

## **Pietro Chiari's America. Among apocryphal attributions and philosophical considerations<sup>1</sup>**

Alessio Giannanti

(Università degli Studi di Sassari)

---

### **Abstract**

In Enlightened Europe, the debate surrounding the New World and the encounter with the Other acted as one of the main driving forces behind the crisis of Eurocentrism, and incited a debate which steered the philosophy of the Enlightenment towards a more relativistic concept of society and institutions. These themes were also developed in literature, particularly in the work of the first Italian novelist, Pietro Chiari. The *corpus* of Chiari's "American" themed works comprises: *La donna che non si trova* (1768); *Sulle Americhe. «Notizie compendiose per spiriti colti»* (1780); *La Corsara Francese* (1781) and *I privilegi della ignoranza. Lettere d'una americana ad un letterato d'Europa* (1784). However, the novel *L'Americana ramminga* (1763), often attributed to Chiari, is now believed to be apocryphal.

As was the case for the literature of the Enlightenment, Chiari's approach to the "American" theme results in a consideration on civilization, in condemnation of the Conquest, in the myth of the Noble Savage and of life outside society, which converged to form a sort of reverse mirror image of the Western world, providing the author with the opportunity to submit a critical reading of the present. The perspective adopted by Chiari in his analysis is a significant indicator of the his own subscription to the ideology and rhetoric of the Enlightenment, which has perhaps been underestimated by some critics in the past.

**Key words** – America; Pietro Chiari; 18th century; Italian novel; Enlightenment

---

In Enlightened Europe, the debate surrounding the New World had the explosive effect of calling into question many of the "untouchable" parameters on which the integrity of culture, faith and reason had been founded. The encounter with the *other*, the *different*, the *foreign*, was one of the principal driving forces behind the crisis of Eurocentrism, and incited a debate which steered the philosophy of the Enlightenment towards a more relativistic concept of society and its institutions, and towards redefining

---

<sup>1</sup> The present contribution is a translation and re-elaboration of a past lecture given by me at the ADI Convention: "La letteratura degli Italiani - 2. Rotte, confini, passaggi". Genova, 15-18 September 2010. The translations of passages from literary texts and essays submitted in these pages are by Emma Pagano, whose precious collaboration is greatly appreciated.

the relationship between man and nature. The discovery of America and the news arriving from the colonies overseas quintessentially represented this encounter with the *new*: a broadening of geographical – and, consequently, mental – borders, loaded with unexpected intellectual cues.

In Italy, the American issue similarly attracted considerable considerations on a philosophical and moral level, but also a mundane curiosity underlain with a generalized desire for information. A response to both these inclinations would be attempted by literature, which in those same years had been experimenting new routes – drawing from other European examples – and reaching equally unprecedented landings, abolishing some of the most inveterate confines between genres in the arduous attempt to impose the “new world” of the novel on a culturally reluctant, if not hostile, Italy<sup>2</sup>.

Pietro Chiari, the scandalous and much opposed precursor of these literary trials, was also notoriously mindful of the leanings of society, and of the propensities of a public which would prove his only ally against the Academy’s reproach. Therefore readers should not be amazed by the presence, throughout his body of work, of characters, situations and themes pertaining to America – which, by his own admission, was becoming «sempre più l’oggetto della curiosità europea, e de’ [...] giornalieri ragionamenti»<sup>3</sup>.

Before undertaking a dissertation, a premise must be made. Although in the past two decades literary criticism has yielded extraordinary advancements in the understanding of early Italian fiction – bridging a grave and inexplicable gap in

---

<sup>2</sup> Since the 1990s, a strong interest for the 18th century novel has emerged, through a series of research projects that breach the gap in literary historiography with regard to the pre-Manzonian novel (and specifically to its two protagonists: Pietro Chiari and Antonio Piazza). Cf. Luca CLERICI, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento. Il caso Chiari*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1997; Carlo Alberto MADRIGNANI, *All’origine del romanzo in Italia. Il «celebre Abate Chiari»*, Napoli, Liguori, 2000; Ilaria CROTTI, *Alla ricerca del codice: il romanzo italiano del Settecento*, in Ilaria CROTTI, Ricciarda RICORDA, Piermario VESCOVO (eds.), *Il “Mondo Vivo”. Aspetti del romanzo, del teatro e del giornalismo nel Settecento italiano*, Padova, Il Poligrafo, 2001, pp. 9-54; Aldo Maria MORACE, *Il prisma dell’apparenza. La narrativa di Antonio Piazza*, Napoli, Liguori, 2002; Tatiana CRIVELLI, «Né Arturo né Turpino né la Tavola rotonda». *Romanzi del secondo Settecento italiano*, Roma, Salerno, 2002. For lack of space, Chiari’s theatrical aspect – which has in recent years attracted renewed interest from literary criticism- cannot be addressed herein; to this regard, see one of the most recent works on Chiari, in which this aspect of his production is analysed in connection with his fiction: Valeria TAVAZZI, *Il romanzo in gara: echi delle polemiche teatrali nella narrativa di Pietro Chiari e Antonio Piazza*, preface by Piermario Vescovo, Roma, Bulzoni, 2010. A linguistic analysis of the subject, in part forestalling the renewed critical interest that would arise, can be found in Giuseppe ANTONELLI, *Alle radici della letteratura di consumo. La lingua dei romanzi di Pietro Chiari e Antonio Piazza*, introduction by Luca Serianni, Milano, Istituto di propaganda libraria, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Translation: «more and more the object of European curiosity, and of [...] daily considerations». Quote taken from the anastatic edition of an essay (dated to 1780) on America: Pietro CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe «compendiose notizie per spiriti colti»*, ed. Carlo Alberto MADRIGNANI, Pisa, ETS, 1991, p. 69.

historiography – there are still some difficulties in approaching this sort of production. As anyone with even a slight familiarity with the bibliographical repertory of the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel is well aware, we are not yet able to section its different corpora with reasonable certainty: many question marks still persist with regard to certain attributions, and even to the actual existence of certain texts<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, considering the undeniable vitality of 18<sup>th</sup> century publishing, very few novels have been preserved within public libraries – a clear sign of strong cultural and moral censorship – often making it difficult for scholars to merely gather sources pertaining to their research<sup>5</sup>. This is also true for the “American Chiari” (a definition still in use) although, contrary to usual, this case is not a matter of integrating new texts into the author’s existing body of works, but rather of refocusing the interpretation of his *oeuvre*. The author has in fact been attributed with a novel about America which is, in all likelihood, apocryphal; consequently, many of the author’s other works, which have been neglected, must now be placed in a better light.

