold Hen’s (Xiocca D’oru’s) mouth was watering because she just loved sweetened fruit and however called the fruit vendor: “Good lady, how much do you want for them?” The woman responded: “Have a taste of one first and see if you like them, and then for the price, we will negotiate; you’ll just pay for the one you like.” Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru), without suspecting anything, took a little bite of one: the pear was poisoned and fell on the ground for it was painfully strong. After a short time, she died.

“Ah, finally!” said the queen with a maligned shout. And she left before the dwarfs arrived. When the dwarves returned, they found her again on the ground, but this time without remedy because they noticed immediately she was dead. With nothing else to do, they placed her in a coffin and every morning they mourned her. These poor dwarfs truly mourned her with their lamenting and their (gemiti). Thus, a month went by, and during this time, they had invited a king’s son. After dinner, this king’s son was searching for their house and saw this beautiful young woman dead in a coffin and said to the dwarfs: “You have to give her to me and take her back to the palace. The dwarves who grew fond of her didn’t want this and said: “Prince, what do you want her for? She is already dead.

Leave her here with us; at least we’ll mourn her.” The prince replied resolutely: “Nothing; whether she is dead or alive, you’ll have to giver her to me!” And he took her away. He placed her in a carriage and went.
On the way, because of the movement in the carriage, Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru), who appeared dead, vomited the poisoned pear and returned to life again feeling as if she was in a deep sleep all that time. As soon as she became herself again, the king’s son said: “You are my bride!” “Before I give you a response, I have to go to the dwarves and thank them and then we’ll see,” said the princess. Then the prince gave the coachman orders to return to the dwarfs and with great consolation, they saw Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) alive again. The princess thanked them for everything, and told them that the prince asked to marry him.

“Yes, yes!” cried the dwarves with all their heart. They knew the prince was a good man. “This is beneficial for both of you”. Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) accepted and the dwarfs had a feast for this beautiful couple. Afterward, they returned to the palace, and when it was time, they got married with a big celebration of kings, marchisi and counts. Gold Hen’s (Xiocca D’oru’s) father and stepmother were also invited without them knowing it was their daughter’s wedding.

They had a beautiful dinner and after everyone ate and drank, said the bride to the guests: “Now I would like to tell you a story. But first we have to lock the doors so no one may leave. While the guest were waiting to hear this strange story, the stepmother who had a clean shirt, but a dirty conscience, took a closer look at the bride who looked more beautiful than the sun, and realized she was her stepdaughter, whom she thought was dead and said to herself: “Uh, this is bad for me! They will kill me!… I will tell the prince, I have a strong need to go out for a bit, this way I can escape.” She asked the prince, but asked her to step out after the story. And without anything more, he began to tell the story of his wife and stepmother. At a certain point, the queen, who realized that they were talking about her said all frazzled: “Open the doors for me because I am dying and I can’t take it anymore.” But the king’s son continued his story till the end. Gold Hen (Xiocca D’oru) approached her father, kissed his hand and said: “My father! My father!” Then she turned to the stepmother and said: “And this is the woman who sent me off with the soldiers on top of the mountain and then did everything to kill me! And I, a poor innocent soul, what have I done so bad to her?”

Her father, who mourned Gold Hen’s (Xiocca D’oru’s) death said: “And what do you wish, dear daughter (figghia mia), to be done to this evil woman?” The daughter
didn’t want to say. But encouraged by all present said: “For all the evil she has done to me and continues to do, she deserves to be dragged by the tail of a (sceccu) throughout the world (mnudu). But I will leave it up to you!” So then the drunk got what she deserved and the queen died a miserable death.

“And the bride and groom were joyous and content,
And we were left with nothing instead.”

“Fairy tales teach us about justice…” (Alice Kane, 1979)

Giacaddaruni

There once was a brother and a sister: the brother’s name was Giacaddaruni and the sister’s name was Sabedda. They were poor. Everyday she wove and at night she didn’t have any oil to work. There was a tiny door, which sprang open from the house, and from there entered a bit of light. In a house nearby, lived an aunt. One time, she heard her weave till night time, and the following morning said to her: “Niece, why to you stay up until night? How can you weave without an oil lamp?” Sabedda said: “Aunt, a tiny light enters from where you are sitting, and this way I can weave until night.” Her aunt turned to her and said: “Yes, daughter (figghia) that’s good; work then!”

In the evening, however, the aunt blew-out the lamp, out of goodness, so the niece couldn’t work. Sabedda couldn’t work in the dark so she faced the porch and saw a tiny light where the witches (fati) lived. She said to her brother: “Go sleep my brother, because I will go and work over there were there is light.” The brother went to sleep and she began to walk.

As she went, an old woman approached her and said: “Take this hallow rod (connolu). As you clap, you’ll see that the (fati calanu tutti li fusa); you combine (la matassa) molasses with this cannolu. Now, bring down my head a bit.” She began to bring it down and found on her lice. The old woman asked: “What do I have? What do I have?” She replied: “lice; they are beautiful like you, cute, little old lady.” The old woman said: “When the rooster crows, return!” Sabedda arrived at the porch where the (fati) lived. The witches (fati) quickly brought-down the (fusa) and Sabedda connected them with the rod (lu cannolu). The witches (fati) went to (m’ammogghinu) soften the molasses and said: “Uh, how sweet mine is!” They were all sweet. The witches (fati)
then, went to get the sharpener and filed it all for her. In the end, one said to her friend: “And you, what will you grant her?” “I will grant her virtue.” Another replied “And I will grant her beauty!” The third one said: “I will grant her jewels to fall from her hair, when she cleans her head in the morning.”

Sabedda went, and when she heard the rooster, she turned around and a gold wand appeared in front of her. When she arrived home she told her brother what happened. In the morning she woke up and washed her head. She placed a seviette at the front and jewels fell which filled up the serviette. All excited she said to her brother: “My dear brother, take these to the jeweller and sell them.” Giacadaruni didn’t waste any time. He went to the best jeweller and they gave him a handkerchief of money. They were rich.

The aunt saw that they were eating well called these children and said: “Who gave you, who gave you this money?” The aunt tried to make up another story; but Giacadaruni, who was a simpleton told her the true story. The aunt had a daughter more ugly than the dark and sent her to the witches (fati). As this snob went, she encountered the same old woman who asked her: “Where are you going?” “Wherever I’m going, I have to tell you?” She responded with all conceit – not even a queen. “Bring, bring down my head.” She brought down her heard, and when the old woman asked her: “What do I have?” Quickly she responded: “You have lice, like you old woman –ice.” The old woman then said: “Take this rod (cannolu): watch that where you are going (calanu tutti li fusa) and you connect them with this rod (cannolu). When you return and (arragghia lu sumeri), then you leave.” So ugly went to the witches (fati); she clapped and (calaru tutt’il fusa). She connected them with her (cannolu). The witches (fati) go and (m’am mogghianu) soften the matassa (molasses) in their mouth and they all said: “’Uh, how bitter!”

Ugly folded he loom and was ready to go. Said one (fata): “I will grant her ugliness; and you?” Another said: “I will grant her unhappiness.” “And I,” said another, grant her that wherever she goes, for the worst thing to happen to her.” With these beautiful wishes, ugly went home and when he heard (arragghiari lu sumeri), she returned. On her forehead appeared a tail of (sceccu), which made her look like a beast. When her mother saw her transformation, her mother all worried said to her: “You don’t have any luck; but your cousin does!” And she couldn’t find peace.
The following day, a king passed by. He saw Sabedda, who looked like the sun holding a gold (stidda) and he fell in love. She spoke with her aunt and with her brother who arranged to remove with a (bastimentu), a lu so regnu, and to also accompany her. The bastimenti arrived: in one (si mbarcau) boarded Giacadaruni and in the other, the women. When they were in the middle of the sea, the brother said regarding his (bastimentu): “Oh my sister, hide yourself from the sun, or it will make you black.”

Sabedda, who didn’t quite hear what he said, turned to her aunt and asked: “What did he say, what did my brother say?” “He asked for you to remove your clothes and to give them to my daughter.” And she replied: “For the love of my brother, I will give them to her!” Then her brother said: “Sabedda, hide yourself from the sun because we will be arriving.” She turned to her aunt and asked: “What is he saying, what is he saying?” “He’s telling you to throw yourself into the sea!” “Yes, for my brother’s love, I will throw myself.” And she threw herself. The Mother Siren saw how beautiful she was and swallowed her remaining alive in her belly. Let’s leave this part and take a look at those who were also traveling on the sea.

When the two (bastimenti) arrived at the city, they all went to the king’s palace; but the king and Giacadderuni didn’t see Sabedda. Then the aunt told them that she wanted to throw herself at sea and nobody could save her. The king, you could imagine, went so disheartened. But the aunt intervened and said: “Oh noble king, don’t feel sad, because there is a solution for everything: take my daughter, who is also beautiful, and that’s is all.” But the king wasn’t of that sentiment: so he sent the aunt to her village, the daughter he locked up in a room and Giacadderuni, he sent him to take care of the ducks.

Giacadderuni went to the sea with his ducks and began to cry. And he was saying: “My dear sister, my dear sister, come out of the sea and wave your hair and give these ducks food to eat. The sister who was in Mother Siren’s belly said: “Mother, liberate me because I want to greet my brother; I will not escape! If you are afraid, wrap a chain around my foot and this way I can go. She begged and begged Mother Siren, who in the end, wrapped a chain around her foot and let her go. Sabedda shook her hair and many jewels fell. And the ducks were eating them. Then she told her brother the story, and when the (papari) ducks returned to the village they began: “Oh, oh, oh!
Giacaddaruni’s sister is more beautiful than the sun.” They waved their hair, and they were granted food.

The king heard the ducks and asked Giacaddaruni if he saw his sister. “Yes, I have seen her!” And he told him how. The king sighed and said: “Find out from your sister what Mother Siren would like in order for her to leave. Don’t delay, for when I see her, I will ask.”

Giacaddaruni returned to the marina with his ducks and began to cry. Like the first time, this sister came out and shook her head and the ducks began to eat. Giacaddaruni remembered what he had to do and asked his sister to find out what Mother Siren would like for her release. Then he returned to the city and told the king, that he saw his sister and she promised him, she’ll find out. The following morning, Giacaddaruni went to the marina, without the ducks and began to cry. His sister came out and told him that Mother Siren would like a sharp saw and a fervent horse. Giacaddaruni returned to the king all joyful. The king without loosing any time, ordered the things and one morning, when everyone was ready, they went with all the court.

Giacaddaruni, as usual, began to cry, and out came his sister. Quickly, they cut off her chain. Then they placed this young woman on top of a fervent horse and she was brought to the palace. The king who was even more enamoured, didn’t lose any time and married Sabedda, who instead of suffering for such hardships, became even more beautiful. Her brother lived with them in the palace and treated like a prince. As for ugly daughter, they threw her in a pot, and boiled her until they made a stew adding salt and placing her eyes in the centre of the pot. Then they sent her mother this pot of stew, who was so happy: “Uh! My son-in-law sent this to me, this delicious stew. This means that he will marry my daughter: who could be more happier than I?”

But as she was eating it, the cats were taunting: “Give us a tiny bit, and we will help you cry!” And she kept on saying: “My son-in-law sent this to me so I can give it to you?”

But when she came to the middle of the stew, she saw her daughter’s eyes, she then realized her misfortune and began to cry: “Oh poor me, poor me!” The cats danced all around her; they were so happy. She cried and cried because she was in so much agony and anger. And the cats to get back at her said: “We would have helped you cry,
but you left us nothing, you left us nothing!…and now cry all alone!” She began to scream always: “Them, them, them!!!!!” She repeated this so many times that eventually became crazy. They took her to the (Versa) asylum and there she died.

“A faula e ditta e cacciamundi a barritta.”

“If you can increase the understanding of an issue or circumstance, illuminate one experience, portray one person’s story in a new light, you will have helped others to understand the social world a little better. This is what research is all about (Kirby &McKenna 1989, p. 96)

The Three Goats (Li Tri Pecureddi)

There once was a brother and sister who were so poor and all they had were three goats. The would sell the goat milk and collect the money in the morning and at nine o’clock at dusk, and with this they sustained themselves. One day as the brother was passing (pasci) throughout the countryside, he was approached by an old man, who was St. Joseph. The old man said: “Exchange one of your goats for my dog?” The young man agreed and they made the exchange. St. Joseph, giving him this dog for a goat said: “His name is Spezzacatini.” This brother went to see his sister full of joy and told her about the great exchange. But the sister began to beat him and said: “You brought me back a dog! And what can I do with it?” The following day the old man confronted him and said: “Can you give me these two goats and I will give you these two dogs? One is named Spezzacatinazzi and the other Scassaporti.” The young man remembered the beating which he received from his sister and was pensive about this. But the old man insisted, that at the end, he gave him his dogs in exchange for the goats.

When the sister saw him arriving without goats, she began to scream: “What did you do? Well now what are we going to eat?” While she was screaming, she began beating him up. She practically killed him with all the beating and then she threw him out of the house. This poor young man, with his three dogs, had to go alone into the world to earn his bread. Walking and walking he arrived at a palace in the midst of the countryside, with a closed iron door. He began to break the door open, and after a bit, the door fell to the ground. The young man entered, climbed upstairs and saw a room with all the food in the world all prepared. He began to eat, he was so hungry and he also fed his
dogs. All of a sudden, (Lu dragu) shouts: “And isn’t it enough that you are eating? Do you have to feed your dogs too?” So he stopped eating, without even responding. After, his heart was hurting him because he was thinking about his sister and so he brought her some food. This way they made peace.

The brother said to her one day: “Look I’m going hunting; if the warlock (Lu dragu) knocks, don’t answer the door or he’ll eat you up.” He climbed down and was far away, when the warlock (Lu dragu) came. Knowing quite well what to do with his flames, began to flatter her and said: “If you want me, I would like you to be my bride. As long as you tell your brother that you want some lettuce from my garden; but he can’t come with the dogs, because I can’t stand to look at them.” She said: “Yes” and they held hands.

The brother arrived during the evening and noticed his sister all sad. He asked: “Sister, that is wrong?” “I want,” she replied, “I want some lettuce from the warlock (Lu dragu).” “Fine, dear. Tomorrow I will get it for you.” And the following morning, while he was going, he brought his dogs with him. She said: “You’re always with those dogs!” The brother, who didn’t want to argue with his sister locked the dogs in a room and tied them with a chain. Alone he went to get the lettuce and began pulling it. Out came the warlock (Lu dragu), who was expecting his arrival and said: “Now, I will eat you!” “Before you eat me, he responded, let me say three words at least!” “And say them, but be quick!” “Spezzacatini, Spezzacatinazzi and Spezzaporti!” he said and the three dogs broke through everything and appeared there immediately. They threw themselves on top of (Lu dragu) and tore him apart.

The brother persisted that it was his sister who cultivated this beautiful gift, and as soon as he arrived at the house, he practically killed her with such a beating, that she was better off dying under the clutches of the warlock (Lu dragu). He left her alone and feeling hurt and vulnerable, he went into the world. Walking, walking, he connected with a king, who had an only daughter and an animal with seven heads insisted on eating her up. The young man presented himself as very assertive to the king and revealed his wish to marry his daughter. The king responded: “My daughter I cannot give you because a terrible animal with seven heads: but if you are good enough to set her free, than she is yours!” “Fine Majesty (Maista); I will think about it and don’t worry about anything!”
He went to look for the animal with seven heads, and the dogs ate him, after a battle (accanita). He returned to the king with his victory, and the king promised him his daughter.

As they arranged their wedding, and the groom forgetting the past, invited his sister. When she arrived, they celebrated their matrimony. Said the sister, who was still angry regarding the beating: “This evening, I would like to fix my brother’s bed!” And everyone thinking that she had good intentions, agreed. So then, she placed a sharp saw underneath the sheets, where her brother slept. That night as the brother went to sleep, he was divided in two. They brought him crying to the church, and the three loyal dogs, were following right behind him. Then they closed the door and remained inside. They were on top of each other (unu di nu latu, n’atru di l’atru latu, e lu terzu di la testa). When these dogs noticed nobody around, one of them said: “Now, I will go and get him.” Another responds: “And I will take him!” “And I will put him together!” said the third. Thus, two of the dogs went and brought a vase (vasettu) with needles (n’unguentu) inside, to put together the wound. The other dog, guarded his owner. They sewed him together again and the prince became whole again. He went to the king to find out who put the saw in his bed and discovered it was his sister who was seeking revenge for the beating she received.

The king had her sentenced to death immediately. This way the bride and the groom celebrated their matrimony and began to grow fond of each other. One day, the prince went hunting with his dogs, when St. Joseph appeared to him and said: Here you three goats which you had given me; and give me my dogs because you don't need them anymore.” He gave him his dogs and he received his goats and was grateful to this Saint for doing a lot of good: as a poor man, He had made him rich and powerful.

“Stritta e la foggia e larga la via,
diciti la vostra ch’è ditta la mia.”

“Culture expresses a community of history, beliefs, value orientations of any given group of people, that is bound b a collectivity. There exists a standard of belonging to certain principles that define such people and may lead to a form of patriotism. The norm of belonging may be religious, economic, linguistic, regional or ideological.” (Mile 1989, p.22)
The King’s Son (U Figghiu Du Re)

There once was a king’s son who went hunting. In the dark forest he saw a tiny house who lived the witch’s (la draga’s) daughter. Not having any other option, he asked for a place to sleep and she gave him lodging. They were both two beautiful young people and they became boyfriend and girlfriend. His girlfriend said to him: “the witch (la draga) will soon arrive, and poor you for she will eat you up! Hide underneath this hay, because then, when the witch (la draga) is sleeping, I will take several rods (palli mpatati) and we will escape together.” In fact, the witch (la draga) arrived and said: “There was a man here!” Her daughter responded: “Maybe you ate about four of them, you smell their odour, and now you’ve come to bother me!” The witch (La draga) didn’t say anything more; she went to bed and the daughter remained alone with the prince.

So then what do they do? They placed a shirt covered with paste (mpastatata) in the bed; she picked-up the rods (li palli) and they escaped. The witch (La Draga) afterwards awoke and from her bed said: “Mariuzza, get up and make the bread!” The shirt responded and said: “I have a headache, I can’t.” “Get up for the love of God and make the bread because it’s late.” “Ah, my stomach hurts!” The witch (La draga) gets up from her bed, all angry, to scold her daughter. But instead she saw only a shirt and said: “I have been betrayed!” She dressed-up with liver in her mouth and went to catch up with them. She almost caught-up with them; but the prince threw a pole (na padda). It turned out to be a church, with bells ringing; don, don, don! Asked the witch (la draga) to the holy (sagristanu) priest: “Have you seen a man with a woman pass by here?” He replied: “Right now, I am consecrating, leave then.” “I’m asking you if you saw a man and a woman!” “Would you like a confession? Soon the mass will end, and I will give you confession.”

She left him there and moved forward. She began to run and running, running, she was catching up to them. The king’s son took the other pole and threw it at front. It became a garden (l’ortu) with many people cultivating. The witch (La draga) said to a cultivator: “Have you seen a man and a woman?” “Wait a minute.” She sat down because she was tired and the cultivator returned with a bowl of beans (scalora). “Why did you bring me beans (scalora)?” “Sit for a moment: you’re driving me crazy!” He brought her cabbage (lattuchina). “Cabbage (Lattuchina) you brought me?” “You told
me a moment ago, those beans (la scalora) you didn’t like, and I brought you cabbage (lattuchina): if you don’t want it, I don’t know anymore, how to serve you.

But I don’t want this!” He continued: “Well then, what would you like? You’re driving me crazy – go away!” And she left. But in the meantime, time was passing and the couple were far away. She began to run (a scattafeli) and was again close to reaching them. The king’s son took the third pole and threw it with all his might. There appeared knives, razors, (lesini, zappuni) e tuuti li ferramenti d’azzuru: chiu ddavia, n’autru munzeddu di focu. Then the witch (la draga) with all her “huffing and puffing” she couldn’t pass anymore and all discouraged, she sent them curses: (“mi si la sperdi a lu Mulinu vecchiu, se lu basa so mamma, o so nanna.)”

The couple arrived at the Mulinu vecchiu and the king’s son said to his bride: “Stay here and I will order the outfits (l’abiti) and return.” She said: “For our love, don’t be taken (abbasari) by your mother or your grandmother, or you’ll forget about me!” “Don’t worry because I will not get lost!” He left her a lul Mulinu, and the king’s son arrived at is house. He didn’t make anyone (abbassari) manipulate him, for fear of being lost. But while he was sleeping, quietly, quietly, his grandmother arrived by his feet, and kissed him with great love. And he forgot about everything, and the poor girlfriend remained alone at lu Mulinu vecchiu.

