

The Inspector Barbara Gillo Series. An Interview with Rosa Mogliasso

Traci Andrighetti (March 20, 2014)



I had the pleasure of interviewing Rosa about her fascinating use of language, and her plans for the future.



Rosa Mogliasso (b. 1960, Susa) is a prize-winning author of Italian regional mystery; specifically, Turinese noir. She is perhaps best known for her Inspector Barbara Gillo series, a gritty and often ironic portrait of contemporary Turin and the surrounding area. Notably, Mogliasso also writes children's literature, and she has been actively involved in productions of her work for the Italian stage.

This month I had the pleasure of interviewing Rosa about the Inspector Barbara Gillo series, her fascinating use of language, and her plans for the future.

Like you, your protagonist, Inspector Barbara Gillo, lives in Turin. What do you hope to convey to your readers about the city and your native region of Piedmont?

By writing mysteries I tell criminal stories and I demonstrate, against my will, how evil can be anywhere, even here. But with the evil, the good and the tenderness, I hope.

You incorporate a number of languages, dialects and varieties of language into your work. Is this a conscious choice on your part?

Conscious choice and challenge. I always try to stratify diverse lexical levels: the how and the low, the educated and the everyday, the correct choice and the jargon, because they coexist in daily life. The reality—for now and for better— isn't undifferentiated but is the synchronic presence of diverse elements. This is why it's necessary to seek out the plurality of languages.

One of the most interesting linguistic features of [L'amore si nutre di amore \[2\]](#) (Love Feeds Off Love) (Salani, 2011), the second novel in the Inspector Gillo series, is the online language of "Giovanna85." Are you familiar with the language of social media? Or was this something you had to research?

The lexicon of social networks is easy. All you have to do is speed it up and remove the punctuation and vowels; plus, in Italy, use "k" instead of "ch." These are practices that I abhor, but as I've already stated, if you want to be realistic you can't exempt yourself from taking note of it and playing along.

From time to time, you insert a word or phrase in the Piedmontese dialect into the text. Do you incorporate the dialect merely for stylistic purposes, or does it serve a deeper purpose?

I adore the dialects, all of them. Speaking in dialect is like putting on your pajamas when you get home. Dialect is also a factor in the attempt to exploit the potentialities of sound and the evocation of words. Certain colorings, certain combinations work only with dialect, in my case Piedmontese, the language that I acquired together with the maternal milk.

Romanesco also makes a brief appearance in L'amore si nutre di amore. As a native of Piedmont, how would you describe this dialect?



Carnal, decisive, disenchanted.

The fourth and final novel in the Inspector Gillo series, *Chi bacia e chi viene baciato*, comes out next month. Can you give us a teaser?

This time Barbara doesn't have time to despair over the loss of her irreplaceable right arm, Peruzzi, and the near definitive break with her boyfriend, the Palermitan Inspector Zuccalà. Destiny has dealt her the case of a French journalist who was killed because she was in possession of dangerous information tied to the trafficking of the Russian Mafia in Italy.

What's next for you?

I'm writing the fifth episode of the adventures of Barbara Gillo while, together with Davide Livermore, a friend and director of lyric opera, I'm writing a book about Mozart. And I'd really like to have my work translated for an American audience

Note: Many thanks to Rosa Mogliasso for the fascinating interview! If you'd like to know more about Rosa and her writing, be sure to read [my post](#) [3] on *L'amore si nutre di amore*.

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