The works set in or pertaining to America which may be attributed to Chiari are: the 1768 novel *La donna che non si trova*; three of the twelve volumes of *Trattenimenti dello spirito. Sopra le cose del mondo passate presenti e possibili ad avvenire* (respectively included in the first volume published in 1780, reprinted in modern times under the heading *Sulle Americhe. «Notizie compendiose per spiriti colti»*, and in the

---

<sup>4</sup> Any inaccuracies, omissions and false attributions are not able to totally vitiate the validity of that which to this day is still the principal catalogue of the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel: Giambattista MARCHESI, *Studi e ricerche intorno ai nostri romanzieri del '700, coll'aggiunta di una bibliografia dei romanzieri editi in Italia in quel secolo*, Bergamo, Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1903; anastatic reprint titled *Romanzieri e romanzi del Settecento*, introd. *Un secolo di romanzo* by Luca Toschi, and *Rassegna bibliografica sul romanzo del '700* by Maura Gori, Roma, Vecchiarelli, 1991 (quoted herein). In recent years, ancient collections of texts have been gradually transferred to digitalised archives, no doubt aiding in the definition of a more accurate bibliographical study of the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel, though in no way nullifying the importance of direct consultation of single copies within archives. Recent monographs addressing turn of the century novels (Clerici, Madrignani, Morace and Crivelli) and other contributions in the form of articles (as well as reprints) have shed light on many issues, yet such amendments and integrations have still not yielded an exhaustive and flawless bibliographical catalogue of the subject. An updated general index is provided in appendix to the essay by CRIVELLI, «*Né Arturo né Turpino né la Tavola rotonda*», pp. 301-326, though some of Marchesi’s misinterpretations filter through to this text. The situation is certainly better with regard to Antonio Piazza, for whom a reliable *oeuvre* is provided in MORACE, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, pp. 307-318.

<sup>5</sup> A particularly emblematic case is that of what has been recognised as the first Italian novel, reprinted in the modern edition: Pietro CHIARI, *La filosofessa italiana, o sia le avventure della Marchesa N.N., scritte in francese da lei medesima*, ed. Carlo Alberto MADRIGNANI, San Cesario di Lecce, Manni, 2004. Its *princeps* (Venezia, Pasinelli, 1753) is extremely rare: the text of 1994, edited by Madrignani, for example, makes reference (for the first three volumes) to a copy kept in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. Another first-edition copy has been found within the Bodleian Library in Oxford, as attested by the article by Paolo RAMBELLI, *Sulla 'princeps' de "La filosofessa italiana" di Pietro Chiari*, «The Italianist», 24.1 (2004), pp. 20-30. This poses a truly bizarre situation: the first Italian novel is only available outside national borders, at least until the existence of a third copy, recovered from the catalogue of the Biblioteca Comunale Teresiana in Mantova, is proven (during the research for this dissertation, however, said copy was located in an “impracticable area” of the library, and therefore not available for consultation).

final two volumes, published in 1781, which contain *La Corsara Francese della guerra presente*); and, concluding the series, *I privilegi della ignoranza. Lettere d'una americana ad un letterato d'Europa*, released almost *in limine mortis* in 1784<sup>6</sup>. This dissertation will focus mainly on these three works, although – as observed by Ricciarda Ricorda in a significant article on this topic<sup>7</sup> – additional, though marginal, references to the New World are not lacking in his other works. Two speculative works must be mentioned to this regard: *Lettere di un solitario a sua figlia per formarle il cuore e lo spirito nella scuola del mondo* (1777, but actually 1772) and *Il secolo corrente. Dialoghi di una dama con il suo cavaliere* (1783) as well as, obviously, every novel in which the characters' extraordinary pilgrimages touch upon the American continent: this is the case in *L'Amore senza fortuna* (1765) and *La Cinese in Europa* (1779)<sup>8</sup>. The 1763 novel *L'Americana ramminga* is clearly missing from this list: released anonymously by the Pasinelli press, it was subsequently attributed to Chiari: this attribution – as previously mentioned – is almost unanimously agreed upon by scholars, and supported even in the most recent research on the subject<sup>9</sup>. In a *Nota antiquaria* in 2004's «Sincronie», Marco

---

<sup>6</sup> As follows is the list of Chiari's "American" works (citing modern editions when available): *La donna che non si trova, o sia le avventure di Madama Delingh, scritte da lei medesima*, ed. Alberto Zava, San Cesario di Lecce, Manni, 2007 (according to the editor, the *princeps* is the Parma, Carmignani, 1768 edition); *Trattenimenti dello spirito umano. Sopra le cose del mondo passate presenti e possibili ad avvenire, del Signor Abbate Pietro Chiari*, Brescia, Berlandis, 1780, volumes I, XI, XII (as previously mentioned, the first volume of the *Trattenimenti* was reprinted in 1991 by Madrignani in an anastasic edition with a new notation, within the collection «Piccola miscellanea»: CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*); *I privilegi della ignoranza. Lettere d'una americana ad un letterato d'Europa*, Venezia, Bassaglia, 1784. Chiari's play, staged in 1754 and titled *Colombo o l'America scoperta* deserves mention, however its text has been lost; among modern critics, the first to speak of it was Giuseppe ORTOLANI, *Settecento: per una lettura dell'abate Chiari*, Venezia, Fontana, 1905, p. 502.