One day, an old lady was walking to see the king. The girlfriend said: “When the king makes the bread, bring me a tiny piece of dough, and I will give you this purse of money.” The king made bread and the old lady entered the palace: “Your honor, will you do a little favor for me: may you give me a tiny piece of dough because I need it for my chickens who lay duck (papara) eggs.” The king who was charitable said immediately: “Take as much as you’d like.” She took about a kilo and she took it to that young woman; and the old woman received a purse full of money. As she gave the old woman this purse, she said to the young woman: “Listened, good woman; before you go see the king, come by here and be seen; I have to talk to you. Don’t forget!” And she left all content.

With the dough, the young woman made two beautiful doves, (li mpatau e parravanu). The old woman passed by and she asked her to take these doves to the king, and to keep the money he will give her. When she arrived to the king, the old woman
gave her the two doves, and the king paid her without hesitation because he was amused to hear these doves speak. One day these two doves flew on the table, when it was only the king’s son sitting there, and they told him the (patimenti) of his girlfriend. The prince, then, remembered everything. He ordered the outfits (l’abiti) and then with a carriage, he went to get her. He brought her to the palace and married her with a great feast.

“Iddi furu filici e cuntenti,
e nu’arrestamu senza nenti.”
“And they were joyful and content,
And we were left with nothing instead.”

“Educators and parents can help students enormously by listening to their stories and by telling their own. This can only occur when you are aware of your past and are willing to mine it for your life stories” (Helen Carmichael Porter 2006, p.43).

**The King of Portugal’s Daughter (La Figghiadu Re Di Portogallu)**

There was once a king and queen who didn’t have any children. She made a promise with La Madonna (Divine Mother) that if She would send her a child, for seven years, she would have oil pouring out and falling from the fountains. Thus, the queen had a child and for seven years, the king ordered oil to pour out from the fountains. After seven years, oil was still falling out. An old woman went to the fountain and filled up her jar (bumbula) drop by drop. In the meantime, the king’s son was playing with a ball: he threw and broke the jar (bumbula) of the old woman. Imagine what rage! The old woman said: “(I scileratu) you clutz! For this bad thing you did to me, I will send you a curse that at the age of twenty-one you will go into the world alone and to find the daughter of the king of Portugal!” The king’s son, after hearing these words, went upstairs and wrote what the old woman said to him on a piece of paper. When he was 21 years old, he read this paper and he remembered this old woman: He asked for his mother’s and father’s blessings and went into the world to find the king of Portugal’s daughter.

Walking, walking, after three days saw, at the end, this beautiful young woman and fell in love. He told her that he was searching for her and wanted to marry her. She had compassion and said to him all shocked: “Soon the warlock (lu dragu) will arrive
and will eat you! Hide underneath this staircase, for he sleeps for six months and is awake for the other six months. When he begins his sleep, we will escape and get married. The warlock (U dragu) arrived; he went to sleep he was so tired. The couple took three rods (palli) and escaped. After six months the warlock (lu dragu) awoke. Not seeing anyone, he said all frazzelled (scunsulatu): “I have been betrayed!” And he began to run to reach them. He was close to reaching them, but the prince threw a rod, and it turned into soap. The warlock (Lu Dragu) was falling here and he was falling there and finally the warlock (lu dragu) passed through and caught up with them again. They threw another rod and instantly it turned into a huge pool of water. The warlock (Lu dragu) passed through here and there and caught up with them again. They threw the third rod and it turned into fire. The warlock (Lu dragu) couldn’t pass through and all angry began to curse them: (mi si la sperdi a la Funtana vecchia!” “May you lose everything and the ancient fountain!

The couple arrived at the Fountain and the prince said to his beloved: “Stay here because soon I will return with the l’abiti and pick you up.” She replied: “do not get lost!” “No, I will not get lost! I know what I’m doing!” The king’s son returned to the palace, and the beauty from Portugal climbed to the top of the fountain where there was a little staircase. The prince, who was out of sight, forgot about her. They had a servant who was a slave and she would go to the fountain to get water. This servant saw a beautiful image in the water and she thought it was her reflection and said: “Is this how beautiful I am and my owner is sending me for water? (rumpimmilla la cortarella)! Ruppiu la cortaredd and returned home. Nci la ficiaru di landa; the slave went again to get water and said: “Is this how beautiful I am and my owner is sending me to get water?” (mbuddammilla la lancella). She took a stone tore it all.

The young woman on top of the fountain broke out laughing when she heard the slave speak this way. The slave turned to her and said: “Will you let me climb, will you let me climb so I may see you?” She climbed to the top and said: “Let me check your head, to see if I find any lice?” She began to check her head and she found a pin (nu spinguluni). The jealous slave began to pierce it into her head and the beauty of Portugal turned immediately into a dove and flew away. The ugly slave took her clothes and put them on and decided to stay there.
The prince, not seeing the slave return, remembered his girlfriend whom he had left at the fountain and he returned. When he saw the slave on top of the fountain, he didn’t want to believe his eyes and said: “How! How did you become so ugly?” The slave responded: “It’s been two days you have left me and I haven’t eaten! This is why I have become this way.” The prince feeling all sad, didn’t know what to say, took her to the palace and married her. When the cook was cooking, a beautiful dove flew into the kitchen and said:

“Cocu, cocu della regina,
Che fa il re colla schiva regina?
Dammi mullichelli, ch’io ti dono pinni d’oro.”

The cook gave the dove bread crumbs and the dove gave him a gold feather. While the cook, who was so content and was generously adding more ingredients, the dove, who had her eyes wide open, threw a handful of salt into the king’s food. The king realized the food was salty and took it out on the cook because the food was too salty. The poor cook, not knowing what to say, told the king about the dove. So then the king ordered all the prisoners to find this dove and their reward would be their freedom. If they didn’t find this dove, their heads would be chopped-off.

Well then, at the same hour, the dove flew into the kitchen and said:

“Cocu, cocu della regina,
che fa il re colla schiava regina?
Dammi mullichelli, ca ti dugnu na pinna d’oru.”

All the prisoners threw themselves instantly and caught this dove. They gave it to the king’s son and he noticed that this dove had a (spinguluni) hairpin. He pulled it out and the dove turned into beautiful young woman, as before. She told the prince her story and the slave could not deny this. This young woman married the king’s son and they were content, and the slave (eppi la pena chi s’ammeritave pe la so perfidia).

“A faula e ditta,
e cacciamundi a barritta.”

“And the story is told,
However, it goes.”
“Language is both the product and the possession of a community” (Donald Polkinghorne 1988, p. 23).

**Petrusinella**

There once was a husband and a wife. This wife was expecting a child and desired some parsley. There was no parsley to be found anywhere, except for the witch’s (la draga’s) garden which was dangerous, for with the witch (la draga) there was no joking around. With all is said and done, the poor husband, to make his wife happy, he went into the witch’s (la draga’s) garden and picked up a sack of parsley. When the witch (La draga) went to her garden, she noticed all her parsley was gone. “And who could this thief be?” Not suspecting anyone (because this was the first time this happened to la draga) she hid underneath the earth with only her ears out in the open. Thus, the wife ate and ate all the parsley and wanted some more. She begged and pleaded with her husband to bring some more. But he responded: “My wife, I brought you a sack full and in 1, 2, 3 you’ve completed everything! Come with me then and you will eat as much as you want.”

They arrived at the witch’s (la draga’s) garden and the good woman began to eat of that parsley as if she was hungry for days. Then they collected a sack full and were ready to leave, when they saw a beautiful, large mushroom. This was the ear of the witch (la draga), who heard everything. Both husband and wife pull – you pull, I pull -- and with all their strength, pulled-out the witch (la draga). “Now I will eat you!” she said. “For goodwill, do not eat us,” responded the wife, “I am pregnant as you can see, and whatever I have, I will give it to you.” “Well then”, said the witch (la draga), “if you have a boy his name will be Petrusinellu and if she is a girl, Petrusinella.”

With this promise, the witch (la draga) let them free. When the wife gave birth, she named the little girl Petrusinella. This petrusinella grew to be a young woman and went to la maistra. She would pass by the witch (la draga) and one day the witch (la draga) called her and said: “Petrusinella, tell your mother to remember her promise.” “Fine, I will tell her.” “Don’t forget.”

Petrusinella told her mother, and her mother said she had forgotten what the promise was with the witch (la draga). Petrusinella walked by la draga’s place, she related the message to the witch (la draga). The witch (La draga), for this time acted as if
she believed. But the following day, as soon as she saw Petrusinella from the balcony, she threw a ball (di guttuni) and said: “Pick it up for me! Pick it up for me!” Petrusinella took the ball to la draga, who bit her fingers and then said: “I did this as a sign: remember this!” Petrusinella went crying home to her mother. She told her the story and the mother sent a message with la draga to take her daughter. And this is what la draga did.

In front of where la draga lived, there was a palace of a king, who had a (pauni), and the witch (la draga) gave Petrusinella a room facing this palace. Every morning, Petrusinella washed her face and (lu pauni) would always say:

“Petrusinella, Petrusinella,
piu ti lavi e piu brutta ti fai;”

And every morning she heard this same music. One day, Petrusinella couldn’t take anymore and she went to tell la draga, who cared for her like her own daughter. La draga said:

“When (lu pauni) says this again, you immediately respond: 
“Paone, paonazzo,
di li to pinni faro un mazzo,
di li to carni faro un boccone,
ca son la sposa del tuo patrone;”

And you’ll see that he won’t bother you anymore.” In fact, this is what happened. Hearing this response, lu pauni was offended and because he was embarrassed, hid behind a chest. The king searched for lu pauni. “Where is lu pauni? Where is lu pauni?” And finally found it behind the chest. The king asked why he was hiding. All embarrassed, lu pauni told him the story and the king said: “Tomorrow when she is washing her face, you tell her the same words, and I will hide to see if this is true. “The following morning, when Petrusinella was washing, lu pauni said to her:

“Petrusinella, Petrusinella,
piu ti lavi e piu brutta ti fai!”

But the young woman immediately responded in a much louder voice:

“Paone, paonazzo,
di li to pinni faro un mazzo,
di li to carni un sol boccone,
ca sono sposa del tuo patrone.”

The king, who heard these words was curious to see her. He peeped through the window and saw that she was beautiful and he liked her. He fell in love with her instantly. And to show his live for her, he killed lu pauni, who was his spassu and sent it to Petrusinella. The king, however, became aware that Petrusinella didn’t really care for him. So one day, the king invited Petrusinella to his palace. At the beginning, the witch (la draga) didn’t like this too much. However, when she saw that this king had good intentions, then she accepted. And so it happened: after a few days they prepared their suits and they celebrated a great feast which lasted about a week. And other things…,

“non mancaru li balli e li canti,
e nu’arrestamu cu l mani vacanti.”

“With song and dance,
We’re left with a bang.”

“On the lives of people at work, in love, going about the normal rounds of life, they confirm that the crucial moments of everyday life contain great drama and substance. Rather than hanging about the edges of powerful institutions, literary journalists attempt to penetrate the cultures that make institutions work” (Sims 1984, p.3).

The White Riccotta (La Ricotta Janca)

There were once two children of a king, who didn’t have a mother and brother. These two brothers liked each other with all their hearts, and there wasn’t danger of one brother being jealous of the other, as is the case amongst siblings. One day, they were both at the table eating ricotta cheese. As the older brother was cutting this ricotta, accidentally cut his finger. This ricotta was then stained with red blood. The older brother said: “Look, my brother, how beautiful this red blood looks on top of this white ricotta! If I find a wife that looks red and white like this, I will marry her voluntarily.”

“Brother,” said the younger brother, “if you want to get married, it is my wish that I find someone as you desire. As a matter of fact, I will leave to find one for you.” They talked things over with the older brother, and the younger brother went to a blacksmith
(scudaria) to choose a good horse. The older brother gave him some money for the journey, and left.

Walking, walking, he arrived in a village and passing by the street, he went observing all the balconies and windows to see if he can find a beautiful face. But none of the women appealed to him. At a certain place, he saw a crowd of people and went to see what was going on. They were selling a beautiful horse. He got closer, he saw this horse and liked it. He then bought this horse and said: “It’s better than nothing; if I don’t find a beautiful face, at least I’ll bring my brother a beautiful horse. This way he’ll realize that I have been thinking of him.” But not wanting to journey with two horses, left the horse he initially was travelling with at a store and said to the owner: “Take care of my horse, because when I return, I will pick him up. And with this said, gave the store keeper some danari (money) for all the inconvenience. He journeyed to another village in Messina, and not even in Messina, he liked the women. In the piazza, he saw a crowd of people gathered round. He asked what was going on, and they said to him: “They are selling a beautiful sword, which is something really gallant (galanti). He too got closer. He saw the sword and bought it. He thought: “If I don’t find a bride for my brother, I will at least bring him another thing, so he can see my great caring for him.” But because he already had his own sword by his side, the beautiful sword he bought he left with a merchant to take care of and said: “On my return, I will pick it up; here is some money for any disturbance.”

He passed through Palermo and not even there he found a beautiful woman who appealed to him. Another crowd was gathered in this town and he asked someone what they were selling and they told him they were selling a crib (n’acula). He saw it, liked it and bought it. Again he thought: “At least my brother will believe I have walked a lot for him!” He left this bird with someone, gave them money for the upkeep until he returned and left for Napoli. One day, he was in the countryside sitting all concerned. He was saying: “I’m running out of money, a beautiful face I’m not finding, and I’m feeling all confused: what am I to do?” An old lady was passing by begging for money. “And leave me alone, good old lady! Can’t you see I’m depressed; what do you want from me?”
Beautiful, good son, would you give me a donation. If I can help you, I will help you!” She gave this prince twelve grains (grana). Then the old woman asked: “What is the matter, prince?” “What is the matter, is the matter!...I’m searching for a beautiful face for my older brother to marry, and I can’t find her!” “Listen, if you would like a beautiful face, I will find her, and I assure you that a beautiful companion is impossible to find. If tomorrow you arrive here at this same hour, I will do some talking and then bring back some news.” “But she has to be very beautiful,” said the prince, because ugly faces you can find anywhere, without going on a journey. She has to be beautiful to me; her face white as ricotta and colorful like blood.” “For this, don’t you worry! Just be here tomorrow at this same hour.” And saying this, the old woman left.

This old woman that in the far away countryside there lived a witch (draga) who had in chains a beautiful princess, who was beautiful like the sun. And every so often she would go there to ask for money. She began to walk and arrived at the witch’s (la draga’s) place. She could speak in secret with this girl and said: “there is a king’s son who is looking for a beautiful face, and he still can’t find her. I knowing that you are beautiful like the sun, told him that I would speak with you. So if you want to leave, I will have him come here to see you, and if you want, he has a beautiful horse in which you both can escape together.” The princess replied: “No, old woman, no; my father and mother will arrive and you are aware they are the witch and warlock (lu dragu and la draga) and if you do not leave soon, they will eat you.

When they arrive, I will find out when they will leave again and for how many days they will be away. You pass by here and this way I will let you know. But now hide somewhere for they are on their way. Beware!”

This bitter old woman, all frazzled, hid and ran throughout the countryside and made it just on time to save herself. The witches (draghi) (husband and wife) arrived and climbed the staircase. This princess, after the discussion with the old woman, she was all concerned; and the witch (draga) who understood her, noticing her melancholy said: “What is the matter?” “Nothing mother, would you like to eat?” “Yes, yes! said the witch (draga), because I am hungry.” La draga and lu dragu ate; they were tired and without asking anything else, they went to sleep. The old woman wet with the prince and told him that once she heard word, she would keep in informed because her mother and
father were arriving. “But is she beautiful?” asked the prince. “Yes, she is beautiful like
the sun, just as you want her to be!” “And if you assure me that she is beautiful,” he said,
I will leave with you! This way I will see if she is for me and make further
arrangements.”

That same morning (lu dragu and la draga) awoke and said to their daughter:
“Figghia (daughter), look, we will be leaving and away for about seven days. Watch the
house.” They left and the princess was sitting by the window, hoping to see the old
woman.

Thus, when she wasn’t expecting it, she saw a handsome young man walking by
the old woman’s side. As they noticed the princess sitting by the window, they knew that
her mother and father were not at home. When the prince went up close, he said: “Ah!
She is worthy of marrying my brother! She is white like cottage cheese (ricotta) and
colorful like blood!

The prince informed the princess that his brother is a handsome young man, rich
and strong and then he said: “Well then, we can leave now!” “No, she said, my parents
will be away for seven days; when they say seven that means they will be away for about
three days. I’m aware that this is what happens. This is why we don’t have time to make
preparations of all the necessities because they will arrive soon.” “And so when?”
replied the prince who was anxious to bring her with him. The beauty responded: “I will
let you know through the old woman; stay away for about 15 days or else there will be
problems and horrible ending. In the meantime, you prepare (nu bastimentu) and this
way we can leave by sea.”

With this response, the king’s son said: “Good bye, until I return.” And he began
to prepare (u bastimentu) doing again the same journey, which he had already done on
arrival. He picked-up the bird (l’acula), the sword, the horse, and all these things and he
brought them into (bastimentu). Then, when everything was organized, he journeyed
back to Naples. He arrived in Naples just in time when the old woman received news
from the princess that the witches (draghi) would be away for fifteen days. The old
woman called the prince, (bastimentu prontu) and the prince and princess escaped to sea.
The sea was calm and the journey was beautiful. But unfortunately there wasn’t any
wind and (lu bastimentu) wasn’t moving too much. In the meantime, the witches (draghi)
returned home and didn’t see their daughter: “Uh!” said la draga to her husband, “she escaped! Hurry, let’s go find her!” Quickly, they transformed themselves into doves and flying away, they found the princess. They perched themselves on the antennae (du bastimentu) and began: “Currucutucu, currucutucu, currucutucu!” la draga wanted to cry. “What is the matter, what is the matter my wife?” asked lu dragu. “Oh, my! The king’s son has robbed my daughter. When she steps down from (lu batimentu) and touches water, may the Siren of the sea will come and take her away!”

“Cu senti e parrera,
statua di marmu addiventera.”

"Who hears and speaks will turn into marble."

She stayed awhile longer; looked underneath (o bastimentu) and began again: “Currucutucu, currucutucu!” “What is the matter, my wife, for you to lament this way?”

“The prince robbed my little girl. When he hops on his horse, may he fall and break his leg!”

“Cu senti e parrera,
statua di marmu addiventera.”

The prince and princess who were at the bottom level of (lu bastimentu) they heard everything la draga was lamenting, but remained quiet and breathless for they feared la draga’s wrath and curse into marble. La draga after awhile began again: “Currucutucu!”

“What is the matter my wife, what is the matter?” “The thief of a prince robbed my daughter. When the prince picks up his sword, may he pierce his side and throw him from one side to the other.”

“Cu senti e parrera,
statua di marmu addiventera.”

La draga was silent for a while and then began lamenting much more sorrowful: “Currucutucu, currucutucu, currucutucu!” “Why are you lamenting, what is the matter my wife?” “Oh poor me! He robbed my little girl!…When the prince goes and picks up (l’acula) his crib, he hears!”

“Cu senti e parrera,
statua di marmo addiventera."

In the meantime, (lu bastimentu) arrived at the port. The prince didn’t let the princess step-down for he feared the curse, and he thought about writing a letter to his brother telling him that he found his wife (white la ricotta cheese and colorful like the sight of blood). But they needed a bridge to be constructed in order for them to embark without touching the water. The brother, all excited, immediately had a bridge made and when it was completed, he sent it as soon as possible. This way the prince, princess, the bird, the sword, and the horse can embark and land without touching the water.

They landed and went to see the old brother. He nearly died of joy, when he saw his bride to be – appearing as beautiful as the sun. “Ah, my brother! What a beautiful bride you found for me! Quickly, quickly, let’s get ready for the wedding. It feels like 100 years, with each moment that passes!” But to prepare for this matrimony, it took more than two days, and the groom didn’t know what to do to wait in annoyance. Searching here and there, the older brother saw the horse and said: “Oh, what a beautiful horse my brother brought back! Tomorrow I will ride this horse throughout the city. The younger brother heard his brother’s wish, and in the middle of the night, when all was asleep, he took out a pistol and killed this horse.

In the morning, the older brother awoke with the intention of riding this magnificent horse. But when he went to the stable, he found the horse dead: “And who kill this horse? It couldn’t have been my brother, for he has given me a beautiful gift – well then, well then….” And left it at that. After an hour he said: “Now as I will go out, I will arm myself with the sword!” The younger brother heard, saw the danger and broke the sword in two pieces.