<sup>7</sup> Ricciarda RICORDA, *I romanzi «americani» di Pietro Chiari*, in Angela CARACCILO ARICÒ (ed.) *L'impatto della scoperta dell'America nella cultura veneziana*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1990, pp. 321-342. An extremely important earlier contribution, which also addresses the Venetian culture of the time, is provided in Pietro DEL NEGRO, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del Settecento*, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1975, later reprinted in an expanded edition: *Il mito americano nella Venezia del '700*, Padova, Liviana, 1986, quoted herein. See also Stefania BUCCINI, *Il dilemma della grande Atlantide. Le Americhe nella letteratura italiana del Settecento e del primo Ottocento*, with a preface by Franco Fido, Napoli, Loffredo, 1990, pp. 69-74.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Lettere d'un solitario a sua figlia per formarle il cuore, e lo spirito nella scuola del mondo. Pubblicate dall'abate Pietro Chiari*, Venezia, Battifoco, 1777; *Il secolo corrente. Dialoghi d'una dama col suo cavaliere scritti da lei medesima, pubblicati dall'abate Pietro Chiari*, Venezia, Bassaglia, 1783; *L'amore senza fortuna, o sia Memorie d'una Dama Portoghese scritte da lei medesima e pubblicate dall'abate Chiari*, Firenze, Colombani, 1765; *La cinese in Europa, ossia storia d'una Principessa cinese del nostro secolo scritta da lei medesima e pubblicata dall'abate Pietro Chiari*, Genova, Franchi, 1779. See also RICORDA, *I romanzi «americani» di Pietro Chiari*, p. 323.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *L'Americana ramminga, cioè Memorie di Donna Innez di Quebrada. Scritte da lei stessa, ed ora pubblicate da M. G. Di S. Sua confidente amica*, Venezia, Pasinelli, 1763 in the following year a Neapolitan forgery appeared, citing Chiari as the author, as was usual at the time («ed ora pubblicate dall'Abbate Pietro Chiari», Napoli, Flauto, 1764). The three main contributions analyzing the relationship between Chiari's fiction and the American issue also relay the attribution to the author: DEL NEGRO, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del '700*, p. 52; RICORDA, *I romanzi «americani» di Pietro Chiari*, pp. 322, 332-333; BUCCINI, *Il dilemma della grande Atlantide*, p. 69.

Catucci suggests the novel may not be ascribable to Chiari<sup>10</sup>, supporting his theory with formal arguments that while convincing are not conclusive: after all, Marchesi himself (the blessing and curse of research into the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel) kept his distance from the attribution contained in Melzi's *Dizionario*, rather regarding *L'Americana ramminga* as a translation of a foreign text<sup>11</sup>. In fact, Melzi may have been misled by the edition published by Vinaccia-Flauto in 1764 (absent in Marchesi's repertoire), which has been recently uncovered and could be considered rare were it not that such editions may usually only be found in very few copies<sup>12</sup>. Chiari is cited as the author in the 1764 edition, but the fact that both Venetian editions (Pasinelli 1763 and Zatta 1788) are anonymous should cast much doubt upon the reliability of the Neapolitan edition, which in all likelihood appears to be one of the frequent examples of false attribution for commercial purposes perpetrated by the publisher in question. The name Chiari was in fact well known among readers of novels, as also proven by the case of Antonio Piazza, who complained that Vinaccia-Flauto's forgeries would revoke his own authorship in favour of the more popular novelist<sup>13</sup>. Catucci's dissertation implies that the originality, or rather the eccentricity of the female character in *Americana ramminga* (so different

---

<sup>10</sup> Marco CATUCCI, *L'Americana Ramminga*, «Sincronie», 8.16 (July-December 2004), pp. 171-178. In this note the scholar traces clear stylistic features: the «insolito andamento colloquiale, quasi confidenziale, adottato dall'io narrante per rivolgersi al lettore, più simile allo stile informale dei giornalisti veneziani che a quello di un autore di romanzi» («unusually colloquial, almost confidential, style adopted by the first person narrator to address the reader, more akin to the informal style of Venetian journalists than to that of a novelist», p. 173). Catucci suggests that even the descriptions of the sea and alpine landscapes contained in the novel are modelled on the contemporary «reports by Venetian and Lombard scientists» (p. 176) rather than by Chiari's own cipher.

<sup>11</sup> Following the example of Gaetano MELZI, *Dizionario di opere anonime e pseudonime di scrittori italiani o come che sia aventi relazione all'Italia*, Milano, Pirola, 1848-1859 (3 voll.), vol. 1, p. 201 – and regardless of Marchesi's warnings to readers (MARCHESI, *Romanzieri e romanzi del Settecento*, p. 373) – scholars of Chiari's *oeuvre* (at least up to Catucci's article) have not sufficiently tackled the issue of the work's authorship. In the catalogue of the 18th century novel contained in appendix to her monograph, Crivelli merely takes note of the novel's doubtful attribution (CRIVELLI, «*Né Arturo né Turpino né la Tavola rotonda*», p. 36.). The case of *L'Americana ramminga* is therefore still complex: in this case, even the popular pseudo-autobiographical device proves harder to decipher. Indeed, the title of the novel attributes it to the mysterious «M. G. di S., sua confidente amica» yet to this day, no one has been able to discover the name (granted it refers to a real person) of the woman behind said initials. Is this a feminine pseudonym employed by an already well-known author, or a testament to the existence of the first female Italian novelist of the 18th century? Or, as suggested by Marchesi, is it merely a translation?

<sup>12</sup> In the early two thousands, the author of this paper was able to locate not one but two copies of the novel within the Biblioteca Civica di Massa (from the archives of the Accademia dei Rinnovati). These include the 1764 Neapolitan Flauto edition. These findings, among other research, gave way to a graduate thesis from the Department of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Pisa: Riccardo SENNI, *Per "L'Americana Ramminga". Analisi e interpretazione del romanzo attribuito a Pietro Chiari*, a.a. 2007-2008, supervisor Prof. Luca Curti (which also suggests that the novel is not attributable to Chiari). I take this opportunity to thank the author of the thesis for granting me access to the rare copies of the novel in his possession.

<sup>13</sup> See MORACE, *Il prisma dell'apparenza*, pp. 7-8, wherein the scholar tracks down fourteen of Piazza's works, published by Vernaccia, and attributed to Chiari. For information on the Neapolitan publishing house, see Anna SCANNAPIECO, *Per un catalogo dei libri editi da Giacomo Antonio Venaccia (1751-1785)*, «Problemi di critica goldoniana», 4.4 (1997), pp. 72-152.

from Chiari's heroines), along with certain stylistic traits, could constitute an element of proof as to the text's foreignness from Chiari's production<sup>14</sup>. In the absence of irrefutable documentary proof, our focus must therefore shift towards more formal aspects, and particularly to tracing certain constants throughout the works, that may at least aid in identifying an "American motif" that would help to dissipate any doubt about the work's authorship, if not the author's signature cipher (Chiari being an author of manifest inconsistency, almost a voluntary propagator of a multitude of stances). However, in light of the information as yet surfaced, the decision was made not to include *L'Americana ramminga* among the texts herein examined.