The older brother went to retrieve the sword and found it broken. He thought, only my brother could have done this and is remaining silent. After a short while he said: “And I will like to see The crib (l’acula) upstairs to see what effect on me to fly into the air.” The younger brother, who was so attentive, ran after him – especially after listening to these words – waited for night time and killed the crib (l’acula). In the morning, when the older brother saw the dead crib (l’acula), wanted to lock his brother in jail, thinking he was doing this out of spite. But his bride begged him and set him free.
The hour approached when they were to marry and the single brother armed with (sciabula) shovel, hid underneath the newlywed’s bed. They got married and after the festivity and the dinner, they locked themselves in their room. They went to sleep. Then, at twelve midnight, the door opened and an animal with seven heads entered to eat them alive. With this battling noise, the husband awakes and begins to scream. Thus, the brother, who had killed this ugly serpent, dragged this beast into the kitchen. The older brother, who didn’t know what to make of all this, seeing his younger brother with a shovel in his hands, he said: “What are you doing with this shovel?” …”You came possibly in the middle of the night to kill me?” Go to the (cullettina) guillotine because you deserve to die! It was you who killed the horse; it was you who killed broke the sword; it was you who killed (l’auila) the bird, after you have spontaneously given them to me…and now you wanted to kill me too? Oh Crazy Brother!” The poor younger brother couldn’t defend himself and left all confused.

The following morning, the king gave orders to prepare the guillotine for his brother, because during the night, he wanted to kill him. In the piazza there was a crowd of people who were curious to see the person they were going to kill. And the poor young man arrived accompanied with many armed guards, as if there was (galiotu). At this spectacle, the king wanted to assist also. When the unfortunate was up at the guillotine, he turned to the king and said: “One grace, master: before I am put to death, I’d like to tell you a few words.” “Speak, speak!” said the king; will listen to what you have to say.” And so he began: “When I went searching for your wife, I found her with la draga who had her chained, and I cultivated a plan to take her away.” And like this, from one thing to another, he told him the story without forgetting to tell him about la draga’s curse. However, as he was speaking, his flesh was turning into marble. He arrived at a certain point, he couldn’t continue and when he had already turned into marble, his brother had him step down from the guillotine and brought home. Crying and feeling guilty, he placed him in a cupboard and everyday he lit candles and adored him like a saint.

A year went by and the king’s wife gave birth to two baby boys. After several days, the king went horse back riding into the countryside. He took the wrong route and ended up in a forest. It was getting late, when he heard from the top of a tree:
“Currucutucu, currucutucu, currucutucu! Don’t you know, my husband, that our daughter had a child?

Well then, there is nothing else to do, other than to changed the marble stone back into a human being, like before… It would be enough just to kill the two baby boys and pour their blood on the marble stone to revive and transform this young man. If then, we need a huntsman to kill both you and I, to take our liver, dip it into oil, and then to connect it to the two baby boys – then they too will be revived from their death. “ The king, who was underneath a tree, listening to this conversation, was looking to see to find out who it was. He looked and looked and then saw two doves. He had his pistol and then he shot first the male and then the female. They fell to the ground, and thinking about the words he heard, he took out their livers and placed them into a ditch (fogghia).

That same night he headed home; he passed by a village and saw that they were having a grand (fera) fair. He asked what feast they were celebrating and moved forward. He arrived at the house, and he said to his wife: “So, my wife, what is knew?” “I passed by a village nearby (facimunci Siminara) and saw that they were having a beautiful fair (fera): if you want to go and enjoy yourself, go with the maid. This way you will go for a walk and you’ll move a little.” “And how about the kids?” she asked “Who will I leave them with?” “Don’t worry about the kids; I’ll take care of them,” replied the husband. The wife didn’t want to leave her kids. But her husband persisted and she was then convinced to attend the fair with the maid. So then, the king took the two children from their rockers and locked himself in the room with the marble statue. With his hands trembling, his cut-off their necks and began connecting their blood to his younger brother (marble statue). With each connection, the marble statue became flesh and slowly was transformed. When he opened his eyes and saw that he was standing in front of his brother, he didn’t remember anything and said: “How long have I been sleeping?” He was still awakening and thus went to sit in a chair. In the meantime, the king boiled quickly, quickly the livers in oil. Then he combined his children with the livers and gradually they were revived to their normal state. He placed them back in their rockers like before and waited for his wife to arrive.
The wife, however, arrived at the fair, and at the same time her husband was
doing all these things, she felt as if someone was setting her free, untying her
(sciogghivananu).

She was enjoying the fair, more content than before, and then returned home with
the maid. There she encountered her brother-in-law: “How do you come back to life?”
and without waiting for a response, embraced him. In the meantime, her husband arrived
and he revealed the entire story and was so happy to have his younger brother, who had
sacrificed his life for him, back to life again. At twelve noon then, they prepared a
beautiful meal amongst themselves and were content and joyful. For them the day bells
rang in celebration, but the bells were also ringing for us, to cultivate (la faula) the fable e
to go and eat whatever we find.

“Through remembering fieldwork – in analyzing, thinking, writing, reproducing –
we are remembering a shared past. We draw on our memories of what the place was like
– how it felt, looked, smelt, tasted – and what the people were like – how they felt,
looked, talked, laughed, cried, acted, worked, played, lived.” (Coffey, 1999, p.109)

**The Beauty of Seven Veils (La Bella di Setti Veli)**

There was once a king and queen, who had three daughters. The Sun arrived and
took away one. The Wind arrived and took away another. The Cloud arrived and took
away the third daughter. Then the queen became pregnant and had a son. When he grew
older, an old woman put a curse on him: “at nineteen years of age, this son shall go into
the world to find la Bella di setti veli, who is the daughter of the Superior king. The day
came when this son asked for his parents’ blessings because he wanted to leave. His
mother said, all sad: “Wasn’t it enough that I lost three daughters, and you too want to
leave? “Its nothing, mother, I have to go into the world!” When the mother saw he was
definite, she gave him her blessing and a ring. She said: “My dear son, if you see your
sisters recognize that they have the same ring as yours.”

With this he left and walked and walked and he met one of his sisters, the one
who had married the Sun. The sister said to him, all out of breath: “Now the Sun will
arrive and eat you.” “Uh, is this all the danger?” he replied, with an know-it-all air. But
then he thought and took his sister’s advice, who hid him behind the door. After awhile,
the Sun arrived and as soon as he entered, said: “I smell the sent of human flesh!” The
wife responded with an ill voice: “Listen dear, my brother came to see me, who is searching for la Bella di setti veli, and you have to help him, because he is a good kid.” She called him and had him eat at their table with them. After they ate, the Sun plucked-out a hair from his beard and gave it to him. He said: “Now go to my brother, who knows better, to explain.”

He walked and walked and at the end came across another one of his sisters, who was married to the Wind. The sister was so happy, but it showed she was all worried: “Now, she said, the Wind will arrive and eat you!” And to save him, she hid him behind the balcony. The Wind arrived and smelled the air and instantly said: “I smell the scent of human flesh.” She explained to him that her brother came to visit her and he asked her to help him. The conclusion was that the young man ate with them and afterward, the Wind plucked-out a hair from his beard saying: “When you need help, call me.” Then he continued walking again.

Walking, walking, finally he connected with his third sister. As soon as she saw him, she felt so consoled, but quickly said: “Now the Cloud will arrive and will cloud you. Poor you!...Where do I hide you?” The brother replied: “Put me in the closet!” And this is what the sister did. The Cloud arrived and said: “I smell the scent of a human, here!” The wife all prepared responded: “My brother arrived.” “And what does he want?” He asked. She said: “He’s searching into the world to find la Bella di setti veli, and he came here to you for some advice.” The Cloud became angry and said: “Ah, at my place, the Sun cannot enter – and now your brother has entered? The Wind cannot enter, and now your brother has entered?” “Listen, said the wife, may he stay here or not. If you want us to be amicable, you have to help him because he is my brother and I care for him. This way she calmed the Cloud and asked her brother to come out. They all had dinner together without further danger. Afterward, the brother-in-law gave him a hair and said: “Here is my hair: when you need me, you throw this into the fire and call me – and I will come.” And he left.

He walked and walked and walked and at a certain point, he saw someone who was making statues of saints. He was watching how they were made, he liked them, and then he said: Teacher, will you make me Saint Lia, and I will pay you?” “Yes sir.” And
he made the young man Saint Lia vacant and with a little door from behind, so it can be opened easily. For compensation, the prince gave him a purse full of money and said:

“Now you must do another favour for me. Look, I will put myself into this statue and you will pick me up and take me where I tell you. Then, you will try to sell me to the father of la Bella di setti veli. You sell me for whatever price he wants to pay and take it without any confrontation. And you keep the money he gives you because I don’t want any of it.” The prince placed himself into this statue and this vendor arrived at the house of la Bella. The vendor said: “Young lady would you like this statue of Saint Lia? I will give you a good price for this beautiful statue. I’m selling it because I have need.”

They agreed upon a price; the vendor appeared sincere, and la Bella bought this statue. “And now, where will I place it?” asked her father. “Let’s put it in my room because I want it with me,” replied the daughter. Thus, they put this statue in her bedroom.

During the night, the prince opened the tiny door of the statue and came-out with a sword. He cut through the seven windows, then the seven ordinary veils which were covering her, then he went in closer and cut through seven satin veils, which were last. She awoke at the end and began to scream: “Help! Help!” The young man said: “Don’t scream Bella, because I didn’t come to harm you; instead, I would like you to be my bride. Is it better to stay here locked-up, without air, or to come with me, who loves you dearly and would like to cherish your beauty only? I will take you to a beautiful palace, where you could do whatever you want, among civilized people, in a big city with all the commodities and entertainment you want. You could be truly happy, if you came with me!” Thus, he persuaded her and quietly, they left together. But before they left, they thought to place Santa Lia, with her face looking up. Every morning, the king Superior had a habit to enter into his daughter’s room, didn’t see her and noticed that the statue was lying with the face looking up in the air. So then, he thought and thought and knowing that la Bella was removed from seven windows, and seven layers of veil, instantly said without suspecting anything else: “Santa Lia took her away into the sky.” And with this conviction, he ordered many masses and didn’t think about her anymore.

His daughter, however, was in good company, with the prince. They were in the city preparing their wedding. All of a sudden in the street, they saw la draga, who tied
herself up and said: “Oh king’s son, come here and untie me!” Bella kept telling the prince: “No dear, don’t go, don’t go or you’ll turn into marble!” But he wanted to go because he felt it was awful to deny a woman help. He went to la draga and turned into marble. Bella found herself in the clutches of la draga, who took the princess away.

One day, Bella who couldn’t find any peace because she was abandoned by her fortune, began to feel the marble stone (her fiancé) hoping to find some kind of memorandum and saw, instead, three hair of a beard. She threw them, out of spite, into the fire, and instantly her brother-in-laws appeared: the wind, the sun and the cloud. “What would you like from us? Where is our brother-in-law?” She told them the story with tears in her eyes. “Don’t cry,” said the in-laws. “However, give us a helping hand. Spy on la draga, and find out what it will take for her to die”: for they too were children of kings and la draga cursed them and transformed them into the sun, wind and cloud.

When la draga arrived, Bella complimented her (carizzi). Then when she saw la draga in a good mood, she asked: “Mamma, what will it take for you to die? I hope you live beyond 100 years, but it is always good to know things before hand.” “Figghia” (daughter), replied la draga, it’s very difficult for me to die, so you may remain in tranquility. Together with me, you will also have a long life. Do you see the two (munti) mountains facing us? They have to yank open two mountains. Inside there’s a dove which they have to take and kill. And only then will I die!” “How happy I am to know that your life is so secure, Mother!” said Bella.

But when the three brothers returned, she told them what to do to kill la draga. “Very Well!” said the brothers, now that we know, we’ll take care of things. In fact, they took a sharp saw and sawing, sawing, yanked open the mountain. They grabbed the dove and killed it. At the same time, la draga died and everyone who was cursed, were now liberated and free. Bella saved her fiancé, who once again was transformed into a handsome young man and the three brothers became human again. Altogether they walked the path to see the king. On their way, they encountered their wives, who were searching for them. They all arrived at the city and received with all splendor by the prince’s parents, who married Bella and the three brothers who married the three sisters.

They had a grand feast and celebrated the four matrimonies and they each lived contented.
“Iddi arrestaru filici e cuntenti,
E nu’arrestamu senza nenti.”

“Creation often needs two hearts one to root and one to flower. One to sustain in time of drought and hold fast against winds of pain the fragile bloom. That in the glory of its hour affirms a heart unsung, unseen.” (Gloria Steinem Revolution From Within 1988, p.103).

**Eye Drops of the Beauty of Seven Veils (L’acqua di L’occhi e la Bella di Setti Veli)**

There once was a king, who was almost (orbu) blind and had three children. One day, the eldest child said: “Papa, give me your blessing for I would like to go and get water for your eyes, because I suffer to see you like this so disgraced.” The father replied: “What will I do?...You are the eldest son. And if one day I die, who will I leave the crown?” The son responded: “It’s nothing: I want to leave and I hope to give you back your sight.” As he left, he took the path toward Spain. In Spain there lived another king, who had three daughters. This king of Spain, knowing that this prince was arriving, approached him, on the way and said: “Oh king’s son, what brings you to these parts?” “I hope to find water for the eyes for my father who has lost his sight.” This king of Spain invited him to his home and said: “Well then, for today you stay with me and tomorrow you’ll leave.”

As they were at the table eating, the prince fell in love with king’s eldest daughter, who was truly beautiful. The prince forgot about his father and didn’t leave anymore. He became part of the king’s court of Spain for two years, while the prince’s father wondered the whereabouts of his son – lamenting his loss. The middle son turned to his father and said: “Papa, Papa, give me your blessing and I will go and find my brother and I will also bring you back water for the eyes. If he is dead, I will not be ignorant and will return immediately.” His father gave him the same speech, not to leave. But he was determined, and thus asked for his blessing and left. He took the road leading toward Spain, hoping to find his brother. He was approached by the king of Spain, and it was the same story all over again. The king of Spain invited him for dinner and when he saw his older brother there, he said: “Oh (scileratu) (you without worries), your poor father is longing (abbrama) for you and you are staying here feasting and celebrating?”

“Come for dinner, replied the older brother, and then we’ll talk.” The middle brother
attended the dinner and fell in love with the middle sister, who forgot about the water for his father’s eyes, he was so inflamed with love.

Another two years passed, and the brothers didn’t return home. The youngest brother approached his father and said: “If my brothers were (ngrati) ignorant towards you, I am not ignorant: Papa, give me your blessings, because I want to get the water for your eyes.” His father taunted him to change his mind and stay, but he saw he was resolute and he gave him his blessings crying. The youngest son walked towards Spain as his brothers. The king of Spain confronted him and invited him for dinner. When this young prince saw his brothers, he said: “Oh ignorant people, our father is suffering and is lamenting day and night for you, thinking you got lost; and you stay here, without thinking about anything?” The brothers replied: “Come to dinner and then we’ll talk.”

“No, I will not accept; I have so things to think about other than your entertainment!” He, then, excused himself from the king of Spain and moved forward.

As he walked, he arrived at a (pianura) valley and at certain point saw a (cadavaru) cadaver in the water and in the wind. He asked the people: “Why is this cadaver abandoned?” “Because he doesn’t have any means,” they said “and not being able to pay, he remained out.” “Depending on how much he weighs, I will pay the gold, as long as you give him (sepulture) and you conserve him well.” They weighed the dead person and the prince paid the gold according to the weight of the corpse. And this way they made a beautiful capella and placed the corpse in a sacred place.

After this (opera di carita) good deed, the prince moved forward and arrived at a forest. All of a sudden he saw a rabbit and said: “Oh what a beautiful catch (hunt) has happened to me today! In all the world, this has never happened to me before.” So he stepped down from his horse to catch this rabbit, but the rabbit wouldn’t allow him. The hunter was determined to kill this rabbit. After running back and forth, the rabbit took a moment and said: “Oh Peppinu, don’t you recognize me?” “No, who are you?” “I am the cadaver, whom you saved from the water and from the wind. Without you I would have still remained there. And you without me will not accomplish what you have set out to do. Well, then follow (listen) to me!” The rabbit jumped on top of the horse and they both headed toward a forest -- the rabbit at front and the prince behind him.
They walked and walked and at 11:00 in the evening, they arrived at a garden. “Come down, Peppinu!” said the rabbit. “Enter into this garden and you’ll see many roses. Don’t stop and continue ahead until you find a fountain. You’ll see two canals: the canal on your right has the water which (annorba) and the canal on your left has the water for the eyesight. You take these two bottles and fill them up: then, the water you get from the right canal, you hold with the right hand and the water from the left canal, you hold with your left hand. To go well, don’t mess it up. If you don’t do as I tell you, you will lose everything. I will recommend especially, to keep in mind my advice and to follow them precisely. At 12 o’clock exactly, this garden will open and you will enter. But be aware that you have only 15 minutes of time to follow my directions and to get the water.

Then when you leave and arrive at the roses, don’t stop to smell the roses: that you like this one, or maybe that one. The time will pass, and if the magu arrives, you will lose the water for the eyes and you will lose your father.”

At two o’clock punctual, the garden opened-up and Peppinu entered. He arrived at the garden, got the water and conserved it. But at the return, looking at all the beautiful roses, he stopped to smell them. He smelt this one and that one and stayed a good half hour. He was about to leave the garden, when lu magu was at the door. “Oh (scileratu)! said lu magu, nobody had ever had the guts (ardiri) to take water for the eyes, and you almost were robbing it?...Now you will pay for it!” The prince said all shocked: “For good will (carita) do not kill me! I am a poor passenger, who has a blind father; and this is why I came here.” “If you don’t want me to kill you,” replied lu magu, “you have to go and get la Bella di setti veli.” He responded: “Very well, I will go.” Lu magu, however, took away the water and then sent him on his way.

Then the prince was out in the open, the rabbit said to him: “Ah, Peppinu, Peppinu! Didn’t I tell you? But you didn’t want to take my words, and look what happened!

Enough, now follow me. If you take my words, you will gain la Bella di setti veli, water for the eyes and your father. If not, you lose everything.” Again, they began to walk and arrived at a palace. Well then said the rabbit: “Look: climb up here and count ninety-nine steps (gradini). When you reach 100, notice that she will say: “Oh
Peppinu, you came to get me? You will immediately say: “Yes”. As you climb, you will see that she will throw herself to kiss you; but to go well, you don’t get close to her! Instead, you begin to climb down backwards, and you’ll see she’ll go after you breathing: “You came all the way here, and you don’t want to kiss me?” You, however, resist the temptation and until you come out here, don’t kiss her: then you are free.” “Don’t worry, said Peppinu, this time I will do as you say. Only one time, will the old lady get believe!”

With this advice in mind, the prince began to climb the palace staircase counting 99 steps. When he reached 100, he found la Bella, who looked like the sun. As soon as she saw him, she said: “Oh Peppinu, did you come to get me?” “Yes!” he responded. But because he feared lu magu, he began to climb down the steps until the last step. “And if you meant YES, she said, you came all the way here and you don’t want to kiss me?” Hearing her lamenting, the prince forgot all the advice and responded all confused: “You are right: I have been stupid not to kiss you.” And he kissed her. Lu magu came out all in a rage and: “Scileratu! he said, up till now, nobody had the audacity to rob la Bella, and you wanted to take her away?” “Forgive me, for (carita) good will,” said Peppinu, “because I am a poor passenger, and I came here (custrettu cu minaccia di morti).” “If you want me to forgive you,” replied lu magu, you have to bring me the talking horse, and I will give you Bella.” With this promise, Peppinu was set free. But as soon as he was out, the rabbit said: “Ah Peppinu, why didn’t you take my words?” “Can’t you see, she begged me so much to kiss her!...I couldn’t resist her anymore, and I kissed her!” “You could have waited until you came out, and then you could have kissed her all you want!...And you were free and you could have enjoyed her for the rest of your life. Enough, this is the way it happened, and there is nothing else to be done!”

While they were talking, talking, they began to walk and walk, and finally arrived in front of a palace. The rabbit said: “Now enter in here, and you’ll see many horses: in the middle you’ll find the talking horse. You will realize instantly, that as soon as he sees you, he will ask you: “Patruni (boss) you came here to get me? You will respond: “Yes”, and notice that he has a (brigghia vecchia and brutta) (old and ugly belt). Up on the wall, however, there is a new (brigghia) belt with gold ornaments, and the horse will ask you: “Patruni (boss), with this (brigghia) belt you will take me out? You have a
beautiful horse that talks, and you want to take him, like this, to the city? Put on, put on me the new belt, or the people will be gossiping, (e tu nci fain a brutta figura)!” “But you, continued the rabbit, be careful when you put it on him. When the horse sees the beautiful belt, he will dance for joy, until lu magu hears, and he will come down to kill you.” “This time I will do exactly what you tell me: don’t you worry!” said Peppinu: and he entered. He found many horses in the stable, and in the middle, the talking horse.

As soon as he saw him, he began: “You came, possibly, to take me?” The prince said immediately, “yes”. “Well, then put on me the new belt!...A beautiful horse that talks, you want to take him to the city with this ugly belt? …And what will the people say?” “Yes, yes, I will put it on you! In fact, it’s not good to go out with this old belt.” The prince took the new belt and put it on the horse. But as soon as the horse saw this belt on him with all the gold ornaments, he began to dance for joy, that lu magu heard and came down. When he saw the young man, he said: “Nobody, yet, has had the courage to take my horse, and you didn’t think that his owner, was also in this world?...Now, you have to pay for it!” The prince said, with tears in his eyes: “I didn’t do it to offend you; but because they told me to. Forgive me, for I will not do it again!” “Me, forgive you? How poorly you know me!...Well fine then, if you want me to forgive you, you have to bring me the (l’aceddu Bonvirdi); and then I will give you, maybe, the talking horse.” “Fine, I will go and do everything to serve you.”