For Chiari, the American setting not only provides the opportunity for a generic exotic connotation, found often throughout his adventure fiction, but also the chance to approach the strand of European and Enlightened literature which had found a sort of inverted mirror of Western society in the theme of the savage, in other words allowing for a critical analysis of the present. It is a new approach to otherness, gradually freeing itself from the ethnocentric paradigms of Conquest literature which, as highlighted by Todorov in his famous essay, tended either to fail to recognize alterity, assimilating the Other to its own world or, vice-versa, to consider such differences as indicative of a fundamental inferiority<sup>15</sup>. Conversely, in an alienating and contrastive manner, the rhetoric of the Enlightenment aims to value differences, providing an alternative model of the savage, who in his simplicity and instinctive acceptance of solidarity among men embodies the values that European society has long sacrificed at the altar of artificiality and economic interest<sup>16</sup>. In Chiari's fiction, this myth of the noble savage naturally encounters yet another *other*, a figure that is particularly dear to the author: the feminine model of the champion of justice, the «philosophesse» to whom his first novel was

---

<sup>14</sup> Cf. CATUCCI, *L'Americana Ramminga*, pp. 171, 173-177. Also note that, along with the female protagonist's character differences when compared to Chiari's heroines (who appear much more virtuous and perhaps less unscrupulous than Jneez), other elements support this hypothesis, the most interesting of which is the drastic reduction in a series of features such as introductory, metaliterary and pedagogical elements, as well as enunciation marks, that typically characterise Chiari's narrative canon.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Tzvetan TODOROV, *La conquête de l'Amérique. Le problème de l'autre*, Paris, Seuil, 1982.

<sup>16</sup> See the definition of the «retorica dell'Illuminismo» («rhetoric of the Enlightenment») included in Francesco ORLANDO, *Illuminismo, Barocco e retorica freudiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1997; in which the scholar, attempting to establish a freudian theory of literature (this is the third volume in his trilogy), applies the notion of «return of the repressed» and Matte Blanco's postfreudian logic to the irony of the Enlightenment.

dedicated in 1753.

In *Donna che non si trova* the main character is Quivira, an American from the North who weds the European Delingh after saving him from death. The ensuing tale is based on Quivira's search for her missing husband, through a series of incredible incidents (as is fit for the genre) spanning America and Europe, until Madame Delingh is able to reunite the family. The protagonist's exemplarity – which even the title's ambivalence suggests – comes not only from her overcoming of exhausting trials, but also from her honesty of spirit, which the author is able to convey from the very first articles, employing a pseudo-autobiographical style tinged with resentment, in which the influence of Rousseau echoes clearly: the savage woman from the «immense boscaglie» («immense brush») of America challenges the so-called developed world with «uno spirito insuperabile d'indipendenza, sostenuto dalla natura, e regolato da' soli lumi della ragione».<sup>17</sup> In fact, Quivira believes that if men followed the «sola ragione» («sole reason») which inspires the American savages' life, the «terrestre abisso di confusione» could be transformed into a «vero teatro di felicissima fratellanza a tutto il genere umano»<sup>18</sup>. These arguments will reappear, a few years later, in many passages of *Privilegi della ignoranza*, celebrating the simplicity of peoples living in contact with nature, uncorrupted by civilisation<sup>19</sup>. Towards the end of the Sixties, the author must have felt particularly inspired by the subject of education “outside of society”: published in the same year as *Donna che non si trova*, his most highly utopian novel, *L'uomo di un altro mondo* (1768), is modelled on Voltaire's *conte philosophique*, although in this case the protagonist hails not from America, but rather from its collectively imagined equivalent, a nameless island – a “new world” in itself<sup>20</sup>.

In his essay *Il mito americano nella Venezia del Settecento* – a fundamental reading to this day - Pietro Del Negro stressed the innovative aspects introduced by

---

<sup>17</sup> Translation: «an insurmountable spirit of independence, sustained by nature, and governed by the sole light of reason» (CHIARI, *La donna che non si trova*, pp. 40 and 47).

<sup>18</sup> Translation: «earthly abyss of chaos [could be transformed into a] true theatre of joyful brotherhood for all humanity» (CHIARI, *La donna che non si trova*, p. 41).

<sup>19</sup> CHIARI, *Privilegi della ignoranza*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>20</sup> Pietro CHIARI, *L'uomo di un altro mondo o sia Memorie di un solitario senza nome, scritte da lui medesimo in due linguaggi cinese, e russo e pubblicate nella nostra lingua dall'Abbate Pietro Chiari*, Venezia, Battifoco, 1768. The novel was reprinted in contemporary times within *Romanzieri italiani del Settecento*, ed. Folco Portinari, Torino, Utet, 1988, pp. 205-361.

Chiari in this American novel, particularly when compared to his most famous rival, Carlo Goldoni<sup>21</sup>. Indeed, if the “savage” heroines put on stage by Goldoni little more than a decade earlier - with 1755’s *La peruviana* (a self-confessed retake of the *Lettres d’une péruvienne* by Françoise de Graffigny) and with the following novel *La bella selvaggia*, published in 1758<sup>22</sup> - were still subject to paternalistic treatment, via their reassuring conversion to Catholic morals, Chiari’s *La donna che non si trova* can be read as a testament to the «passaggio ad una versione più “filosofica” del mito del buon selvaggio»<sup>23</sup>. Undoubtedly, Chiari’s consideration of savages – though not completely exempt of backwards stereotypes (such as certain passages of the *Lettere scelte*, which are however much earlier: 1751)<sup>24</sup> – is also characterised by that which even Ricorda defines as a «globale impostazione progressista ed illuminista»<sup>25</sup>.

The myth of the noble savage and the exaltation of simplicity inevitably led to a gradual erosion of rationalist optimism and of eurocentrism, the cornerstone of which was the belief in the positive function of the civilisation of “barbarian” peoples. Chiari’s interest for the world of the savages follows a similar route: though not rejecting the ethical value of those who wish to “advance” the New World, he also grasps their limits and distorted views, on more than one occasion raising doubts to this regard: notice, for example in *Sulle Americhe*, the passage in which, after providing an unforgiving description of the history of the Conquest, Chiari invites the reader to consider whether this encounter between the two worlds «reputarsi deggia d’utilità maggiore, o di

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. DEL NEGRO, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del ’700*, pp. 63-68.

<sup>22</sup> Following their production, *La peruviana* and *La bella selvaggia* would be published in 1758 and 1762 respectively, within Carlo GOLDONI, *Nuovo teatro comico*, Bologna, Girolamo Corciolani, ed. eredi Colli a S. Tommaso d’Aquino, 1757-1764, voll. III e VII.

<sup>23</sup> Translation: «shift to a more “philosophical” version of the myth of the Noble Savage» (DEL NEGRO, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del ’700*, p. 66). The scholar links these shifts in Chiari’s perspective (when compared to Goldoni’s as yet pre-Enlightened point of view) to the circulation of W. and E. Burke’s *Account of European Settlements in America*, that shall be referenced again in the prosecution of this contribution.

<sup>24</sup> This observation comes from DEL NEGRO, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del ’700*, p. 63, who quotes the following passage: «il genio solo Europeo costituisce nell’esser di belle, e buone certe proprietà, che nell’America, per esempio, son malvagie e difforni» («Europe’s exclusive heritage consists in being of fair, and virtuous properties, which in America, for example, are wicked and misshapen»), in Pietro CHIARI, *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli, critiche, ed erudite scritte ad una Dama di qualità dall’Abbate Pietro Chiari Bresciano*, I, Venezia, Roselli, 1751, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Translation: «progressive and enlightened global stance». (RICORDA, *I romanzi «americani» di Pietro Chiari*, p. 329).



maggior documento»<sup>26</sup>. A similar dilemma – moving from history to intersubjectivity – is faced by the protagonist of *Donna che non si trova* who, as correctly pointed out by Alberto Zava<sup>27</sup>, at one point poses the central question in the debate on civilisation: «Sarà sempre un problema da non decidersi mai, se il raffinamento dello spirito umano sia più giovevole alla società, o ne sia più pernicioso l'abuso»<sup>28</sup>. With his usual «abilità di volgarizzatore mondano e colto»<sup>29</sup> of European philosophical debate, Chiari never takes a clear position with regard to the issue of civilisation, but “restricts himself” to problematizing and relativizing a concept of reason and historical evolution that is too optimistic, as the ideology of the Enlightenment seemed to have become after the Lisbon catastrophe (also represented in *La francese in Italia*<sup>30</sup>) which, as Tagliapietra wrote, constituted an out-and-out philosophical earthquake, opening the field up to newfound unrest in the consciences of many intellectuals<sup>31</sup>.

In *Sulle Americhe* – the work in which all these considerations on the New World are best expressed – Chiari moves in the same direction taken by the novel, that is, towards the 18<sup>th</sup>-century «trattenimento» (“entertainment”) – combining the useful to the pleasurable (as anticipated a century earlier by Monsieur Huet in his *Traité de l'origine des romans*<sup>32</sup>), yet he restricts the diaphragm of fiction to indulge a composite and culturally intermediate audience, for which the information provided in newspapers was not enough, and who wished to delve into the historic and philosophical ramifications of the issue. Between the lines of the booklet, the author himself hints to

<sup>26</sup> Translation: «[this encounter] should be deemed of higher benefit, or higher damage» (CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*, p. 55).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Alberto ZAVA, *Introduzione*, in CHIARI, *La donna che non si trova*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Translation: «Shall it always be a problem to never be resolved, whether the refinement of the human spirit be more fruitful for society, or its abuse pernicious» (CHIARI, *La donna che non si trova*, p. 86).

<sup>29</sup> Translation: «skill of the mundane and learned vulgarizer» (CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*, p. 10).

<sup>30</sup> Pietro CHIARI, *La francese in Italia o sia Memorie critiche di Madama N. N., scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari., Poeta di S.A.S. il Sig. Duca di Modena*, Venezia, Pellicchia, 1759.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Andrea TAGLIAPIETRA, *La catastrofe e la filosofia*, in VOLTAIRE, ROUSSEAU, KANT, *Sulla catastrofe. L'illuminismo e la filosofia del disastro*, introduction by the author, translation by Silvia Manzoni and Elisa Tetamo, with an essay by Paola Giacomoni, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2004, pp. IX-XXXIX.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Pierre-Daniel HUET, *Trattato sull'origine dei romanzi*, ed. Ruggero Campagnoli and Yves Hersant, Torino, Einaudi, 1977. In accordance with his own classicist education, Huet expresses this concept («pour le plaisir et l'instruction des lecteurs») calling back to the idea of *miscere utile dolci*, contained in Horace's *Ars poetica*. The book was published for the first time in 1670 with the original title *Traité de l'origine des romans*, as a preface to the novel *Zayde* by Madame de La Fayette. After circulating under its original title, the treatise was only translated into Italian after 1740 and, by paradox, the translator overturned the mark of Huet's operation, professing his own aversion for novels, and thus taking on the ostracism of Italy's official culture (an aspect highlighted by MADRIGNANI, *All'origine del romanzo in Italia*, pp. 220-221).

the fact that updates on certain specific “fashionable” topics are not only useful but necessary, in mundane circles: «Son piccole cose, che non è molta gloria il saperle, ma l’ignorarle in certe circostanze mettono le persone di spirito in molto discredito»<sup>33</sup>.

*Sulle Americhe* is in fact a historical and geographical compendium containing much ethnographical information (mirroring the style of the *Encyclopédie*), in which Chiari displays his ample research on the matter: one of his sources is undoubtedly the *Account of European Settlements in America* by William and Edmund Burke, translated into Italian from 1763, and quite appreciated in Venetian intellectual circles<sup>34</sup>. However, the history of the discovery and subsequent colonisation recounted by Chiari rapidly morphs into a *pamphlet* which, with the exception of Columbus (seen as an *ante litteram*<sup>35</sup> hero of the Enlightenment), expresses an irrevocable sentence against the conquerors. The colonisation of America (South America especially) is not presented as a victory of civilisation and faith over uneducated peoples, but rather as the «trionfo della malignità, e della impostura» («triumph of malignity, and of imposture»):

Chi c’era in que’ giorni, e sopra tutto tra i sudditi d’un Monarca cattolico, che non credesse, e vantasse per azioni piene di merito il togliere a nazioni infedeli, benché innocenti, le sostanze, la libertà, la patria, il sangue, e la vita medesima? Una antica maniera di pensare così barbara, e sanguinaria era ella, o non era assolutamente conforme allo spirito caritatevole dell’Evangelio?<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Translation: «They’re small things, the knowledge of which yields little glory, but in some circumstances not knowing them brings people of spirit in high disrepute» (CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*, p. 69).