When he came out, the rabbit said: “And didn’t I tell you that you needed a strong will to overcome all the temptations?... I will advise you for the last time: if you do not take my words, you will not escape your death. This is the last trial: if you know how to approach it and follow my advice, you may still remedy everything and gain the four things; but, if you (voi fari di to crapicciu) , like in the past, you will await nothing, but death.” Peppinu was embarrassed, this time, to respond “yes”, and all sad within himself, he began to walk with the rabbit.

Walking, walking, they arrived at a beautiful garden. “Look, said the rabbit all afraid (premurusa); look that walking through this garden, you will arrive at a tree, bigger than the rest. You climb to the top of this tree and you’ll find a cage with a bird. This will be the bird Bonvirdi (l’aceddu Bonvirdi). As soon as he sees you, he will begin to talk and will ask you: “(Patruni) owner, you came to get me?” “You will respond, “si”
and then he will beg you to place him in a new cage, because it’s embarrassing to leave a bird so beautiful, in an ugly, old cage. Don’t trust to put him into the new cage, or you will be in trouble. If lu magu catches you, he will not be accommodating and will kill you without pity. You take, however, together with the bird, the new cage in your hand. After, when you arrive out here, put the bird into the new, beautiful cage, and you’ll see he’ll be content just the same. Did you comprehend (M’hai ben capitu)?” “Si!” said Peppinu, and this time I will do what you have advised. Arrivederci!” and he entered the garden. The prince arrived to the grand tree and climbed to the top and saw the bird. The bird begged him to put him into the new cage. But the prince, keeping in mind the rabbit’s advice replied: “No! Walk with me and as soon as we are out, I will put you in the new cage. Thus, he took the bird in one hand, the new cage in the other, and went out of the garden, safe and sound. The rabbit who was anxiously waiting for the prince, for this was his last trial, as soon as he saw him arrive with the bird and cage in hand, all joyful said: “Ah, now you have done well! If you continue to do as I tell you, not only will you gain the (l’aceddu Bonvirdi), but also the talking horse.” “Ah, yes, I will do this!” responded the prince. They changed the cage for the bird, and again began to walk and return to the warlock (lu magu).

The owner of the horse, as soon as he saw him coming, was so happy, he couldn’t stand on his own two feet. Before he left his side, the rabbit, always prompt and provident said: “Now that you will go to lu magu, you’ll see that he’ll bring down the horse that he promised. But you have to tell him like this: “Magu, you have asked me for a favor and now I ask you to do one for me. If you give me permission for an hour, I would like to enter the garden – riding the talking horse and holding the talking bird in my hand – to find out what harmony it brings. You’ll see that he’ll say: “Sure, even for two hours!

And you continue to pass. When you find that the horse has a good trot, then you’ll climb over the garden walls and come out here. After you have climbed over the wall, lu magu cannot do anything to you. After this discussion, Peppinu went to lu magu and lu magu said to him: “Oh Peppinu, you came with the bird?” “Yes!” he replied. I brought it to you, but now I want a favour from you: you need to give me permission to
enter the garden for one hour with the talking bird and horse just to see what harmony it brings.”

Lu magu, who was all happy, gave him permission even for two hours, and Peppinu took the horse and began his way into the garden. When he saw that the horse had a good trot, he poked the horse and jumped over the wall. “And now go and get him! Lu magu, all in a rage, yelled: “Trader! Nobody had the audacity to take my horse; you with your ideas, took it away!” The prince turned to him and said: “Die, warlock (magu), irresponsible (scileratu)! Die in a rage!” And lu magu, was so angry and hurt that he banged his head on the wall and died.

When he was out, the rabbit said: “Bravo, bravo Peppinu! Continue doing what I tell you, and don’t worry. And as they were walking, the rabbit gave him further advice regarding the other magu. This magu, was so content to see him. Peppinu greeted him and then said: “Magu, the other day you asked me for a favor, and I have done two, for I brought you the talking horse and bird. Now, you have to do one for me. You have to give me permission to enter into the garden, alone for one hour, with the talking horse and bird and with la Bella di setti veli (on the horse with me), just to see what harmony it brings.” “Even for two!” said lu magu. For you, I will not deny anything.”

Thus, Peppinu began walking through the garden and when he noticed the horse had a good trot, “tiritumpiti…” and jumped over the walls. “Ah scileratu!” yelled lu magu: “you did it to me; but I hope you don’t have time to enjoy all these things you have robbed!” But realizing that everything was out of his hands, was so raged and distressed that he couldn’t resist the pain and killed himself.

“Bravo, bravo! Said the rabbit to Peppinu, when he saw him out of every danger. If you continue this way, you will also gain the water for the eyes for your father.” And walking, walking, the rabbit gave the prince more necessary advice. So they arrived at the garden of roses, and the rabbit did not forget to reveal the last recommendation.

Peppinu presented himself to lu magu and said: “Magu, the past few days, you’ve asked me for a favor, and I have accomplished three favors to make you happy: I not only brought la Bella di setti veli, but the talking bird and horse – which you so desire. Now, I ask you to do a little favour for me: give me some water for the eyes and permission to enter your garden with the talking bird, horse and la Bella to find out what
harmony everyone brings altogether.” Lu magu, was so secure with his things and situation, trusted the prince for he kept his promise and said: “Why not? Even for two hours!”

Peppinu entered the garden of roses and he jumped over the walls safe and sound. Lu magu yelled: “Oh, you trader, scileratu! You run, but you haven’t done anything to me because I have the water for the eyes and I will do with it what I will. And as he was more fortunate than the other maghi, he consoled himself and remained alive. In the meantime, the rabbit, when he saw the prince return with all the things, said: “Bravu, Peppinu! Now we can return toward home: follow me and walk. On their way back, they arrived to the place where there was once the cadaver. The rabbit, then said: “You have done a lot of good to me and I wanted to re-compensate how I could, doing those thing that you could. If it wasn’t for me, you wouldn’t have been able to do anything – relying only on your strength. Now, it’s time for us to separate. But before we go our own separate ways, I want to give you another piece of advice and I recommend you keep this dear: beware of sinners (guardati di carni impiccata)!” And telling him this, he vanished.

Peppinu remained sad to loose such a precious friend. But continued his journey until he arrived in Spain. Throughout the entire kingdom, he said: “a king’s son has arrived and brings four rare things: la Bella di setti veli, the talking bird and horse, and water for the eyes.” And everyone ran to see and were marveled. How he arrived at this city, Peppinu saw that they were preparing to hang two people and there was a crowd around. He got closer and asked: “For what motive are you hanging these two?” “Because they have incurred many debts, and they don’t have anything to repay them.” “How much are these debts?” “Milli lire each.” The prince generously paid everything and had the two poor souls released. These two men went to thank the prince, and then he realized that they were his brothers. “And why didn’t you do as I advised you? If you didn’t follow your own mind, you wouldn’t have found yourself in these conditions – sacrificing your honor and life. Enough, now everything is finished and I’m content that finally we are together.” “And where did you go?” asked the brothers. “I went on a journey to save our father’s eyesight. And by doing this, I gained four things.” And the
prince named them all. “And the water for the eyes, where is it; we don’t see it?” “In my pocket,” Peppinu replied. “And now that we are here, let’s return to our own city.”

They began to walk. As they were walking, the middle brother said to the older brother (in a low voice): “And now what are we to do? With what face and scorn we will reenter our city! He went to save our father’s sight and saved our lives too. Instead, we haven’t accomplished anything with our love and with our dinners! This is embarrassing for us!” “Well, then, this is what we’ll do?” responds the older brother. “When I left home to come here, I remember seeing a well. When we arrive at this well, we’ll tell him that we are tired and we will ask to stop at this well because our feet can’t take it anymore. This way we all stop at this well and sleep there.

When we feel that he’s in a deep sleep, we’ll give him an excuse, and as soon as he awakes, we will throw him into the well. After, I who am the eldest, will take la Bella and the talking bird, and you who are the middle, take the water and the horse. Then, we present ourselves to our Papa, and we’ll tell him that we have earned these things, with our hard labor. They walked and walked and arrived at the well, and they followed through with their plan: “brother, we can’t walk anymore, by foot, and we are so tired!”

“And what would you like me to do? The horse that speaks, who doesn’t want to be dismounted by anyone (non si faci muntari di nuddu…) and so, there are, however, two of us on this horse – I and la Bella.” “Well then, come down!” responded the two brother “and we’ll rest a bit and then we will continue our walk with more (lena) stamina. “Ah yes! This I can do: and I’ll come down.”

He was also tired, for the long (gran) walk he did. And as soon he leaned against a rock, he fell asleep, he and la Bella. The brothers saw that their plans were going better than they thought. They reserved their excuses. They took one of the bottles of water from his satchet and threw it in the well, before realizing his betrayal. At the awakening, la Bella saw that Peppinu wasn’t around, and asked his brothers, what happened to him: “We don’t know anything. We were also asleep. Maybe, a ferocious animal came while everyone was asleep and took him away.” Even the horse and the bird asked what happened to their owner; but the response was always the same: “We don’t know anything!” Thus, the eldest brother took la Bella and the bird, and the middle
brother took the sachet with water. When they began to walk, the horse didn’t want anyone on him, and so the brother had to pull the horse by hand walking on foot.

“You arrived at your father’s,” the servants said quickly: “Master, your kids are here – the eldest and the middle accompanied with a woman.” The poor father was all content. And it was true that his two children returned and the first thing they did was kiss his father’s hand. Then they said: “Papa, we are here in your presence, after many hardships (danger). I brought with me la Bella di setti veli and the talking bird. And my brother brought the water for your eyes and the talking horse.” “And why do I need these things for, if I don’t have the sight and can see them? At least bring me the water, so I can put a little on, because I can hear you, but not see you.” They gave him the water for the eyes, and he put it on. But if before he had little vision, now he couldn’t see at all and (annorbau) avoided everything; the bottle, by mistake, was the one (chi annorbava). And so this poor father lamented and cried everyday: “I will die and I won’t be able to see my son Peppinu! Who broke my heart (Chi straziu pe lu me cori!) What a torn heart!” He turned to his sons and said: “And of Peppinu, did you bring me any news?” “We know absolutely nothing. We took another path and we didn’t see him.” While the father was lamenting for his youngest son Peppinu: “I will die and I will not even see my own pupils and my own eyes!” La Bella locked herself in a room and didn’t want to eat anymore; the bird was all melancholy and the horse, because he was so sad, didn’t want anyone on him and didn’t speak anymore with anyone. And so, they were all sad and suffered the missing prince.

In the meantime, word spread throughout other cities about king’s sons who returned home with all these beautiful things, and from every part arrived princes, marchisi, and counts, to see la Bella di setti veli, the talking bird and horse. But when all these people arrived, nobody could see anything, because la Bella wanted to stay locked in her room, the bird neither, and the horse was kicking, and didn’t want anyone around him. Let’s now leave this scene and return to Peppinu who was so hopeless (desideratu). When this poor, young man saw himself abandoned in the deep well, said: “My dear rabbit was so right to warn me to beware of sinners (di carni mpiccata)! After all the good that I have done to my brothers, they paid me in this beautiful way (muneta)! What an ignorant (ngratu) world!” While he was reflecting, he heard a voice: “Peppinu! O
Peppinu!” “What do you want? Who’s calling me?” he responded instantly. “Don’t worry; it’s me the rabbit! Do you want to come out?” “Of course, I would like to come out; but how?” The rabbit extended his tail and said: “Hold on to me; I will pull and you will climb.” When he arrived to the top, the rabbit said: “I told you!...if you have done what I have told you, this big disgrace wouldn’t have happened. Now that you have been saved, (opera e ngegnati).” And he vanished from his eyes. Peppinu, remained alone saying: “Opara e ngegnati! What do these words mean? He began walking thinking and was confronted by a (massaru). He said: “Massaru, would you like to do an exchange? You give me your clothes and I will give you mine.” Lu massaru was content, because he would benefit, and they changed their clothes.

Peppinu, dressed as a massaru and with the good bottle of water for the eyes in his sachet, went to the bottom of his father’s palace. When he arrived at the bottom, there was a festa ginerali: la Bella was allegra (revived), the bird began to talk all content, and the horse had happiness in his eyes again. The two brothers were facing each other on the balcony, and lu massareddu said to them: “young gentlemen, do you need me for (garzuneddu)?”

“And what can you do?” “I know how to tighten and hold a horse, make food for sad women, and I can also heal birds (pasciu l’aceddi).” “Yes, Yes!” they said, without recognizing him: “you’re perfect for us; we have a horse, who needs to be cured.” Well then, they allowed him to enter and put him to work. From then on, the horse, who couldn’t be recognized, was so alive and ate voluntarily, and this was so for la Bella, who’s face changed (chi avia mutatu facci), and the bird spoke continuously.

After fifteen days of this life, lu massaru said to the brothers: “May you allow me to see the king?” “Sure, climb up!” He climbed up the stairs, and when he was in his presence, he said: “Your Majesty (Reali Maesta), I have been here for fifteen days as a garzuni with your sons, and only now was I able to climb, to see how you are doing?” The king replied: “There should be three, but the youngest, who was the “pupil of my eyes, went to find water for my eyes and never returned. Their brothers returned, but he did not. I soon I will die and my son Peppinu, I will not see anymore! Hearing this, Peppinu was all consoled and said: “Your Majesty (Maesta), I have a bottle of water for your eyes, which will bring back your eye sight: would you like me to put some on
you?” “I hope it’s not like the one my sons gave me, which left me (annorbari) totally blind!” “No,” he said, this is a good one!” He then put the water on the king’s eyes and his eyes turned bright and lucenti comu du’ stiddi. “Ah!” said the king “my vision has returned, and my son Peppinu hasn’t returned anymore; the one who left from here without so much love to find the water of the eyes! And now that I have regained my sight, I cannot see him anymore!” “Well, then, said this young man, would you like to see your son Peppinu?” “Would I ever like to see him!” “Ah, dear papa, I am your Peppinu!” “Well then my son, why are you dressed like a massaru? Why this finzioni?” Peppinu told his father the story, how he had earned all the things, and how his brothers threw him into the well, after he saved them from death. “Ah, what brothers scilerati!” said the poor father; and he gave Peppinu a king’s suit.

Peppinu put it on underneath his clothes of massaru. Afterward, the father called his other sons and said: “My sight has returned, because of the garzuneddu who had the good water. Today, I will have a grand dinner, to celebrate new beginnings, and I want to invite princes and counts and also the massareddu, will eat at our table with us. At this dinner we cannot forget, la Bella, the horse and the bird. This way, all who are invited can see the beautiful things you have conquered and brought. This feast was held with all splendour. After dinner, the massareddu said: “Now, we will lock the doors and everyone of us here will tell a story, in dialect, of this noble companionship.” They locked the doors and said la Bella: “If you don’t mind, I will begin.” “Yes, yes!” they all agreed for they wanted to hear such a beauty speak. Well then, she told the story of how she was locked in lu magu’s palace and how a handsome young man set her free.

When she arrived at this point of the story to reveal the name of who liberated her, she turned to the massareddu and said: “It’s you Peppinu! Remove now your clothes of massaru and let everyone see you.” With these words, he removed his clothes of massaru and had on his king’s suit. “Figghiu meu prediletto! My long lost son!” said his father, you are here and have thought of me. But your brothers, after you have saved them, have betrayed you and are two scilerati and will be put to death.” He responded: “No father, because I forgive them, and I don’t want that this beautiful feast will end with a brothers death. They hurt me a lot, but I repeat: I FORGIVE THEM!”
After the feast, the king sent his two sons to another city. Then the youngest son married la Bella di sette veli and he also enjoyed the talking horse and bird. And so,

“Iddi arrestaru, filici e cunteni,
E nu’ arrestamu senza nenti.”

“My hand delights to trace unusual things,
And deviates from the known and common way,
Nor will in fading silks compose,
Faintly the inimitable rose.” (Virginia Woolf 1929, p. 58)

Tradicinu

There once was a mother who had twelve children and she was also pregnant. The children, who were all men, went to work in the countryside and said: “Mamma, if you have a boy, put the broom outside the door; if you have a little girl, put a wooden broom handle out. They gave this unborn child a name of Tradicinu, because it was the youngest of thirteen children. In the evening, when all the children arrived, they saw a broom outside the door, because she gave birth to a baby boy – and they were overjoyed. The following morning, they said to their mother that they would go to work, but instead they went to lu dragu. They arrived at lu dragu, they told him that if he would give them his daughters to be their wives, they would cultivate (zappavanu) his garden for three days and three nights. Lu dragu immediately agreed and the twelve brothers began cultivating so hard that sweat was pouring down their foreheads.

Tradicinu, who was worried, not seeing them return the first night, said to his mother: “Mamma, my brothers went to put themselves with lu dragu: he’s going to kill them! Better that I go, so this way he doesn’t kill them.” So in fact, he went to where his brothers were and said: “My brothers, see that tonight lu dragu will come and kill you, and he will send his daughters with white towels (to distinguish who they are) and to you, he will give black towels. When his daughters arrive, you take the white towels and put them on and they will put on the black towels. This way, lu dragu will kill them instead of you and you can escape.” With this plan in place, Tradicinu hid in the olive orchard, to see what would happen and to prepare provisions (pigghiari provvedimentu). Lu dragu, by mistake, killed all his children, because he thought they were the men who cultivated his land; but how it happened or not, he captured Tradicinu and took him to his house.
All happy, he went to his wife and said: “Tomorrow we will have a great meal because I killed twelve men, and for the rest of the week we have to have a fiesta.

Tridicinu, we will put you in a barrel, take care of him until he’s nice and plump, and then we will eat him.” In the morning, they put Tridicinu into a barrel, and both husband and wife went to get the dead ones. And this way, they saw that they were all their children. “Poor me!” said lu dragu: “Poor us! They did it to us! I killed my twelve children; but they will not be so satisfied, because I will eat Tridicinu like bread.”

Lu dragu went home with a liver in his mouth, and asked Tridicinu to give him his finger. Tridicinu, clever, who knew he wanted to eat him, gave him a lizard’s tail. Lu dragu put it in his mouth and spat it out. “Uh, how sour! He’s too thin, yet”: and they continued taking care and plumping him up. After a couple of months, Tridicinu asked them to take him out from the barrel, because he didn’t fit anymore, he was so fat, and he wanted to get some air. Lu dragu took him out from the barrel and asked his wife to start the fire and prepare the cauldron, to boil him. Lu dragu tied Tridicinu in a chair, from head to toe and he said to la draga: “my wife, cook him well, because I will call our brother-in-law for dinner.” With this, lu dragu left and la draga quickly began gathering sticks for the fire. She tried and tried to start the fire, but gave up. Well then, Tridicinu said: “Un-tie my hands, and I will start it for you, and you gather the small sticks.” La draga without (malizzia) malice, untied him, but as she bent down, Tridicinu hit her over the head with a wooden spoon and cracked her head open, like granite. Then with the wife’s meat, he made a meal for lu dragu; but he save her head and fixed her up on the bed, with clothes, which made her look all dressed-up. And he ran. When lu dragu arrived, seeing that his wife was extended on the bed, said to his brother-in-law: “My wife worked so hard and is tired and sleeping. Let’s leave her alone to rest. We’ll eat and then we’ll call her.”

We’ll save her some food and call her later. This is what they did and they ate as if they were famished. But when it was evening, lu dragu went to the bed and touched his wife’s head. You could imagine what shock and rage he had towards Tridicinu. Instead, Tridicinu had already arrived at his home, safe and sound and lu dragu couldn’t do anything else, but cry over his wife. But to cry over a dead person, are tears lost. “Lu faula e ditta cacciamund’ a barritta.”
“Cultivation is mostly found in the intentional work of schooling and in the unintentional lessons of play and other forms of daily life. It is by being attentive to how each individual is undergoing the experience that we can be reflective about the ways the cultivation is shaping the horizons of the individual’s knowing.” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, p.3).

**Juxa**

There once was a mother with an only son. This son was bad, didn’t understand anything and his name was Juxa. One day his mother said to him: “Juxa, do you know what to do? I will give you a piece of linen and you will go and sell it. But, I will recommend you to give it to someone with little words, because others will fool you.” She told him the price to sell this piece of linen. Juxa threw this linen over his neck and left. This way he began to walk: all the women, on the road, were calling him and asking him: “Juxa, where are you taking this linen? Do you want to sell it?” “And leave me alone!” he responded, “because I have to give it to someone of few words.”

He kept on walking and everyone naturally were asking him if he wanted to sell the linen, but Juxa noticing that they all spoke, kept moving forward, until he arrived in the out-skirts of the village in the countryside. He felt tired of all the walking and sat down. As he was sitting, he saw a serpent come out of nowhere (pertusu) and the serpent wasn’t talking. “And finally, now I have found you! Here is the linen; because you are truly of few words and give me the money so I may bring it back to my mother!” Juxa stayed a while, and not seeing the money, thought to leave the serpent the linen and returned home.

As soon as the mother saw him without the linen, she asked him to whom he sold it to. And he responded: “I gave it to the serpent who was of a few words. Everyone was talking to me, but I continued forward until I saw this serpent.” “And the money?” “Money, he didn’t give me, and he made me wait awhile too.” “Uh, you have me! Uh for your life!” said his mother. She picked up a rod (vestuni) and began beating him. In the end, she sent him to get the money. Juxa returned to the serpent, with the stick: and he began hitting it against the wall, where the serpent vanished: “Either give me back my linen or my money!” He hit many shots, which destroyed this wall, and with another shot, he heard money shuffling. He removed another rock and found a bucket full of gold.
money. He emptied it into a sack. Then he covered this sack with thorns and he threw it around his neck.

On his way, people called him: “Juxa, what do you have in your sack?”

“Ahime, se non cridi,
Tocca e vidi!”

They felt the sack and could feel and hear thorns and said: “Oh my! Juxa, you are bringing back thorns to your house!” And they made fun of him. And as they made fun of him, Juxa arrived at home and at the door, he said to his mother: “go and get a bed sheet because the person I sold the linen to, had paid me buckets.” His mother looked at what he brought home; she saw so much gold and said: “Uh mi hai! Don’t scream or they will take it.” They quickly emptied the money and the mother, who was prudent, as her son was sweet as salt, saved it in a chest. Then she boiled figs, parsley and peeled eggs, and said to Juxa: “Sleep my child and face your head in the air, because God (Our Creator) will throw figs, parsley and peeled eggs.” Juxa went to sleep, and his mother threw figs, parsley and peeled eggs.

After this down-pour of good news, Juxa got up from bed and went to the piazza. There, he found two children who were playing with money. When he passed by, these kids asked him for money and Juxa said: “At my house, I brought a sack full!” These kids told everyone that Juxa had a sack full of money at his house. Word spread throughout and even to the authorities. The police went to Juxa’s house and out came his mother. “The money your son brought home, where did he rob them? We are aware that he brought home a sack full!” “What sack!” his mother replied “I’m amazed that who had heard this conversation said: “Oh porca fujuta! Don’t you remember when I went to sleep and I faced the air and God threw parsley, figs and peeled eggs? And that day, I brought a sack of bucket full of gold.” “You see what an idiot, he is!” said his mother, “and what beautiful discourse he knows to do!” The police began to laugh and left on their way. And this way,

“La faula e ditta
E cacciamund’ a barritta.”

“Life stories are living and dynamic; they need to be told and retold, heard and reheard to reveal their meaning.” (Cassie, Drake, Miller, 1990, p.28).
There once was a father and a mother: they were poor and they had many children. One day a furesteri presented himself at the door. He was well dressed and asked if they had any food. They gave him what little they had to eat, and after he ate, this furesteri left. The wife, however, recognized him as the Lord and quickly sent her husband, to ask for at least the grace of his soul. The husband, whose name was Rafaeli, caught up to him and asked him for a grazia (grace). The Lord responded: “Ask and it will be given unto you!” So then, he asked for the grace that whosoever climbed to the top of the garden wall, to remain seated in the chair and to not be able to get up without his command. The Lord granted him both wishes and Rafaeli returned home all content. His wife asked: “Well, then, did you ask for the grace of your soul?” “No cara,” he said “I instead asked for, a more valuable grace;” and he told her the story. “Go quickly—reach him!” responded his wife, all worried: “go reach him and ask for the grace of your soul!” He began to run, and caught up to him in the middle of the road and asked for another grace: “I wish for a (barrittedda e’n mazzu di carti) bar with a deck of cards: and wherever you put this bar for I to enter also, and whoever plays with me cards, for I to win everything.” “Your wish has been granted!” said the Lord and He continued His journey.

Rafaeli went to his wife, all happy and told him the two wishes he was granted from the Lord. “Uh mi hai!” the wife began to scream “Uh for your life! I sent you to ask for the grace of your soul and you returned with these things? Poor you! Go catch up to him again and ask Him.”

He went and caught up to Him and asked to receive whatever he desired in his pocket. And he received it with great scandal from his wife, who was a good woman, full of good will, charity and religion. After a while, the devil went to Rafaeli to take him; because he had lost the grace of his soul. The devil said to him, without cirimonii song or dance: “Walk!” Rafaeli replied: “Yes, but first let me eat several fruits, so I won’t leave with an empty stomach.” He climb on top of the garden wall, extended his arm to the fruit trees, ate his fruit and threw the pits to the devil. This was making the devil hungry and said: “Rafaeli, if you don’t mind, allow me to climb up so I can eat some too. Come down!” He came down and the devil, quickly, quickly, climbed up. He ate all the fruit.
he wanted; then he wanted to climbed down, but couldn’t. Rafaeli went to call two blacksmiths to beat the devil up. The devil received so many shots, until there was a circle of fire and then he escaped.

After sometime, Death arrived to take him away. He said: Godfather, sit awhile, because we will soon leave. Death went to sit on top of the chair and couldn’t get up anymore. “Uh pe mia, isatimi!” he said. But Rafaeli took Death with all the chair to the blacksmith, and both of them with bats, began to take shots: “tiritonghiti and tiritanghiti; dundi vegnu, vegnu du mulinu.” Finally, Death, all beaten up, promised to leave; and so Rafaeli let Death go. Years passed and Rafaeli finally died. The Lord sent this sinner to hell and Rafaeli went and he saw hell was closed. He knocked and a voice said: “Who is it?” “Rafaeli.” “Uh pe mia! Uh for me! Lock the doors, lock the doors, so he won’t enter; because last time he beat me up!” It was the devil, who many years earlier, when he met Rafaeli, and he remembered their encounter still. Rafaeli remained locked out and not knowing what to do, he went to where Death was. But even Death learned his lesson and didn’t want to receive him. So then, Rafaeli absorbed himself and went to the Lord, to explain himself. But the Lord said to him that he was going to hell. “And well then, what do I do?” asked Rafaeli. He returned to hell and he found it was open. Quickly he snuck in and said to his pocket: “Gather together all my relatives!” They all appeared in his pocket: but the devil, seeing that Rafaeli was taking his souls, kicked him out. “And now what do I do?” asked Rafaeli. He began to walk and arrived at the place where St. Peter was – the doors of paradise.

As he arrived, he said: “Will you let me go in to see how paradise looks like? “Nothing!” responded St. Peter “Nothing, hell awaits you: I haven’t received orders to let you in!” “And let me see it a tiny bit, even for good will and charity!” St. Peter opened one of the gates and instantly Rafaeli removed his hat and went after him.

Afterward, he took out all his dead relatives from his pocket and placed them in Heaven. He then presented himself to the Lord telling him that hell didn’t want him; and this way, the Lord had pity for him and sent him to purgatory, to wash away his sins. After many years in purgatory, one day he saw a soul who had purged all his sins and was climbing to Heaven. “Wait, wait!” said Rafaeli: “if you don’t mind, can we have a game of cards: whoever wins, will go to Heaven and who loses will remain here
in purgatory. “Uh, this is bad for me!” said the soul “after I paid for my sins, I have to
gamble whether I end-up in Heaven or not?” But Rafaeli convinced this soul who played
brisciuli. Rafaeli with his cards, won and then climbed to Heaven. When the Lord saw
him, he said: “And how! Instead of the soul who paid for his sins, you climbed instead?”
Rafaeli responded: “Dear Lord forgive me! We played cards and whoever won, would
end up in Heaven, and I won.” “Bravo, bravo! Said the Lord, laughing; “since that soul
lost his spot, I will forgive you and will let you in Heaven. This way Rafaeli, with all his
relatives gained Paradise and he’s still enjoying it even today for all of eternity!

“A faula e ditta
E cacciamundi a barritta.”

“Experienced knowledge is defined as our accumulated understanding of human
affairs which resides in our hearts, heads, and actions.” (Hunt, 1992, p.7).

God, St. Peter and The Poor Man (U Povareddu, Lu Signuri e San Petru)

There once was a poor man, who had a large family with many kids. One day,
these kids asked him for bread, and he, who had nothing else to sell, went desperately, to
destroy himself on a mountain, and to end it with a death and all his miseries. While he
was travelling through a forest, he saw a man all dressed up as a cavaleri, with a beautiful
feather hat and thorns (spiruni) on his feet. As soon as he saw him, this cavaleri said:
“Where are you going, where are you going good man?” He responded: I’m desperately
going to destroy myself because I don’t even have a cent to buy bread for my kids.”
“Would you like me to give you a purse of money?” asked the cavaleri “as lo
long as you
do as I tell you!” “Tell me what I need to do, and I will do it!” The cavaleri then said:
“You know what to do? Go into the forest, and you’ll see that you’ll find a caddaruni
(cauldron). You will start a big fire and then you’ll put the caddaruni (cauldron) on top;
so then, that’s all you have to do! In the meantime, take this purse full of gold money
and leave. On the return, if you do as I have told you to, come back to me, and I will give
you another purse.”

The poor man, all happy, went into the forest, started the fire and then placed the
caddaruni (cauldron) on top. While this was happening, he turned his eyes to the
caddaruni, and he saw it full of blood, boiling, and many souls packed in there. Then he
realized, that this cavalieri with the feather hat was the devil and regretting his agreement, he threw a kick at the caddaruni (cauldron) and took off. The devil, seeing that his plan wasn’t followed through, he made a circle of fire and vanished.

After a while, the poor man was hungry. He saw a hotel and he entered to get something to eat. In this hotel there was the Lord with St. Peter, who were walking throughout; the world. And after the poor man ate, they saw that they took out some money from the purse, to pay for his bill. The Lord, who was sitting nearby, however, said to him: “Who gave you the money?” The poor man, who saw that looked like a good perons, told him his story: this, this and this, without forgetting anything. At the end of the story, the Lord said: “Oh, poor man, do you know that this is money from the devil? Give it to me; then pay the hotel keeper, I will think about it.” So then, the Lord took the purse, He said a few words, and this money turned into many leaves. Then He got up and He said to St. Peter: “Let’s Go!” St. Peter got closer to the poor man and He said: “How come! The Lord is here present, and you don’t ask Him for a grace? Go quickly, and what you’ll ask for, you shall receive.”

So then, the poor man approached the Lord and asked Him for a grace. “What would you like?” asked the Lord. “I’d like You to give me a little sack, and when I say: “All the things for me, in this little sack!” all the things I want to appear in this little sack.” “Your grace has been granted!” said the Lord, and he left. But St. Peter got closer to the poor man and he said: “Go ask him for another grace, even better, and think about saving your soul.” The poor man approached the Lord again, and he asked Him for a deck of cards, that will enable him to win always. “Your grace has been granted!” said the Lord and He left.

Evening arrived, and this poor man went to bed, in a room of the hotel, where he had eaten. Around midnight, however, he hears a loud noise of chains rattling, and many devils pulling this poor man from the arms and feet saying: “Where did you have the money which you took, or you’ll come with us!” Then the poor man said: “Okay, and you don’t want to leave?...We’ll see who’ll regret this!” He took his sack and said: “All the devils in here!” And the devils were zapped into this sack. When morning arrived, after a good sleep, he put the sack on his back and he went to the master blacksmith. And he said: “Hammer this sack well. The devils began screaming: “Ahi, ahi my legs! Ahi
my eyes! Ahi my head!” But the blacksmith wasn’t moved and continued to hammer and bang. When he couldn’t take anymore, the poor man said: “ Enough!” He opened the sack, but the devils all escaped, they made a circle of fire and vanished.

After this incident, many years have passed, however, one day Death came to the house of the poor man and said: “Go prepare yourself and come with me.” The poor man said: “Don’t take me now, I beg you; but give me another year of time, and then will come.” “No way, now you have to come!” “Another year, another year! Repeated the poor man: “I ask you as a favour!” But Death was adamant and said: “hurry up, because I don’t have time to waste with you! I have many others!” “Well then, we’ll see who will win!” said the poor man “Death into the sack!” And Death entered in there.

He took sack to a master blacksmith, and began, tiritunghiti, tiritanghiti, (banging) – one bang after another. Well then Death began to scream: “Fine, fine, I will give you another year! Just leave me alone!” The poor man opened the sack, and Death left, all beaten and limping, that he looked like he came from the hospital.

A year went by quickly, and Death returned. All genteel he said: “Let’s go; because this time neither you or I can do anything.” “If you wait for me, I will come with you; just let me bring my sack and my deck of cards.” This way he died and he was sentenced to hell.

When he arrived at the doors of hell, he began knocking: “tubbi, tubbi!” “Who is it?” asked the devil, from in there.” “It’s me, don’t you recognize me? I’m the poor man.” “Out! Out!” cried all the devils; “Throw him out and don’t allow him in here because he’ll beat us up!” “Fine, fine!” he said “not even in hell, they want me!” “If you want to enter,” said the devil, put down the sack! Only with this pack, you may enter.” “You know what we could do?” he responds: “let’s have a game of cards, for our souls. If I win, I will take a soul at a time. However, if you win, you will take my soul, without further discussion.” With saying this, they began playing with an arrogant devil, who believed he would win with flying colours. Instead, with his deck of cards, the poor man won, and he regained his soul. So the devil all in a rage said: “Go away, or you will take all of hell with you!” The winner took seven souls, choosing his relatives, he put them in his sack and said: “Now, let’s go to Heaven and we’ll see if they want us.”
They began walking towards Heaven, and when they arrived at the doors, he knocked: “tubbi, tubbi!” “Who are you?” asked St. Peter. “Open Peter; don’t you recognize me? Don’t you remember when we met at the hotel, and you gave me the good advice?” “Go Away! Go Away! Said St. Peter “because Our Lord sent you to hell. And there is your place!” “Listen, Peter; don’t get angry: I went to hell, and there they don’t want me; so what do you want me to do? Open the door a tiny bit, so at least I can see what it looks like!” “Go Away; if the Lord finds out that I showed paradise to a condemned soul, He will take away my keys and not trust me anymore.” “Oh Peter, what does it matter if you give me a tiny peek? Even do it for goodwill (carita), don’t be ignorant/arrogant.” “Bonu, I will open it; but see to it that you stay in between the door, and don’t get stuck there!” “Oh, don’t worry because I will be obedient.”

St. Peter opened the door and said: “Look!” So then the poor man said, quickly, quickly: “St. Peter in my sack!” And this Saint ended up in this sack. “O pezzu di birbanti,” said St. Peter; for I who forgot about this story (ca jeu chi m’arricordava chiu do stu tranellu)? And this was the grace for your soul, which you asked the Lord? Now let me out; and I will go and speak with the Lord and this way I’ll have Him receive you in paradise.” “Oh Peter, Peter, you want to do this for me; but I know it much longer than you! First give me the keys and after I will have you come out.”

Well then, St. Peter, seeing that he couldn’t shock him (spuntari), gave him the keys; the poor man placed himself in paradise and then closed the door. When he was in there, the poor man opened the sack and St. Peter came out with another seven, as well. “Well what did you do?” said the Saint “also these damned souls? If the Lord finds-out, where will I put myself? What will I do?…” “Fine, I will tell the Lord, and I’m sure He won’t do anything to you.” The Lord heard this argument (baccanu) and he approached both of them and asked what all the commotion was all about, St. Peter told the Lord the story, and He said to the poor man: “For this time I will forgive you and these other souls; but you Peter, think next time to be a better guard; because the fault is all Mine, who gave You the keys to paradise, without thinking that you are too old.” And this way, the poor man, with his astuzia (wit) gained eternal life and saved also his relatives.
“Each person’s map of the world is as unique as their thumbprint. There are no two people alike. No two people who understand the same sentence the same way…So in dealing with people you try not to fit them to your concept of what they should be….” (Bradshaw, 1990, p. 139).

**God and the Bad Tenant (Lu Signuri e Lu Malu Alloggiu)**

At their time, the Lord walked through the world with His twelve apostles. Once, however, He was alone, and as it got dark, He went to ask a husband and wife for lodging. The husband was good; but the wife was so sad, and didn’t want to give Him lodging. “Where will we put him?” she said “Where will we put him, if the house is so small?” “Even in an astray, I’ll be fine!” said the Lord. “As long as you keep me with you for the night; because tomorrow morning, I will leave.”

The husband was moved with pity and said to the wife to give Him lodging. This way, the Lord remained with them. That evening they were eating fish and the husband sent with his wife a large portion to the Lord. But the wife thought to eat the fish and bring the remaining bones to the Lord.

After they ate, the husband said to his wife: “Rosa, fix some hay to this poor foreigner, so He can sleep.” The wife, who was vindictive, fixed the Lord some hay, not to have further questions from her husband; but after she compiled the hay, she threw water on top. However, that evening, she had a horrible stomach ache, which was torturing her and she couldn’t find rest (abbentu). The husband gets up; enters where the Lord was sleeping and said: “Good old man, would you give me some comfort for my wife, who is yelling and lamenting her pain.

The Lord went immediately; He looked at her and said to her husband: “Leave her alone, leave her alone; leave her to scream, until I say so.” She continued to scream more so and the poor husband, with tears in his eyes, begged the old man and said: “Good old man, what are we to do?” “Leave her alone, leave her alone!” responded the Lord “because the moment has not yet come.” When, however, the woman was in so much agony, the Lord turned to her and said: “Now is the good moment; repeat after me my words:

“Acqua rasa, pagghia spasa,
Reschi di pisci mi dasti a mangiari:
Dogghia di panza ti poti passari!”

He asked her to repeat this three times, and the pain passed; then He gave her His blessings and vanished. She then understood what the old man meant with His words and regretted how she treated the Lord. She ran to see if she could find Him, and she pounded her chest, screaming with tears in her eyes: “Master, forgive me! Master forgive me!” The Lord turned to her from afar and gave her His blessings, seeing that her regret was sincere. And so, this woman changed her life and at her death she saved her soul.

“The more we know what we know, the more we can challenge ourselves, direct our energies, and work with renewed intensity.” (Donald H. Graves 1991, p.144).

**God and St. Peter (Lu Signuri e San Petru)**

When the Lord was walking in the world with his twelve apostles, St. Peter said to him once: “I’m hungry, Master! The Lord turned to the apostles and said: “If you are hungry, each of you pick up a rock and walk. Well then, St. Peter cringed his lips and picked up the smallest rock because he was a little more putruni. Instead the others were more obedient and they picked up a larger rock. They continued their walk and when they were at a certain point, the Lord said: “Now put down the rocks which you brought; and saying this He gave them His blessings. All the rocks turned into bread; and however, as St. Peter chose the smallest rock, he ended up with a little bread. This St. Peter was frustrated to see that he ended up with the smallest portion. But the Lord said to him: “O Peter, Peter, small you wanted and a small piece of bread you ended-up: it’s your fault!”

St. Peter remained famished and as they were passing by a village: “Lord”, he said “now I will go into a shop and make a debit.” “You will make a debit!” responded the Lord. “And see that you’ll return without your jacket…”; and he gave him money made of sole (sola), because this was customary during that time. “Well then, I’ll go!” And he entered into a shop where they were making food. St. Peter ate, for he wasn’t missing an appetite and then he wanted to give the owner the money made of sole (sola). But the owner didn’t want it and it so happened this Saint didn’t have other money to pay, he grabbed his jacket which was on him. This way, St. Peter returned to his companions without a jacket and the Lord reminded him: “Didn’t I tell you that you’ll
return without a jacket? But you Peter, are determined and want to do things your way. Now then go and pay because I don’t want to see you without a jacket!” And He gave him some money to take care of it. St. Peter paid his debt and then returned to his Master with his jacket.

They continued their journey and they wanted to arrive at a certain village. As they were walking, they saw a young bag man with a beard lying underneath a tree. The Lord said to this bearded man: “Good man, where is this certain place? And he named the village.