<sup>34</sup> Information confirmed by DEL NEGRO, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del ’700*, pp. 44-47, 50-51. Cf. William BURKE - Edmund BURKE, *Storia degli stabilimenti europei in America divisa in sei parti nelle quali oltre una breve notizia della scoperta, e conquiste fatte in quella parte di mondo de’ costumi, e maniere de’ popoli originarij, si da un’esatta descrizione delle cola stabilite colonie. Tradotta in italiano dalla seconda edizione inglese*, Venezia, Graziosi, 1763 [Orig. Ed. *An account of the European settlements in America...*].

<sup>35</sup> In CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*, p. 30, the «piloto italiano» («Italian pilot») is described as a *philosophe*, «pieno de’ lumi suoi in quel tempo rarissimi» («full of Reason so rare for that time»). As noted by Madrignani, these pages reveal the author’s will to take part in the long-standing debate regarding the attribution of the discovery of America. Upon close inspection, Chiari’s self-confessed predilection for Columbus reveals the influence of Voltaire’s American writings *Essai sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations*, dated 1756, taking adversary stance with regard to Angelo Maria Bandini’s biography of Amerigo Vespucci, which in fact had been reprinted in those years (Carlo Alberto MADRIGNANI, *Colombo, le Americhe, i «selvaggi» e l’Europa*, in CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*, pp. 10-12). During the ADI conference in Genova, in 2010, I was able to access the extremely rare (and slightly earlier) poem attributed to Chiari within the University Library: *La verità. Canti IV dell’Ab. Pietro Chiari Poeta di S.A.S. di Modena*, Brescia, Ragnoli, 1778, many passages of which are devoted to America, and can be interpreted as a celebration of Columbus and his feat, quel memorabil volo» («that memorable flight»): wherein the term *flight* clearly calls back to the simile traced during the Renaissance and reclaimed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, between the Genuan explorer and Dante’s Ulysses, seen as a prefiguration of the Age of Discovery. Another work of literature entirely devoted to Columbus is the aforementioned lost play *Colombo o l’America scoperta*, dated to 1754.

<sup>36</sup> Translation: «Who in those days, and especially among a Catholic monarch’s subjects, did not believe and commend as acts of merit, the taking from unbelieving nations, though innocent, of their substances, their freedom, their motherland, their blood, and life itself? An ancient way of thinking so barbaric and bloody was it, or was it not entirely true to the charitable spirit of the Gospel?» (CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*, pp. 52 and 38).

In recounting the different phases of the penetration into the continent, Chiari points his finger at the «saccheggiamenti» («pillaging») and «stragi» («slaughter») carried out against the natives, identifying the main cause of such actions in the «scellerata» («wicked»), «furiosa» («furious») and «illimitata avidità dell'oro» («illimited greed for gold»), which «divorava ogni giorno più quello sciame d'avventurieri d'ogni nazione» («more and more each day devoured that swarm of adventurers from every nation»)<sup>37</sup>.

Such a peremptory condemnation is infrequent in an author who usually maintains a calm and conciliatory tone, yet if on one hand Chiari retrieves the enlightened eloquence of “past and sombre centuries”, on the other an influence from Marmontel’s novel *Incas ou la destruction de l’Empire du Pérou* (published in Paris just three years earlier, in 1777, and translated the following year in Venice) may be suggested<sup>38</sup>. Aldo Maria Morace is credited with recognising the case of a similar condemnation among the works of the other Venetian novelist: Antonio Piazza<sup>39</sup>. In *Narcisa o la virtù coronata dal premio* (which, significantly, also dates to 1780)<sup>40</sup> the protagonist meets Altamoro, «regale discendente» («regal descendant») of the Indios that had been almost completely annihilated by Cortés). Narcisa’s Spanish origin provides the author with the opportunity for a «denunzia vibrata [...] della sopraffazione razziale, della violenza etnica e del genocidio» («quivering condemnation [...] of racial suppression, of ethnic violence and genocide»<sup>41</sup>) perpetrated by the conquerors, to which, along with the customary commendation of the simplicity of savages, Altamoro

<sup>37</sup> CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe*, pp. 73-74. Often throughout the treatise on America, the author’s condemnation of the «sanguinoso spettacolo di que’ tempi funesti» («gruesome spectacle of those baleful times», pp. 44-45) can be found (almost as a *refrain*) though Chiari is not fully exempt from colonial stereotypes regarding the natives: for example, the author points out their sloth and low propensity towards labour and obedience.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Jean François MARMONTEL, *Incas ou la destruction de l’Empire du Pérou*, Paris, Lacombe, 1777; Italian translation by Venezia, Palese, 1778.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. MORACE, *Il prisma dell’apparenza*, pp. 207-211.

<sup>40</sup> Antonio PIAZZA, *Narcisa o la virtù coronata dal premio, operetta tratta dall’inglese e pubblicata da Antonio Piazza*, Venezia, Bassaglia, 1780. Marchesi takes the author’s translation as valid, and refers to a «romanzetto inglese», however failing to note the original edition’s authorship (MARCHESI, *Romanzieri e romanzi del Settecento*, p. 191). Also with regard to the American subject in relation to Piazza, Marchesi provides the following information: the author had announced an upcoming book titled *L’Africana in America* «nella prefazione della *Persiana in Italia*, Venezia, Graziosi, 1799, inaugurando la *Collezione del Graziosi*. Ma la *Collezione* cessò presto e l’*Africana* non credo sia stata pubblicata mai», p. 371 («in his preface to *La Persiana in Italia*, Venezia, Graziosi, 1799, inaugurating the *Collezione del Graziosi*. But the *Collezione* was soon discontinued and, to my knowledge, *L’Africana* has never been published»).

<sup>41</sup> MORACE, *Il prisma dell’apparenza*, p. 208.

adds bloody omens of vengeance: «l’America oppressa scuota il vergognoso suo giogo, e con un mare di sangue inimico plachi l’anima invendicata dei nostri antenati» («may oppressed America shake its shameful yoke, and with a sea of enemy blood appease the unavenged souls of our ancestors»<sup>42</sup>).