The bag man stretched-out his foot and signaled the direction, he responded: “Over there, over there!” “What a beautiful criana, what a beautiful chest” said St. Peter. But the Lord didn’t speak and continued walking with all the apostles. Passing by a house, they see a beautiful young woman, who was mpastava lu pani nta la maidda. The Lord said to her: “God-child, God-child, what path does one take to go to this village?” She left the bread in la maidda and went out to show them. And after when she showed them the way, she returned to her things. She entered and seeing that the bread was all baked and ready, instantly knew that this was a miracle from the Lord. She ran out and began to call: “Master, Master!” The Lord turned around and from afar gave her many blessings. “Why!” said St. Peter, who always had the need to observe certain things: “why! That scruffy bag man, who showed us the way by stretching-out his foot; and this beautiful teacher, who left her bread to show us the way, with all gentleness, You only gave her a blessing?” “Listen, Peter, responded the Lord, don’t look down (maravigghia) at that bag man because I will take this young woman as his wife.” “Ah Master, Master!” said St. Peter, all scandalized; “you’re doing things all wrong! How! That bearded bag man who doesn’t even know how to speak, you want to give him this beautiful young woman? And how could this be?” “Listen, Peter, -- responded the Master – this bag man is lost; but, by taking this young woman as his wife, he will scartisci (transform) and will become good. You may think that this is not right?” St. Peter closed his mouth and stopped talking. And in fact, this happened, what the Lord had said: that bag man took this beautiful young woman as his wife; with her he changed and he saved his soul.
“Simple as it seems, beginning with your self is not so easy to put into practice.”
(David Hunt 1987, p.2)

**St. Peter’s Mother (La Mamma di San Pietru)**

St. Peter’s mother was a lost soul and she did quite a bit in her time, of all colours. When her end came, the Lord condemned her to hell, into the ardent fire. St. Peter’s heart was broken and he prayed and prayed so much to his Master, that in the end he received his grace. The Lord asked St. Peter: “Spy on your mother, who I gave out of goodwill (carita) to the world, and let me know.” The mother said: “One day a poor soul asked me for money and I gave him a head of garlic.” “Well then, hold yourself from this head of garlic and climb to Heaven!” said the Lord, not knowing how to find any way to save this savage soul, without offending justice.

This way the Lord sent down to hell a head of garlic and made it strong, for her to hold onto it without danger of breaking, with weight. St. Peter’s mother got a hold of this garlic and began to climb. But as she was passing purgatory, many thousands of souls took advantage of this occasion and they were hanging on to her, hoping that they too would enter Heaven. With all the souls attached to the head of garlic, it looked like a grapevine: and who hung-on from her dress, another her hand and other parts. She seeing this, shook herself and said: “Go away, go away because my son prayed only for me. She didn’t finish saying these words, when her soul fell to hell. And while all the souls from purgatory saved themselves, it’s not certain if St. Peter’s mother could save herself anymore. So you see, God doesn’t like (superbia) superiority and this doesn’t reign in the other world either.

“The world is neither accidental nor ultimately chaotic. It has directions, patterns and pulsations, and the law of cause and effect, or karma, shapes our reality.” (Feminine Fusion: Chris Griscom 1991, p.21).

**The Poor Man and the Door (Lu Povareddu)**

There once was a poor soul who had many kids and so hungry they all were, they could pick up by the cupfuls. One Sunday, it was the last day of carnival and everyone ate and drank joyfully, before (prima mi trasi coraisima cu li so dijuni). The poor soul didn’t have anything and was disperava (depressed): “That evening (di l’azata), everyone in this world are celebrating fiesta: “they have here, and they have there; and I have
nothing? Ah, this can’t be, and the Lord shouldn’t permit this! But what can I do to get myself out of this trouble?...Ah, this is a beautiful thought! Now, I will pull-out the door and sell it: this way my poor kids won’t starve, and they will also enjoy themselves!”

So, in fact, he removed the door, put it on his back and went out to sell it. On his way, he was confronted with an old man, who was the Lord and said to him: “Where are you going, good man?” “I’m going”, the poor soul responded, this evening is the last evening of carnival; everyone is having a good time and are feasting and I with all my kids are starving. Well then, I thought about selling my door, so my family and I will have a carnival fiesta.

The Lord was moved with these words and gave him a pouch of money and said: “Go and put-up your door where it was. Here is a pouch of money and this will be enough for today and for another three days still – for the remaining days of carnival. And this way, the Lord extended the poor man’s days, from one to three so that he may have an enjoyable carnival fiesta with his family (prima mi veni coraisima cu lu so fusu). During the two days which the Lord gave him, the poor man bought meat and pasta and wine and he had a feast with his kids, who have never seen such goodness. But spending here and spending there, the pouch of money quickly disappeared and the poor man became even more depressed than before.

When Easter arrived, the poor man, chi non mancava di malizzia, returned to pull-out the door and thought: “Now I will go and if the old man confronts again (he didn’t realize it was the Lord) he’ll give me another pouch of money and I will have a beautiful Easter with my kids. This way, I will be fine.” He threw the door on his back and began to walk the same path. At the same point as before, he saw the old man and said: “Where are you going fine man?” “It’s Easter, so I’m going to sell this door because my kids are starving. This way, I can have an Easter too.” “Go on, go on!” said the Lord “and hang-up the door where it was, because it’s always Easter.” And the old man didn’t give him anything. The poor man went on, all scorned and put the door back where it was before. And this is why they say:

“Di Pasca e di Natali a undi voi,
Ma di carnilevari cu li toi.”
“So don’t try to be positive – that’s just performing, and it’s hard work. Our goal is peace of mind, which will give your healing system a true “live” message (Siegel, 1989, p. 33).

**Mother Sibilla (La Mamma Sibilla)**

When Mother Mary was a little girl, she would go to the maestra and this maestra (teacher) was la Mamma Sibilla, who is still alive and lives all’Aspromunti, and whoever goes there are put under a spell. The doorman will say: “Come in! The chair: sit down! The bed: lie down! But who this happens to, will not come out again – like this happened to many kings and emperors, who went and remained under a deep spell.”

Every morning, this Mother Sibilla, who had a lot of knowledge and who wanted to be the mother of God, would ask her disciples, every morning: “My children, what did you dream last night?” And they would all tell them their dreams. One time, after she asked all her friends, she asked also la Madonna and asked: “Mariuzza, and you what did you dream of?” “I dreamt...” responded la Madonna, “that the sun entered through my right and departed through my left, and it seemed as if it was real.” Listening to these words, La Mamma Sibilla said all out of breath: “Hurry, hurry, all my children! Throw away all your books and burn them all! And she said this because she thought immediately that Mariuzza was to become the mother of God. All the disciples burned the books; but la Madonna (Mariuzza) hid her book underneath a mascidda, and this is why we have the nguвитatura.

This way, Mariuzza became the mother of God, and la Mamma Sibilla, with all her knowledge, was condemned to remain all’Aspromunti and continued to curse and put spells on whoever went to her palace.

“As the cause is, so the effect will be. As the seed is, so the fruit will be. As the action is, so the result will be.” (Hart, W., 1987, p. 42).

**Mother Mary’s Story**

When Mother Mary was of this world, Harrod ordered to kill all the innocent. And why did he order this? He ordered this so to see the Son of God and to destroy him as a child, so he wouldn’t be able to preach his law of justice. When Mother Mary heard this news, She placed Baby Jesus into a (scossu) to save him and She tried to alleviate all bad encounters. But one day She encountered the enemies who had orders to kill all the
innocent; and one of them asked: “What do you carry in this (scossu), beautiful lady?” Mother Mary opened the apron and said: “this is what I carry: roses and flowers! And in fact, the Jews looked and didn’t find anything other than roses and flowers. This way she was free and she continued walking.

But the traders weren’t convinced, and they searched her everywhere. Mother Mary was bothered by this preoccupation, because it wouldn’t end, and seeing in the countryside a fig tree, she tried to hide. So then, the fig tree opened and Mother Mary remained closed in the trunk of this fig tree. This way the Jews passed by from there and didn’t see Her.

After they passed, Mother Mary all content, came out and She turned to the fig tree and said: “May you have honey at your mouth for all the good you’ve done for me! And so it happened that the fruits of the fig tree received this honey.

She had more, walking, she began to pass by a camp with a wheat harvest, which parted to let Her pass and then it folded, moving here and there. Mother Mary tried to escape: but seeing that she was loosing time and the danger was growing at every moment, She turned and said: “May you have all my hardships!” and because of this, the wheat suffers many hardships before it becomes wheat.

Walking, walking, another camp of chick peas; and as these plants opened up for the Mother of God, the chick peas, instead, remained indifferent, as if nothing happened. Well then, Mother Mary, who was in a hurry, lost Her patience and said: “May you have la me sarmura!” and this is why the chick peas are naturally sarsu and when they are cooked, they need little salt.

Passed the chick peas, Mother Mary continued Her agonizing walk and after a certain point, She arrived at a cultivated terrain of luppinu. She began walking in the midst of these plants, and the luppinu was making noise, for the enemies to be aware and to take away Her Son. Mother Mary, then, seeing that the noise continued, and danger was increasing, She said: “May you have my bitterness!” and after this curse, the luppinu turned bitter, and could not be eaten without removing the bitterness, and salting it with water from the sea.

“Each individual forms a microcosm of the known world and, as a private universe, it has its own processes of growth and decay, whether slow or sudden. Each
metaphored mind-space has its own separate centre, its “starter” or mind’s eye.”

(Diamond, 1991, p. 15).

*Mother Mary and the Evil Woman (La Fimmana Mala e La Madonna)*

There once was an evil woman, who had kids all the time with this person and that person. The midwife, attending today, going tomorrow, in the end became tired to go every nine months and did not want to go anymore.

Once when this evil woman was in labour, an old woman, who was Mother Mary, went to the midwife’s house and knocked on her door: “tubbi, tubbi!” “Who is it?” asked the midwife from upstairs. “I’m an old woman and you need to give me lodging for the night, for goodness sake.” She responded: “For I don’t have any lodging; my house is big enough just for me.” “Even in the chimney of the fire place, I’ll be content to stay; and if you give me lodging, I could give you some good advice.” “and what advice do you have to give me?” said the owner. “Open-up, then you’ll see.” This way she opened-up and Mother Mary remained there.

At midnight, someone came and knocked at the midwife’s door asking her to go quickly to the woman’s house, who was having labour pains. The midwife did not want to go; but Mother Mary convinced her to go and in the end she said: “Would you like me to come with you?” “To come with me? And what for?” responded the midwife. “If you let me come, I could give you some advice.” “Well then, come!” This way, Mother Mary accompanied the midwife. The evil woman ripped herself open and had a little girl. Said the old woman to those in the house: “Get me a pail of water and place it here on the ground.” Wanting to save the woman, who had lived a life of many sins, took the pail, placed it on the ground and instantly there appeared thousands of big flies which were in the pail: “vu, vu, vu...” without end. So then, Mother Mary turned to the midwife and said: “listen to this “vu, vu?” “These flies will be all humans, who will pass through this new born, little child, when she becomes a woman; this is her star.”

After she said these words, Mother Mary vanished and they then realized that the old woman was Mother Mary. They kicked themselves alive, asking forgiveness for their sins, especially the evil woman, who could not stop crying bitter tear; and thinking of all the large flies she had seen in the pail, she felt confused knowing that her little girl would have a bad destiny. This way she converted and was saved.
“Of all things which a man has, next to the gods, his soul is the most divine and most truly his own.” (Plato, 1995, p. 47).

**St. Martin (San Martino)**

Saint Martino, before becoming a saint, was a (latru) dangerous bandit, who went killing and robbing whomever he encountered. One day, passing by a little church, he heard singing during the mass and said: “I’ll go to hear it”. He entered the church and saw a man who was preaching. The preacher was explaining the homily (reading from the Bible) of Our Lord: “Love Your Neighbour as Yourself; do unto others what you would have done to you; and repeated many times these commandments of God. The bandit (latru), listening to these words, remembered them in his mind and thought about all the bad/evil he had done and was converted. In the evening, while at home with his wife, he kept on saying: “Love your neighbour as yourself; what you don’t want done to you, don’t do unto others.”

The wife, hearing this same song repeated over and over, thought that her husband had gone crazy. The fact was that Martino couldn’t sleep all night, every moment saying the same holy words, which impressed him deeply.

In the morning, the brigantes went as usual: “tubbi, tubbi!” “Who is it?” “Martino, come down because it is time.” And Martino continued: “Love Your Neighbour As Yourself; what you don’t want done unto you, don’t do to another!”

They continued knocking, but he repeated the same words. Finally, after many attempts, Martino opened the window and his friends said: “Aren’t you coming, it’s time?” And he continued: “Love Your Neighbour As Yourself; what you do not want done to you, don’t do to another!” The briganti, listening constantly to these words, thought that Martino wanted to (zanniari) back-down and with their rifles they shot him. Instead, the moment arrived for Martino to save himself. After he died, the wife was afraid to publicize his death, because Martino was head-briganti and thought it was better for the same briganti to dig a hole in the cantina and buried him in a wine barrel.

This wife sold wine and selling today and selling tomorrow, the wine in the barrel was endless. The law was informed and wanted further explanation: “How is it that this wine doesn’t end?” “Let’s see what it is!” The government guides went with all the law
and dug underneath the wine barrel and found Saint Martino with a flower in hand. His body was all decayed; but the flower, instead, was green, so green.

They recognized he was a saint; they took him to the church, and had a funeral for him. And this is why Saint Martino is the patron saint of all the wine and it’s said and known throughout the people:

“The wine begins,
When it’s the feast day of
Saint Martins!”

“My voice is doing funny things. It does not seem to emerge from the same parts of my body as before. It comes out from somewhere in my throat, tight, thin, and mat – a voice without modulations, dips, and rises that it had before, when it went from my stomach all the way through my head.” (Hoffman, 1989, pp. 121-122)

The Serpent Child

There once was a king and queen who were childless. The queen tried everything, but still couldn’t have any. One day she went into the woods and saw many different animals: lizards, snakes, birds and said: “all the animals in the woods can have children and I am the only one who could not have any. The queen then saw a snake and there wished: “I’d be happy even with a snake!” Well, after sometime, the queen’s wish came true and after nine months she gave birth to a little snake. Everyone in the kingdom, who came to greet this snake child were grief-stricken, but the queen was happy. Then they made a beautiful cage and placed the snake-child in it. The maid would serve this snake-child the same food that everyone in the kingdom ate – soup for breakfast and food for lunch and dinner.

Everyday, the serpent child ate and grew to be a young adult. It so happened that one day, the maid went to the serpent’s room and heard a voice: “Tell my father, that I want my wife here with me, beautiful and rich!”

The maid was shocked and was afraid of this snake. She told the queen. However, the queen insisted that the maid serve the snake, who heard him repeat:” Tell my father, that I want my wife here with me, beautiful and rich!”

Again, the maid mentioned this to the queen. The queen all distraught asked one of her servants: “I’ll give you what you ask for, if you give me your daughter.”
The servant agreed and his daughter was married with this serpent. They ate together and at night he became a handsome looking prince. One morning the serpent asked his wife: “what time is it?” She responded: “at this hour my father goes to the woods to work – it’s four o’clock.”

The serpent realizing that his wife’s family were poor peasants, he chopped-off her head. When the maid went to serve soup for breakfast, the serpent said: “I would like a wife beautiful and rich.”

The queen all distraught pleaded with the servant for another daughter for the serpent. The serpent married again and after three days, he chopped his second wife’s head after asking her what time it was. In the morning, when the maid arrived with the soup, she was more shocked than ever to see and hear him say:” Tell my father that I want my wife here with me, beautiful and rich!”

Immediately, the maid told the queen: “what are we to do?” “the servant only has two daughters!” But in the kingdom, there was however a shoemaker who was poor. He only had one daughter who was beautiful. The shoemaker agreed to sell his daughter who then married the serpent. After three days, the serpent asked his wife: “what time is it?” She turned to him and said: “At this hour my father would be working and pairing shoes.”

When the serpent heard this, he took-out his sword and chopped-off her head. In the morning, the maid found the third wife dead and went directly to tell the queen that the serpent was in search of a wife who was rich and beautiful. The king wrote to the emperor, who asked for his consent to unite his only daughter in matrimony with the serpent. The princess took a month to prepare herself for the serpent.

She placed a spider in a basket and her mother (the queen) went to see the serpent. “If you can guess what living thing is in this basket, then you serpent may wed my daughter.” The serpent guessed correctly and the serpent was wed with the emperor’s daughter. A feast was held with all splendor, and after the matrimony the serpent said to his wife: “If you dear wife would like to see me transformed into a human day and night, there’s something you need to do for me?”

“Whatever you’d like me to do for you husband…I’ll do.” The serpent continued: “You know my mother the queen forever has these great galas. Do not dance with
anyone but myself when I enter the ball in human form.” In the midst of the crowd, the king and queen were not pleased with the princess’ conduct. At every gala, the princess continued to dance with these different men.

Furiously, the queen mistreated and was mean to the princess – pulling her by the hair and hitting her with a large stick. One morning the princess picked-up a little sack of money and left the castle. On her journey she met a crystal-maker who was crying. “What is the matter dear man?” wondered the princess. A bird flew by in a flurry and broke all my crystal. And how much is the damage because the bird belongs to me?” The owner said it will cost me “50 liri. The princess opened her money little sack and paid the crystal maker. “So where did the bird go?” “From here, it flew directly.”

The princess continued on her journey until she encountered a jewellery shop. A young man was crying. The princess asked: “What is the matter dear man?” A bird flew by fervently and damaged everything. The owner will soon arrive and will kill me. The princess looked at the young man and asked: “How much is the cost of the gold?” “Oh just leave me alone for I’m so depressed right now!” “NO!” insisted the princess. “I want to repay you because this bird belongs to me.” The young man was overjoyed and began to sum-up the repairs. Again the princess opened her little sack of money and gave him six mila liri. “So where did the bird go?” asked the princess. “In that direction,” said the young man.

The princess continued on her journey and suddenly saw a big bird and she said: “I think that’s my bird!” she climbed a tree and all distressed she began to pray for the bird to return home with her. All the other birds beckoned the big bird to return home, but didn’t want to leave. As matters were destined, he hit (na beccata) and poked out the eyes of the princess. With both eyes poked, she begged the big bird to return home. Blind, the princess pleaded with the big bird to accompany her on the (camino) walk, but he refused stubbornly. He struck her again and chopped-off both her arms. The princess expressed: “Poor me! What am I to do with my life? Poor, blind and armless!”

The princess continued her journey and encountered an old woman (who was actually Mother Mary) and asked her: “what is the matter beautiful lady?” The princess revealed everything to the old woman and as she was telling her story, the bird flew onto
his mother’s bag pipes (ceramidi) and then was transformed into a human. Overjoyed, the mother invited everyone in the kingdom to celebrate and as he told the story, she said: “You did well killing that awful (horrible) woman!”

In the meantime, the princess was speaking with the old woman who said: “Place your arms underneath this water fountain.” And as she did this, her hands grew back. Then the old woman asked her to wipe her face with this water and her eyes grew back. The princess became more beautiful and the old woman asked her to always walk the straight path giving her a long stick and said: “Ask this stick what you desire and your wish will be granted. The princess wished for a beautiful palace situated across the king. In her palace, there were chickens and birds out of gold walking from room to room. She also had maids and servants. The princess sat on her throne covered with a beautiful veil.

In the morning, the king’s son opened his window and sees this magnificent palace. “Father, Father!” he called. “How magnificent!” As they peeked through the window, they could see all the gold animals moving about. The prince said to his father: “who could possibly be living in that palace – such a palace constructed in one night!” At that moment, the princess came to the window and removed her veil from her face. “Oh Father! Oh Father! She is beautiful! I would like her to be my bride,” said the prince. “Go away, away – what are you saying! Who knows who she is; and besides – you think she wants you?” responded the king. “Don’t bother asking because she won’t be interested in you.”

Determined, the king’s son sent the beautiful princess an embroidered chunk of gold. The princess threw it away and ignored the prince. The prince then sent the princess a gold ring. But the princess threw it away to the birds. “We warned you she was not interested in you,” said the king and queen. Insistently, the prince went underneath her balcony to speak with the princess. The princess bluntly told the prince she was not interested. Then she turned to him and said: “Do you remember what you did to me?” The prince did not recognize her. The princess continued: “You did this, that and the other to me. Both your father and mother were mean to me. You deceived me. Married to you, you were a serpent. And when I wandered into the world, you appeared as a big bird and chopped-off my hands and poked-out my eyes. But fortunately, I found a kind soul who healed me.”
The prince responded: “If I did not chop your hands and poke-out your eyes, how would I have become a human? I would have remained as a bird.” “A bird you would have remained!” she said. “Well, you may have a point there,” she continued. Well then let’s get married and become husband and wife. The princess voiced to the king and queen how she was discontent with how they treated her. They forgave each other and made peace. And so the prince and princess were married with all splendor – celebrating an entire month for their union. And for the rest of their days, they lived contented, after many trials and tribulations.

“Human beings from birth on are stimulus-seeking organisms, not stimulus reducing organisms. The task of the school is to provide a resource-rich environment so that the child will, without coercion, find what he or she needs in order to grow. The metaphor is biological: growth is the aim of life. In developing this view further, it is argued that organisms develop not so much from the outside in as they do from the inside out.” (Eisner 1979, 58)

**Mariuzza**

There once was a husband and wife who had a daughter Mariuzza. Eranu (veddani), and this Mariuzza would go to the teacher (maestro) and every morning she would bring a basket of figs. The teacher (maestro) saw the figs and said: “ask your mother for two figs for me. When your mother opens the box (cascia), as she puts her head in there, you release a (catarratu). This way you will kill her and you can come and live with me.” This child, when she returned home she asked: “Mamma I would like two figs to bring to my maestro.” “Good daughter, I will give them to you.” In the morning, the mother opened their box of figs and said to her daughter: “my daughter hold the (catarratu), and I will get them.” The mother placed her head inside the box and the daughter instantly released the (cumbogghiu), killed her mother with all that heavy weight and as if it was nothing, she went to see her maestra.

When her father arrived in the evening, he did not find her at home. He climbs upstairs, all worried, and finds his wife dead with her hands and her head in the fig box. Imagine what despair! He called his daughter at the maestro; everyone in the village thought this was a disgrace and were in mourning. After they buried her, the maestro told Mariuzza to tell her father that she wanted him for a husband. Mariuzza’s father was still
in mourning and did not give the maestro a response to her proposal. Thus, the maestro didn’t expect this response: she sent all her shepherds to the fields to pick flowers, and asked them to stick them in the walls. The house resembled a garden covered with flowers.

When the father arrived he called Mariuzza and said: “My daughter, I didn’t want to marry because of you. For after I’m married, the maestro will mistreat you, and I will not be able to do anything for you.”

Mariuzza replied: “Don’t worry father dear, the maestro cares for me.” Her father responded: “If this is what you want then I’ll marry.” They married and the step-mother began to mistreat Mariuzza to cook, clean and complete chores. Poor child, she began to cry.

Thus, her step-mother could not stand the sight of her and demanded Mariuzza be given to the king and queen who could not have children of their own. She began to cry and all depressed went to church where her mother’s bones were buried: feeling lost she cried.

With every tear she poured on her mother’s bones, her mother appeared to Maruzza and said: “My lost daughter, what you wished for, you received. But you will know something new. Go up to the queen’s bed: here is a sack of (giogghiu) and (criu). Twist it on her bed and you will see that the queen will have a child – Marcavallu whom they will ask you to wed. Marcavallu is (mpatatu) and will ask you: “what time is it?” And you will respond immediately: at this hour, my father returns from the office: it’s evening. Then at 12 midnight, beware he’ll ask you: “let’s eat?” And then you’ll say: “I’m not hungry.” But he will force you to eat and you will have him eat three portions, while you eat one. Beware if you don’t do this! In the morning then, as soon as he asks you – “what time is it?” You respond: “At this hour my father has coffee and then goes to the office. Now leave with your mother’s blessings.”

Mariuzza all content went to live with the king and queen. She climbed the steps of the queen’s sleeping chambers and on her bed she twisted the (giogghiu), as her mother advised her to do. In time, the queen gave birth to a beautiful child Marcavallu. During the day he was a horse and at night he became human. Alone at night he asked
her: “what time is it?” Immediately she responded, “at this hour my father arrives from
the office.”

Marcavallu then replied: “Good, good, I like the way you carry yourself.” At
midnight he said: “let’s go eat.” “I’m not hungry,” she said. “Let’s eat anyway.” And
he forced her to eat anyway. He ate three portions and Mariuzza one. Then in the
morning he asked: “what time is it?” And she responded: “at this hour, my father drinks
his coffee and goes to the office.” After sometime, Mariuzza became pregnant; but
when it was time for her to give birth, la draga came and pulled Marcavallu from his feet.
That same night, he went to his wife when she was sleeping and sang:

“Lamp of gold, luminate silver,
Who makes my wife with my son?
If I knew,
A chest of gold I will give.”

Every night Marcavallu would sing her this song. The prisoners nearby heard
what he was doing and reported this to the king. The king said that if they could prove
this to be true, they would be released from jail. One night when Marcavallu was
chanting this song to his wife, the prisoners vigilantly caught him and would not let him
go.

Marcavallu said to them, that in order for him to become fully human, they would
have to get a cauldron to boil water from three days and three nights and in there they
would put all the chickens and roosters: this was the only way, he would become fully
human.

An old woman in the village hid her rooster in a chest: instead they placed
Marcavallu in the cauldron. For three days and three nights they boiled him, and when it
was time for him to come-out, the old lady’s rooster crowed: “chicchirichi…!”
Marcavallu vanished from inside the pot.

As he vanished, his wife heard her husband’s voice, who said her: “make eight
pairs of steel shoes and eight hats and to depart on a journey to find him.”

Well, Mariuzza prepared the shoes and hats and journeyed into the world.
Walking, walking, she consumed the first pair of shoes and then the second, third and all
the rest searching and inquiring for her husband. But he was nowhere to be found.
Imagine what pain (thorn) this dear child carried in her heart! When she was down to her last pair of shoes and hat, and had lost all hope, she arrived at a house in the forest and saw Marcavallu.

This was la draga’s house. Marcavallu was so happy when he saw his wife and hid her underneath his bed because he feared la draga. La draga approached Marcavallu and he said: “you have to promise me not to eat my wife!”

She responded: “is she in your bed?” “No! No!” he said. “Swear on your soul…” She swore. Marcavallu then showed his wife to la draga and for a moment she appeared content. This was only temporary because la draga had intentions to kill Mariuzza. She mistreated and over-worked Mariuzza to the bone. She had to do everything la draga ordered and fortunately Marcavallu helped her.

One day, la draga sent her to her sister’s to get something. She had arranged for her sister to eat her all up. The poor, young girl went on her way crying and thinking about her ill fate. She arrived at an old gate. “Ah!” said Mariuzza as she entered: “if I had time I would hammer two nails; the gate opened-up and let her pass – closing behind her. She passed by the river flowing (marcia) e (sangu). Mariuzza knelt down and drank of this water.

“Ah! Ah! I feel refreshed!” she said. The river parted and let her pass through. With pieces of bread she fed two loons who were starving and were almost ready to eat her up. “Oh what heartless people! They leave these poor animals hungry!” As the loons were eating, she passed through the river and arrived at la draga’s sister’s house. She held a child in her arms and instantly she said to Mariuzza: “hold him, hold him”.

Mariuzza picked-up this child and as soon as she left, she threw this child into the furnace and ran. She passed by the loons and threw more bread at them. She passed by the river, drank from the water and passed through. She arrived at the gate and said: “if I had nails and a hammer, I would repair and hammer a few little nails to leave a gate like this…this poor gate!” And she passed through until she arrived to la draga’s house.

When la draga saw her arrive, she was so angry and wondered why her sister didn’t eat her-up. So la draga went on her way. On her search she came across the gate where she got stuck passing through while it opened and closed. And finally let her pass through.
She came to the river, but the water current pulled her in without pity and she drowned. Thus, Marcavallu became fully human: he, his wife and many others who la draga had chained, were all liberated and they all returned to their home contented.

“The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives.” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2)

**The Bird (L’Aceddu)**

There once was a king and queen who had only a daughter. One morning this daughter after washing and combing her hair, she left her comb on the window ledge. A bird flew by and picked it up. The following morning, she washed again and left a watch filled with pins on the window ledge. The same bird picked it up and flew away. The third morning, she washed again and placed a ring on the window ledge. Again the same bird picked it up and flew away with it. This dear girl searched everywhere for her things and could not find them. Feeling depressed, she fell ill and no doctor could persuade her to feel better.

One day while she was ill, an old lady was washing at the fountain. She turned to her eyes and saw a (sumeri) with two (barrili): when he arrived at the fountain, he filled the barrili with water and left. The old woman observing this was astonished; put-down all the clothes she was washing and said: “I have to find-out where he will go”. And she followed him. She walked and walked and arrived at a palace where she saw the sumeri enter and not come out. She was so curious and decided to enter. She climbed the staircase and when she reached the top, she saw three caldrons bubbling away. One cauldron had milk. The other wine and the third water. She hid and after awhile three birds flew – and one was carrying beak a ring, watch and a comb in their beak. These three birds, as soon as they entered, threw themselves in a cauldron and became three handsome young men. Said the young man who was holding in his hands the three objects: “who knows what the king’s daughter will say?” “How I would like to know!”

The old woman heard everything; in the end, she remembered that she left all her clothes at the fountain and climbed back down the stairs. At the fountain, she found her clothes and picked them up. Then she thought to go to the king and told him she had a way to cure the princess from her melancholy state. The king all content invited this old
woman into his daughters room and she recounted what she saw with the three birds, the caldron, and how they transformed into humans and words she’s never heard before. The king’s daughter felt her face in flames, thanked the old woman for her advice and gave her a bag full of money. The princess hopped on a horse and asked the old woman to show her where this all happened. They trotted along and arrived at the palace and the old woman said: “It’s here!” Thus, the princess who preferred to stay alone said: “Now fine woman, you may leave now while I stay here to see what will happen.”

The princess remained the same, courageous as she was, climbed to the top of the staircase, like the old woman had mentioned. Thus, the three birds arrived and threw themselves into one of the cauldrons: one of the birds carried her belongings. He was transformed into a human and when the princess set eyes on him, on this handsome young man, she approached him and immediately said: “You are my spouse!” He responded: “Thank you for this honour, and I will voluntarily give you my heart. But if you want me to be fully human forever, you must lock yourself in this room for a year, a month and a day.” “Fine!” she said. I will accept because I love you.” So the princess locked herself in this room, without food and bit by bit as time passed she became more thin and more ugly.

After a year, a month and a day, her beloved arrived as a handsome young man. But when he saw her so ugly resembling a corpse, he left her (cu dispettu). This dear girl (ncolarata) returned to her mother who became Queen of the entire kingdom because her father (the king) died of a broken heart in the absence of his daughter.

The princess did not have any peace. Her heart was broken and cried day and night. After awhile, she could not take it anymore and asked her mother to bless her and went into the world alone.

After walking for many miles, St. Joseph saw her and said: “where are you going daughter of the king?” Seeing this old man with a long white beard, she trusted to tell him her story and all the pain and suffering she had in her heart. “Fine, fine!” said the old man. “Don’t worry about it too much, because with everything there’s a remedy.

And saying these words, enabled her to open-up brighter than the sun. Then he gave her a stick (wand) (di cumandu), saying: “with this wand, command what you want, and instantly you’ll have it.”
The young girl, all happy, thanked the saint and asked the wand to take her immediately to the city where her beloved lived. She arrived in front of the Palace Reali and asked the wand for a beautiful palace facing the palace reali. In the morning, as the king awoke, he saw this magnificent palace with a beautiful young girl standing in the balcony. He couldn’t believe his eyes; this seemed extraordinary. But when he realized this was real, he told his mother: “Mother, mother, come to see this beautiful palace with a young girl at the balcony!” “I’d like to send her a gift, hoping she’d accept.” “And what would you like to send?” asked his mother. “I’ll send her a golden rag, which I think is beautiful.” “Do as you wish, son.” So, he called the servant and sent the golden rag praying she’d accept it. The servant went as the matchmaker. “Here, here,” said the princess; with this rag we can wipe the pan; go place it in the kitchen!” The servant left all scornful and reported it to the king. Instead of feeling offended he said to his mother: “mother, mother, this is the woman for me. I would like to marry her!” “Send her a handful of jewels and will see if she appreciates them.”

With the same servant, he sent her the jewels and the princess did not even thank the servant. Instead called (la xiocca) with golden chicks who was walking from house to house, she through jewels at her saying: “EAT! EAT! Because our king has sent them for you?” The servant left more scandalized than the first time, and told the king. The king said to his mother: “Mother, mother, send her a crown, because I would like her to be my bride.” They sent the princess a crown. But when the princess held this crown in her hands, she told the servant to place it in the kitchen to be used as a (tripod)”. Hearing this news, the king fell ill and wanted to try again, he wrote her a passionate letter telling her he would like her to be his bride. She read the letter, realized his intentions and she returned it to him not accepting his proposal.

Thus, the king realizing that all his attempts were useless, thought of another plan. He declared news throughout the kingdom that the king had died and ordered a funeral and bells to ring throughout. Then he asked his mother not to nail the coffin but to construct a glass coffin so he can be seen to place it underneath the balcony where the princess usually stood. All was prepared and word spread throughout the kingdom that the king had died.
Finally, the hour had arrived when the funeral was prepared and the bells were ringing. Hearing these funeral, the princess came out and asked who died. A man responded; “Don’t you know, our king has died and they say he died of a broken heart.” The princess felt sad; immediately, she dressed all in black and from her balcony facing the glass coffin below she cried and mourned. Well then, the king, seeing her dressed all in black and mourning his loss realized that the princess loved him and he rose out from the coffin and climbed the balcony. He threw himself at her feet and said: “Do you love me?” The princess revealed to him who she was and after he had left her, (l’onuni soi) couldn’t permit her to mend the relationship, like the poor do with their bread.

For their sake, he realized his fault and regretted his ingratitude. “Yes, yes you are right; I was ignorant towards you who loved me very much; forgive me! But rest assured for I have been punished greatly and you need to be my bride. This way they made peace; their relationship reconnected after many trials from one side and the other and after a few days they married and celebrated for one week their union. “I was there and part of this beautiful feast.”

“Telling stories is a significant way for individuals to give meaning to and express their understanding of their experiences.” (Mishler, 1986, p. 75).

**Fiorilla**

There once was a king and queen who had an only daughter named Fiorilla. Fiorilla, who was very beautiful, had the misfortune of losing her mother so young; and the poor father, who loved her very much, would hang his head on the wall. Princes and soldiers would arrive and they held dances and galas to comfort the king, but nothing could be done to console this poor, disgraced king. One day, a woman dressed in black entered his bedroom and said: “why are you crying, oh king?” “My wife – a good woman died and I could not console myself.”

Although I’m naughty, I do not think I’m all that bad of a woman. If you want to marry me, stay secure that I know how to comfort you. The king, wanting to get rid of this feeling, which he could not find any peace responded: “Fine, I will marry you;” and after several days they got married.

This queen had a daughter, who was living with her godmother, (maga): she asked for her to be picked-up and she came. Her name was Trotrona, and she was ugly,
as Fiorilla was beautiful. A king from another kingdom, who knew of Fiorilla as a beautiful, young girl, asked her father for her hand in marriage; but an aunt, who was jealous of Fiorilla and wanted her daughter to marry first, convinced the king of Trotrona as a marriage proposition. But the young king, did not give his response because he wanted Fiorilla and not Trotrona. The aunt, angry with this response, began to mistreat Fiorilla and tried everything to make her ugly: she hid her combs, so she could not comb her hair, took away her beautiful clothes and made her dress like a servant girl. Then, not content with this bad treatment, seeing that the king loved Fiorilla just the same, one day they had four in mascarades (mascarati), so they wouldn’t be identified and were given orders to lock Fiorilla in a far-away tower. They took her away, and the king who wanted her, knew nothing. Not seeing her anymore, one day, this king called a servant from Fiorilla’s palace and asked: “where is Fiorilla?” “Ah, don’t you know?” … “I did not know either!” “If you tell me,” said the young king, I will give you a purse of money.” “Fine, wait I will find-out then tell you.” The servant went to the queen and told her everything the young king had requested. The queen ordered the servant to tell him that Fiorilla was in the Tower on the first floor. The servant met with the young king. “Where is she?”

“On the first floor in the tower; if you would like to see her, you must go at night about ten o’clock.” He gave her the money and returned to the queen so contented.

This was a great strategy to fool the young king. They dressed Trotrona with garments more beautiful than Fiorilla, and said: “daughter go to the tower on the first floor and wait there because in the night he will arrive. That night, the young king arrived at the tower and looking at a woman, he thought it was Fiorilla. He asked: “why are you locked-up in here?” “And how can you get out?” Trotrona, who knew very well to act the part according to her mother’s advice (l’avvertimenti) told him a (filastrocca) and concluded the discourse with these beautiful words: “listen dear, for this evening we could not leave; but if you’d like we could leave from here after tomorrow night.” “In the meantime, for remembrance that you love me, give me a ring or whatever you’d like best.” The young king quickly removed the ring from his finger and gave it to her.

In the morning, Trotroana went to see her mother. She told her mother about the encounter in the night and asked for her advice. The mother thought awhile and said:
“Now leave and ask the young king not to pick you up in a carriage, but in the air. Trotrona without asking the motive of this plan, asked the servant to tell the young king, that if he truly loved her, he would have to pick her up by air and carry her into the carriage. The young king receiving such news said quickly: “this other impediment was not necessary! And now what do I do?” But then he remembered of his godfather who was a (magu) wizard and begged him to go into the air to the tower and bring his beloved (who was locked away) to his palace. The (magau) wizard did everything punctually: he went to the tower, picked-up Trotrona and brought her to the young king. When the young king saw how ugly she was, he put his hands on his hair and said: “Ah! This is Trotrona, not Fiorilla! She did it!” And he refused to marry her. At once, Trotrona was demanded to return home.

Instead, she cried all the way to (la maga) the house and told her what happened and how she was mistreated. Then she asked for her advice and help. La maga who practically raised by Trotrona comforted her. Then he called the young king and said: “or you marry Trotrona, like you promised her, or I will turn you into (marmurau) marble: you do not have a choice!” “Fine!” replied the young king. “I prefer hundred times better to turn into marble (marmuru), than to marry an ugly face. Trotrona I don’t want as my wife – no and again no!” “Well then,” said la maga again, be prepared to turn into marble (marmuru), or if you prefer a bird.” “If I could choose my destiny, I prefer to be a bird rather than marble (marmurau).” And with these words, (la maga) pulled-out a wand, swung it in the air, and the young king, bit by bit turned into a bird and flew out the window away. When he was in the air, he remembered of Fiorilla and said: “I know where she is; I will go there to find her.” He flew towards the tower and there in front as a tree. He perched himself on a branch and began to sing. Fiorilla, hearing this song, went up to the wind and asked: “Who’s the bird that sings?” The bird replied: “Quiet, Fiorilla, quiet! It’s I the young king, who has always loved you and have always wanted to marry you.” And he told her everything.

After this, they had conversations continuously during previous evenings, and the bird, every time he’d went he brought his beloved an item of gold: a necklace, bracelet, a crown and their love for each other grew. Word spread throughout the palace of these discourses: “who does Fiorilla speak to every evening?” This was reported to the queen.
And the queen to be her vengeful self sent for a servant to sleep with Fiorilla in the tower and to report everything back to the queen. But this servant was so tired and fell asleep immediately. The following night, Fiorilla asked the servant: “why are you here, and who sent you?” “The queen sent me to keep you company.” My aunt is really generous,” responded Fiorilla. “And why have you never kept me company, and this very evening you are?” She was defensive and rightfully so. But when the bird arrived, at the same hour, Fiorilla forgot to be prudent and she began a discussion at the window with her beloved. The servant, meanwhile, pretended she was sleeping, but was awake with her ears open and heard everything. The following day, she returned to the queen and told her everything: this, that and the other. Immediately, they took action and on top of the tree, where the bird would perch, they placed many pieces of cut glass, for them to cut his feet.

Thus, that evening, when he did arrive and perched on a branch on top of the tree, he cut his feet a lot of blood was pouring, he weakened and fell to the ground. Fortunately, his godfather, (lu magu) wondered where the young king went and thus went to search for him. Walking and walking he saw him on the ground, still bleeding.

His godfather, collected some grass, (la pistau) and then placed it on his blue birds wound to stop the bleeding. He brought the bird home and placed him in a cage. This godfather had also a cat and one day this cat waited to capture the bird. This was a dangerous situation and the godfather didn’t realize this on time. The godfather said to him: “My godson, why do you want to remain in the middle of danger, in a cage? Wouldn’t it be better to get married? It’s better a hundred times to have an ugly wife than to live like a beast, without hope or transformation.

Well, the godfather pleaded with the bird who responded: “Fine, godfather, I will marry her. They both went to la maga and he agreed to marry Trotrona because he was tired of living such a life. Then la maga pulled-out her wand and asked it to turn the bird back into a human. The two returned to the palace to make the necessary preparations for the wedding. In the meantime, another king wanted Fiorilla to be his wife, asked for her hand in marriage. Fiorilla responded: “liberate me for three days of this prison and then we will marry.” The king had Fiorilla released from the tower; the queen agreed because now Trotrona would marry. But Fiorilla had agreed, but with other intentions to be set
free. In fact, as soon as she was free, she took all the gold the bird had given her and placed it in a sack. Then she picked-up an ugly old dress and began to walk.

She arrived at a fountain and washed her face, feet and hands. As she was washing an old woman saw her and said: “what are you doing here beautiful young girl?” “Can’t you see that it’s bad for you?” “Eh, it’s not the water that is bad, but people who are evil!” And Fiorilla told her the story; then she said: “good lady, would you give me advice?” “Alright” said the old woman; and I will give you three eggs.” Whenever you find yourself in a bad situation, crack open one of these eggs and see what comes out.

And if you find that the three eggs will not be enough, and you find yourself in need, crack open these other two: a nut and little nut. Well then, have a good journey and good luck!”