Yet another savage woman is found in *La Corsara francese* (Cadì, the daughter of a Frenchman and an Iroqueuse Indian), whose extravagant sentimental conduct is underlain with a radical criticism of the European world, with the difference that in this novel the flair for adventure prevails against the «tematica filosofica» («philosophical matter»), which the author addresses «con attenuato impegno ideologico» (MADRIGNANI 2000: 180, «with dull ideological commitment»). For the first time, however, certain references appear in this short story, which are connected to that myth of the American revolution which had been taking hold throughout Europe, bringing forth a significant shift in the collective idea of the geography and topography of the New World: the Northern cities (Philadelphia and Boston) had by now overcome the wild brush of *La Donna che non si trova*. Is this enough to assign Chiari to a (however shy) pro-American and separatist position? It is certainly true that, throughout the years, the author’s consideration of America proves somewhat autonomous, and provides innovative elements when compared to the more conservative Venetian milieu<sup>43</sup>. It is important to keep this cultural background in mind to understand some of the choices the author makes in his “American” works from the 1780s. For example, the echo of the Independence War and of the birth of the United States called for a rethinking of the myth of the myth of the Noble Savage, which had elevated this figure to new civil virtues and acknowledged its higher degree of acculturation.

This is the case, in closing, of *I Privilegi della ignoranza. Lettere d’una*

---

<sup>42</sup> PIAZZA, *Narcisa*, p. 152.

<sup>43</sup>As stated by Ricorda, Chiari should be accredited with the «priorità, almeno in ambito veneziano, nell’individuazione di qualche nodo che risulta fondamentale nella percezione del Nuovo Mondo nell’Europa settecentesca» («record, in Venice at least, of identifying certain links which became fundamental to the perception of the New World in 18th century Europe», in RICORDA, *I romanzi «americani» di Pietro Chiari*, p. 322). Examples of this are provided by his condemnation of European colonisation, and of the paradox of the *Conquistadores’* catholicism during the gold rush (p. 337); the author was also able to identify the key role held by Quakers in the American myth (to this regard, also see DEL NEGRO, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del ’700*, pp. 53 ss.). For more information on this subject cf. Federica AMBROSINI, *L’immagine di nuovo mondo nel Settecento veneziano*, «Archivio veneto», 133 (1973), pp. 127-168, e 134 (1973), pp. 31-105.

*americana ad un letterato d'Europa*, one of the very last works published by the author, who seems to push his considerations on the New World even further, to the point that his tone rings at times provocative, and his criticism irreverent. In this work, his ongoing tendency for experimentation led the author to conceive of a sort of ideal union of his “American” novels and the treatise *Sulle Americhe*: Chiari is able to assemble a discourse that moves from the most traditional of books of letters, of encyclopaedic purpose, to the epistolary novel, the ancestry of which can be easily found in the model par excellence of Enlightenment-age rhetoric: Montesquieu’s *Les lettres persanes*. With the letters she sends to a European scholar (by whom she was taught during a stay in London), the American (as the character is called) wishes to prove the “scandalous” theory according to which ignorance is preferable to the culture which the so-called civilised world flaunts as proof of its own superiority. Herein such arguments, which had already partially appeared in other “American” works, gain greater strength and speculative depth. The correspondence also marks a path of maturation for the protagonist. In the first part, the American exhibits the humility of one who seeks redemption for her own «*donnesca ignoranza*»<sup>44</sup> («womanly ignorance»), by her own admission writing to console herself for being so far from Europe by this time. Letter by letter, however, she gains a growing self-awareness. The entire second part seems to be the expression of her desire to prove she has well apprehended the knowledge of the Old World’s culture, yet at the same time, the theme of challenge and the claim for total independence gain force. The ending sanctions an impossible reconciliation: the American denies sending her daughter to study in Europe (upon the European scholar’s invitation), because she’d rather the girl be raised in the simplicity of her native land. Therefore not only is the theme of civilisation present – and suggested more radically – but, as mentioned above, upon close scrutiny we are able to identify many of the secessionist arguments which had spawned from the American revolution in those years. It is not difficult to glimpse Chiari’s own autobiographical pride in the protagonist’s refusal, and his likely frustration in seeing any chance of a legitimate return to the literary scene vanish, from his exile in Brescia, near the end of his life.

Therefore, for Chiari, the “American” subject is not merely one of the many

---

<sup>44</sup> CHIARI, *I privilegi della ignoranza*, p. 1.

possible topics touched upon within a body of works vast in quantity but also in variety of subjects. America, opinions of the conquest, the Savages and civilisation were all sensitive arguments that touched a nerve in the intense debates of Enlightened Europe. On the other hand, the American subject provides a fundamental testing ground for literary criticism to understand Chiari's actual degree of affiliation to the ideology of the Enlightenment, also considering the verdict placed by certain scholars of Chiari's work, who may have excessively belittled this aspect, unwillingly assimilating some of the preconceptions which have kept the author on the sidelines of literary canon. As suggested by Carlo Alberto Madrignani in more than one occasion, it is important to reconsider the philosophical aspect in Chiari's work which, casting aside the instructive simplicity he often pledges to, may prove an effective aid in better situating this author within the history of literature and culture of 18<sup>th</sup> century Italy<sup>45</sup>.

## References

- AMBROSINI, Federica, *L'immagine di nuovo mondo nel Settecento veneziano*, «Archivio veneto», 133 (1973), pp. 127-168, and 134 (1973), pp. 31-105.
- ANTONELLI, Giuseppe, *Alle radici della letteratura di consumo. La lingua dei romanzi di Pietro Chiari e Antonio Piazza*, Introduction by Luca Serianni, Milano, Istituto di propaganda libraria, 1996.
- BUCCHINI, Stefania, *Il dilemma della grande Atlantide. Le Americhe nella letteratura italiana del Settecento e del primo Ottocento*, Preface by Franco Fido, Napoli, Loffredo, 1990.
- BURKE, William, and BURKE, Edmund, *Storia degli stabilimenti europei in America*

---

<sup>45</sup> «Negli anni dei Lumi la cultura filosofica si espande orizzontalmente, nella dimensione dell'intrattenimento e della ricezione non specialistica [...] Attraverso la mediazione universale della lingua francese [...] alcuni nuclei filosofici si espansero in ambiti sovranazionali e propagarono nuove forme di mentalità, e di mode intellettuali. Guardare da tale ottica i romanzi di Chiari aiuta a conoscere la cultura dell'Illuminismo italiano nella sua dimensione meno nota, quella della diffusione fuori dei circuiti meno dotti». Translate: «During the Age of Enlightenment, philosophy expanded horizontally, entering the realm of entertainment and non-specialized information[...] Through the universal mediation of the French language [...] certain philosophical hubs expanded across national borders, promoting new forms of ideology and intellectual trends. Observing Chiari's novels from this perspective helps to understand the lesser known aspect of the Italian culture of Enlightenment, that of its circulation outside of less scholarly circuits» (MADRIGNANI, *All'origine del romanzo in Italia*, p. 57).