She began to walk. And after sometime, she found herself in a front of a mountain which prevented her from moving forward or backwards. La maga (her enemy) had done this to prevent Fiorilla from passing forward and spoiling Trotrona’s matrimony. So, Fiorilla remembered the old lady’s advice and cracked an egg. The mountain opened-up and in that same place appeared many mirrors and many women collecting olives. Young women who looked into the mirrors turned old and old women turned young.

She continued to walk and encountered another mountain which touched the sky – all planned by la maga so she could not pass. Fiorilla cracked-open another egg and a dove came-out. The dove carried Fiorilla on his back and flew over the mountain. But when she arrived on the other side, yet another mountain she found preventing her to move forward. Instantly, she cracked open the third egg and a man came out. He said to her: “Beautiful young girl, how come you are here?” Fiorilla replied: “I’m going to find the young king who will marry in three days. Could you take me to his palace?” “Why not?” He placed Fiorilla on his back and brought her to the palace where the young king and Trotrona stayed.

As soon as she arrived, she put on the old garments so they wouldn’t recognize her, she put make-up on her face, to look ugly and then she opened the canister with the gold in it. Then she stood underneath the balcony: “who would like a gold crown,
bracelet or necklace?” Out came the servant and saw all these beautiful things which glittered from a distance. Enters the servant and tells the princess: “Oh princess, there’s a young girl out front who’s selling beautiful things. Now that you will be getting married, these items made of gold are for you. I will call her?” “Call her! Call her!” the servant called her and Fiorilla climbed the staircase. Trotrona said to her: “How much do you want?” “Nothing!” responded Fiorilla, without being recognized by Trontrona or the servant, because she appeared as a middle aged woman all in rags. “Nothing! Only to sleep one evening with your fiancé.” “Dear God, Dear God!” said Trontona scandalized “go away, run, run, because I do not want any! Aren’t you ashamed; with my fiancé you want to sleep?” The servant whispered in Trontrona’s ear: “nobody has these beautiful things. One evening won’t do anything. Can you not give your fiancé opium to fall asleep and you can have all these beautiful things for yourself!” “Fine, fine! Responded Trontrona, all scorned: “well then call her.” Fiorilla was on her way and the servant called and said: “give me your things because the princess has agreed for you to sleep with her fiancé for one night.

That evening, they all ate together. They put opium in the king’s wine. He was feeling tired and went to his chambers to sleep. The servant and Trotrona told Fiorilla: “go and sleep with him!” All night while the young king was in a deep sleep, Fiorilla called him and said to him crying: “when you were a bird, you brought me lots of gold and you spoke to me about LOVE all night; now that you are human, why don’t you talk to me and give me an affectionate word? I’m your Fiorilla, and I searched all over the world, walking much and in danger: why don’t you awake to my call? Admit it and tell me only that you still love me!” But the young king with all that opium he drank could not awake and poor Fiorilla cried the entire night.

She awoke in the morning and daylight while the young king continued to sleep and left all discouraged. Thinking about her problems, she remembered of the nut, which she could crack-open whenever she was in need – and she cracked it. Out came a beautiful carriage all in gold and all splendidous, and began selling underneath the palace balcony: “a beautiful gold carriage! A beautiful gold carriage! Who would like to buy it! Who would like to buy it!” Again the servant came out and asked Fiorilla to enter the palace.
Trotrona asked: “How much do you want?” “An evening in bed with your fiancé!” “Another night you want with my fiancé?” “Go away! Go away! Do you want another night crying?” “Without me he would surely cry!” “Well then I will leave, but I will not sell this golden carriage to anyone else.” “Fine, fine!” said Trotrona, who didn’t want to lose this golden carriage. “Fine, for this evening I will make you happy.”

Again in the evening, they put opium in the young king’s wine. And all night he was in a deep sleep. Fiorilla by his side, called him, touched him and realizing that he wasn’t listening, she repeated the same words more convincingly than before and was crying sour tears. She cried so much, that the tears fell to the dungeon where the prisoners stayed. In the morning, without solving anything, Fiorilla left all depressed.

Fortunately, that morning, the young king went for a walk and the prisoners called him: “Come here young king, for we have word for you. There’s a woman who slept with you and for two nights she cried. We know about her; she is Fiorilla.” Said the young king growing paler and paler: “Fiorilla!...How could this be?” “If this is true what you are telling me, I will liberate you all; but if this is not true, I will have your heads chopped-off.”

After this discourse, he returned to the palace, all concerned, and stayed-up all night to see what would happen. In the meantime, Fiorilla cracked open the tiny nut and came-out a plate of gold, so beautiful with fruits inside also made of gold. Once again, Fiorilla went underneath the balcony to sell. Once again, Trotrona asked her for a price and Fiorilla told her that she did not want money but to sleep with her fiancé – the young king.

Trotrona did not want to consent to this. But the servant convinced her saying: “fine, fine, consent to her wishes. This will be the last night and then you’ll marry the young king – and that’s the end of it.”

In the evening, they all ate together. But the king who had planned to stay awake at night would pour the wine in a shirt not to make it obvious. He acted as if he was tired as before and the servants took him to his room; they removed his clothes and placed him on his bed. Then Trotrona and the servant said to Fiorilla: “Go to bed.” In the room, Fiorilla began to say: “Oh king, this is the last night that I could stay with you.” In a low voice, the young king said: “Quiet Fiorilla, Quiet! I know who you are. Tomorrow
I will get married with that ugly face Trotrona. I’ll tell you the whole story, but this I tell you, I instead will marry you, who always loved me. Rest assured that my love for you has quadrupled and if you have suffered for love of me, I too have suffered for you. Now then, God willing, our trials have come to an end and from now on we will remain together, happy with our LOVE.” These beautiful words were healing balms to Fiorilla’s heart and she too revealed words of LOVE.

In the morning, without anyone noticing, she left. But this time she was all content because her wish was granted. The young king liberated all the prisoners and said: “The day that I get married, take Trotrona and beat her to death, because she made me suffer and put me thru hell.”

And so Trotrona paid the price of her life because of her mother, and justice was served without la maga defending her, and the young king married Fiorilla who looked like the glowing sun – full of JOY. “After many trials, they remained HAPPY and we remained with NOTHING…”

“Leaving implies that we were there in the first place. Quite properly, leaving the field never happens completely, as that would be leaving ourselves, our pasts and our memories.” (Coffey, 1999, p.109)

**Re Pipi (King Pipi)**

There once was a king whose wife had died, leaving an only child. She was of age to get married and the king’s sons of the (marchisi) nobility would arrive, but she refused them all and didn’t want to marry. One day, her father called her and said: “My dear daughter, why don’t you want to get married?” “Papa” she responded, “if you would like me to marry, you must give me (nu cantaru di farina, n’cantaru di zucaru) because I would like to make my boyfriend with my own hands.” The king shrugged his soldiers and said: “Fine, I will give it to you!” The king gave her the flour and sugar and the daughter locked herself in a room. She got a (maidda) and a (crisara) and she began to churn. For six months she churned it; six months to paste it; but after she pasted it, she did not like the way it was formed and she rolled it up and began again. This time, finally, she liked it: she also put a red pepper for the mouth and then fixed-it into a cone.

After she placed him there, she called the king and said: “Papa, Papa, this is my boyfriend!” Her father saw him, examined him from every part and he liked him. He
said: “he looks fine, but he doesn’t speak!” She replied: “Give me a little more time and you’ll see he’ll speak.”

This father, who loved his daughter dearly, was waiting for him to speak. The daughter then, everyday would enter inside King Pipi and would say:

“King Pipi made by hand,
Without pen and (calamaru),
I began to churn you,
I began to paste you,
I began to clean you,
I began to remake you,
I put you in a cone,
So you can have words!”

And for another six months, he did this life, entering into King Pipi and repeating this same song. After six months, King Pipi began to speak and words were coming-out of his mouth. Instantly, this daughter ran and called her father: “Come Papa,” come because my boyfriend speaks!”

The king went and began a discussion with King Pipi; they spoke amongst themselves. Quickly the king, all content invited King Pipi to a banquet for dinner. In the meantime, the princes spread the word throughout the kingdom for everyone to prepare for their wedding. After several days, they got married.

After they were married, king Pipi never left home, and one day the king asked his daughter: “Fighia mia” (my daughter) why is it that you never got out with your husband? Every so often it’s good to go for a walk – even for your health!” “yes, yes, Papa! Today I have a desire to go out with the carriage.” Then the king called the cook to prepare the carriage for the princess, and the princess went out leisurely with King Pipi.

They went through the meadows and fields and when they were far away, King Pipi wanted to come down from the carriage to walk for a bit. All of a sudden, a furious wind arrived and blew King Pipi. The princess and the cook began to look for him everywhere, but he was nowhere to be found. The princess returned to the palace, all (dispiaciuta) upset, and her father when he saw her alone, he asked: “And your
husband?" “He said he wanted to go down from the carriage; a wind came along and blew him away. We searched everywhere and we could not find him. Now, I want to lock myself in a room with my (dispiaciri) sorrow and I don’t want to know about anything else.”

After sometime, in which she was melancholy, she got an idea to get a horse and some money, ask her father for his blessings, and departed in search of her husband. On her journey, she walked and walked and after many days, she ended-up in a forest. It was getting dark, she could hear animals calling (voices), she was shocked, she roped the horse around the tree and climbed-up a chestnut tree. Looking, looking, she saw a (lumiceddu) lantern far away and said: “Over there, that has to be a house all lit-up luminously. Someone has to be living there.” Thus, I will hop on my horse and go there. It’s better to be in the midst of humans than on top of this tree (plant) surrounded by animals.”

So she headed towards the light. At midnight, finally, she arrived at the house. She knocked and a voice answered: “who’s there?” “A human soul: can I stay the night or the animals will eat me?” The voice replied: “Here, no humans come; here there are no animals and serpents. If you are human do the sign of the cross.” In the name of The Father, Son and Holy Spirit – she did the sign of the cross. The door opened: she saw an old man with a long beard, who immediately said: “Oh daughter of the king, what are you doing in this part of the world, for the animals will devour you?” “I’m on a journey in search of my fortune. My father wanted me to get married, and I molded my husband with my own hands. It took me six months to churn him, six months to mold him and she went-on to tell him her story. Well then, continued the young girl, how did I find myself in this deserted terrain (campagna) – I saw light (lumi) and inhabitation over here.

Board me for the night, because tomorrow I’ll leave.” “Oh daughter of the king, now that you lost your husband, it will take awhile to find him. In the meantime, here’s a chestnut: save it and don’t lose it! Tomorrow morning continue walking and walking some more until you find another house. You will knock, my brother lives in this house and he will give you another piece of advice. For now, eat in the Grace of God!” And he gave her a piece of bread and some water. Afterwards, the princess went to sleep and left early in the morning.
She walked the entire day and at night she found herself in a forest. She was afraid of the animals, so she climbed to the top of a tree and from there she saw a lantern (lumiceddu).

She thought and did the same as last time; and she was boarded by another brother (rimitu). The (rimitu) wanted to know where she was going, and when he found-out, he told her that it would still be awhile before she found him.” Then he said: “here’s a nut (sarbala) and with your chestnut my brother gave you. Walk another day and another half a night and you will come across a house. Knock because there lives another brother of mine, who can give you further advice.”

In the morning, the princess began her walk and at twelve midnight she arrived to the third (rimitu) place. She came to a house and knocked on the door. She found herself in the presence of a very old man with a very long beard to his feet and dragged himself as he walked. She told him the story and the (rimitu) gave him a tiny nut. And making the connection said: “if you would like to arrive, you have to walk on this direction;” And he showed her the way. At the end you will find a little village and you’ll recognize it easily, because there’s a great big palace. This palace is connected to other ugly palaces, which is the jail. When you are there, peel (xicchì) the chestnut, and with what comes out, you begin to sell. By your voice, the maid of (la draga) will call for you.

You will climb and (la draga) will spy you (seize you-up) with how much you want for your things. You do not ask for money; only, you tell her that for one night you would like to stay alone with her husband, who is presently King Pipi. If, however, this does not work-out to speak with this king, the following day, peel the nut and begin to sell whatever comes out. Well then, see if you can speak with him during that night. If it does not work the second night, break the tiny nut and try for the last time. In the meantime, it became daylight; the princess saluted the very old man (rimitu) and continued on her journey.

*Divine Mother of Montserrat (La Madonna di Montserrat)*

The Madonna di Montserrat was in Barcelona Spain. Well then on this mountain called Mont Serrat in Spain, a shepherd who was tending the sheep heard music and saw a light on this mountain. He then called other villagers for help because mid day he always heard music and saw a light. Villagers went and the Madonna gave
them a sign where She was. They dug inside the mountain and found her. This was a
revelation – a discovery of la Madonna who was in this mountain for five hundred years.

So the villagers began to dig. And as they dug, they found La Madonna di
Montserrato with a letter. When they removed her, she was a dark coloured Madonna (la
Madonna near). In this letter it was stated that she wanted to be brought to Italy in the
village of Vallelonga, Calabria. So they began to walk with this statue of La Madonna di
Montserrato. As they walked, many wanted to keep her. Then they passed by a village
called Capistrano (a village nearby 5-6 km from Vallelonga). The villagers in Capistrano
wanted to keep her. The Madonna responded: “I will dedicate this tree in Capistrano for
everyone in this village to pray the litany.” People from everywhere came and prayed
the litany underneath this sacred tree.

The procession for la Madonna lasted eight days. Flea Markets with animals,
honey cookies, embroidered material, plates, gozzi (jars for water) – it was something
beautiful. Villagers from every part in Calabria donated money, gold necklaces to the
Madonna. Many villagers who before immigrating to Canada, donated and offered their
olive orchards for la Madonna.

Maria di Montserrato,
Aprite le porte che sono serrate,
Io vi chiamo, e Voi mi rispondete,
Sono in scuro, e Voi sei di lucce,
Sono inflita, e Voi mi consolate,
Questo grazia vi lo chiedo per carita.
Ma Voi per carita, mi la dette fare,
Oh Vergine Maria,
Con questi penne mia,
Trovatami la via.
Then you say a Salve Regina……

I heard this prayer as a child. My mother sings this prayer….

Divine Mother of Providence (La Madonna Di Providenza)

There once was a handsome, young prince who was depressed and sad and didn’t
want to leave his room. His mother was worried and therefore called the best doctors to
see her sad son. The doctors advised the mother to find a beautiful, young woman for her
son. They prescribed “love” to be the cure to his ill state.
The queen knew a wealthy merchant who had three beautiful daughters – the youngest was the most beautiful. He approached the merchant and offered that the daughter to bring joy and happiness in her son’s life, and would become his princess. The first daughter went to visit this handsome, depressed prince. When she entered his room, she greeted him and instantly threw a glass of water at her… cursing her with negative words and wishes. So she went home crying.

Then the second daughter went to visit this handsome, depressed prince. As soon as she entered his room, the prince treated her the same as the first daughter. She too went home crying and screaming.

The third daughter, then, went to visit this handsome, depressed prince. She had a gentle way about her. And although he was rude with her, he responded without sending her away back home crying.

Well, the Queen was overjoyed. Her son finally found the solution to his emotional, depressed state. A feast was held with all splendor and the prince married the merchant’s youngest daughter.

They continued to live there for days, until the merchant’s daughter noticed this prince leaving the bedroom during the middle of the night. One night, the merchant’s daughter followed him to wherever he was going. The prince went down a narrow winding staircase to the palace dungeon. There, his wife noticed him talking to a dark woman who was ugly to look at (her face was deformed). The wife overheard him say to her: “I’ll be leaving for a short while….I will return…” Thus, la dark woman seemed upset, as she heard this news. “Don’t worry, he continued…” “Call upon Divine Mother of Providence” for strength and courage, when I’m not here…”

The prince, who was truly in love with her, quietly returned to his bedroom. His wife, in the meantime, quietly and quickly returned to bed assuming she was in a deep sleep.

The prince returned to bed and dark woman held on to the encouraging advice of the prince: “Call upon Divine Mother of Providence whenever you feel discouraged…”

So then the prince did leave the palace for a while and dark woman was devastated. One evening, when she was all alone, dark woman began to pray and call
Divine Mother Providence for strength and encouragement. She began praying with all her heart….

As she lay there in bed, she noticed by her bedside a woman with a beautiful, white dress, with specks of gold. This image shone and glittered like the sun. Dark woman couldn’t believe what she was seeing….She felt stronger and more peaceful inside.

Dark woman continued to pray and call Divine Mother of Providence to return….Dark woman, on her hands and knees prayed with all her heart: “Madonna Mia, I know I’m a sinner, I adore you; awake the man whom I’m madly in love with to feel the same way about me…!” On her hands and knee, she pleaded and prayed to Divine Mother of Providence.

Two doves appeared then, tied together with a gold thread. Dark woman, in amazement, was transformed into a beautiful woman. Her heart opened and her feelings of jealousy dissipated into the thin air.

Dark woman awoke and was headed towards a life of love….

**Divine Mother of Polsi (La Madonna Di Polsi)**

In June 1981 I went to Italy. My sister took me to this place to visit the Divine Mother of Tindaru (Black Madonna). A person told me that there is a place with a cathedral in this Madonna’s honour. There is a story that a mother who went with her child to visit this Madonna. When this person entered the church and saw this Black Madonna, she said: “I traveled a long way to see a woman darker than myself. All of a sudden her child vanished. Everyone was alarmed. Then someone found this woman’s child at sea (which was at the bottom of the mountain) where the church was. This woman all in despair turned to this Madonna and asked Her to save her child who had fallen from the mountain deep into the sea. When the villagers went to sea, they found the child safe and sound. The waves pulled the child back to shore. This sand in this sea is soft and velvety. This is a beautiful story. The Divine Mother wants people to pray to her. The Divine Mother wants people to adore her. With the Divine Mother, everything is capable.
Divine Mother of Polsi (Another Miracle) (Madonna Di Polsi Unaltro Miracolu)

Another story and this happened in 1771 is about a Duke and Duchess who were married for sometime and couldn’t have children. The wife turned to la Madonna di Polsi and asked her: “Madonna Mia, grant me this grace to have a child. This is my husband’s greatest wish – to have a child. If You grant me this wish, I will give You as much gold as the child weighs. In time, her wish was granted and the duchess conceived a child. The duke and duchess didn’t forget their promise to La Madonna Di Polsi. After three days they brought the new born child and gold to La Madonna. On their way, the duchess noticed the child dead, in her arms. They were devastated. They purchased a tiny casket, and placed their child in it. The duke wanted to return home. However, the duchess firmly insisted to continue with the journey to see La Madonna. When they arrived they found the church of La Madonna Di Polsi (Franciscan convent in Astramonte Calabria) located on top of a mountain over-looking the sea. The priest opened the church and decided to celebrate a mass in honour of the deceased child. They opened the casket and placed it on the alter. Celebrating the mass, the child all of a sudden, let out an enormous cry and awoke. He was dead and then resurrected. You could imagine the joy the duke and duchess had. La Madonna Di Polsi granted their WISH. Thus, they left all their gold to La Madonna Di Polsi. They left behind the child’s little casket and returned home. If you visit today, this little casket is still present.

Madonna Di Polsi (Another Miracle)

It happened once many years ago (Celebration September 15th) there was a husband and wife with a child who was deaf. Many times they took her to see La Madonna Di Polsi asking Her to grant them the grace for their child to speak. Many times they went and many times their wish was not granted. This couple pleaded with La Madonna: “Madonna Mia, if you grant us this wish, we will give you the finest veal we have in our stable.” They brought their finest veal and mute child to La Madonna. When they arrived at this church, their mute child shouted: “VIVA MARIA!” and their wish was granted. They kept their promise and left the veal to La Madonna. They were grateful to La Madonna and began on the journey toward home. Walking and walking, they encountered an old woman who asked: “Is it true that La Madonna has granted you
your wish?” “Yes,” the couple responded. “However,” said the husband, “We gave La Madonna our finest veal for this grace.”

After many days, when they arrived home, the husband went to feed the cows and found the finest veal (the gift he gave to La Madonna) in the stable. When he saw this, he wondered and asked La Madonna why She had returned the veal: “Madonna Mia, You’ve granted me a beautiful grace and the veal is for You.” However, La Madonna had returned the finest veal and their daughter became once again mute.

Therefore, this means that whatever you promise La Madonna she would like without bragging to anyone your gift to La Madonna. La Madonna is the Queen (Padrona). The way La Madonna gives it, La Madonna can take it away. The husband didn’t give the veal with heart. Instead, he revealed to the old woman that because he gave La Madonna his finest veal, his daughter became well again and could speak. He was insinuating to the old woman that La Madonna would like to be paid for graces received. However, La Madonna doesn’t want payment but prayers from humanity.

“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts”
(Shakespeare, 1978, As You Like It, p. 360).
APPENDIX B

*Calabrian Women Speak: A Dramatic Narrative*

The author summarizes the participants' characters and stories through a dramatic presentation - acting 'in role' as each Calabrian woman comes to life through props, song, and narrative (45 minute video):