*divisa in sei parti nelle quali oltre una breve notizia della scoperta, e conquiste fatte in quella parte di mondo de' costumi, e maniere de' popoli originarj, si da un'esatta descrizione delle cola stabilite colonie. Tradotta in italiano dalla seconda edizione inglese, Venezia, Graziosi, 1763.*

CATUCCI, Marco, *L'Americana Ramminga*, «Sincronie», 8.16 (July-December 2004), pp. 171-178.

CHIARI, Pietro, *Lettere scelte di varie materie piacevoli, critiche, ed erudite scritte ad una Dama di qualità dall'Abbate Pietro Chiari Bresciano*, Venezia, Roselli, 1751.

CHIARI, Pietro, *La francese in Italia o sia Memorie critiche di Madama N. N., scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall'Abate Pietro Chiari, Poeta di S.A.S. il Sig. Duca di Modena*, Venezia, Pellecchia, 1759.

CHIARI, Pietro, *L'Americana ramminga, cioè Memorie di Donna Innez di Quebrada. Scritte da lei stessa, ed ora pubblicate dall'Abbate Pietro Chiari*, Napoli, Flauto, 1764.

CHIARI, Pietro, *L'amore senza fortuna, o sia Memorie d'una Dama Portoghese scritte da lei medesima e pubblicate dall'abate Chiari*, Firenze, Colombani, 1765.

CHIARI, Pietro, *L'uomo di un altro mondo o sia Memorie di un solitario senza nome, scritte da lui medesimo in due linguaggi chinese, e russo e pubblicate nella nostra lingua dall'Abbate Pietro Chiari*, Venezia, Battifoco, 1768.

CHIARI, Pietro, *Lettere d'un solitario a sua figlia per formarle il cuore, e lo spirito nella scuola del mondo. Pubblicate dall'abate Pietro Chiari*, Venezia, Battifoco, 1777.

CHIARI, Pietro, *La verità. Canti IV dell'Ab. Pietro Chiari Poeta di S.A.S. di Modena*, Brescia, Ragnoli, 1778.

CHIARI, Pietro, *La cinese in Europa, ossia storia d'una Principessa cinese del nostro secolo scritta da lei medesima e pubblicata dall'abate Pietro Chiari*, Genova, Franchi, 1779.

CHIARI, Pietro, *Trattenimenti dello spirito umano. Sopra le cose del mondo passate presenti e possibili ad avvenire, del Signor Abbate Pietro Chiari*, Volumes I-XII, Brescia, Berlendis, 1780.

CHIARI, Pietro, *Il secolo corrente. Dialoghi d'una dama col suo cavaliere scritti da lei medesima, pubblicati dall'abate Pietro Chiari*, Venezia, Bassaglia, 1783.

- CHIARI, Pietro, *I privilegi della ignoranza. Lettere d'una americana ad un letterato d'Europa*, Venezia, Bassaglia, 1784.
- CHIARI, Pietro, *Sulle Americhe «compendiose notizie per spiriti colti»*, ed. Carlo Alberto Madrignani, Pisa, ETS, 1991.
- CHIARI, Pietro, *La filosofessa italiana, o sia le avventure della Marchesa N.N., scritte in francese da lei medesima*, ed. Carlo Alberto Madrignani, San Cesario di Lecce, Manni, 2004.
- CHIARI, Pietro, *La donna che non si trova, o sia le avventure di Madama Delingh, scritte da lei medesima*, ed. Alberto Zava, San Cesario di Lecce, Manni, 2007.
- CLERICI, Luca, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento. Il caso Chiari*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1997.
- CRIVELLI, Tatiana, «*Né Arturo né Turpino né la Tavola rotonda*». *Romanzi del secondo Settecento italiano*, Roma, Salerno, 2002.
- CROTTI, Ilaria, “Alla ricerca del codice: il romanzo italiano del Settecento”, in Ilaria CROTTI, Ricciarda RICORDA, Piermario VESCOVO, *Il “Mondo Vivo”. Aspetti del romanzo, del teatro e del giornalismo nel Settecento italiano*, Padova, Il Poligrafo, 2001, pp. 9-54.
- DEL NEGRO, Pietro, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del Settecento*, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1975.
- DEL NEGRO, Pietro, *Il mito americano nella Venezia del '700*, Padova, Liviana, 1986.
- GOLDONI, Carlo, *La peruviana*. In *Nuovo teatro comico*, Bologna, Girolamo Corciolani, ed eredi Colli a S. Tommaso d'Aquino, Vol. III, 1758.
- GOLDONI, Carlo, *La bella selvaggia*, in *Nuovo teatro comico*, Bologna, Girolamo Corciolani, ed eredi Colli a S. Tommaso d'Aquino, Vol. VII, 1762.
- HUET, Pierre-Daniel, *Trattato sull'origine dei romanzi*, ed. Ruggero Campagnoli and Yves Hersant, Torino, Einaudi, 1977.
- M. G. DI S., *L'Americana ramminga, cioè Memorie di Donna Innez di Quebrada. Scritte da lei stessa, ed ora pubblicate da M. G. Di S. Sua confidente amica*, Venezia, Pasinelli, 1763.
- MADRIGNANI, Carlo Alberto, “Colombo, le Americhe, i «selvaggi» e l'Europa”, in Pietro CHIARI, *Sulle Americhe «compendiose notizie per spiriti colti»*, ed. Carlo Alberto



- Madrignani, Pisa, ETS, 1991, pp. 7-24.
- MADRIGNANI, Carlo Alberto, *All'origine del romanzo in Italia. Il «celebre Abate Chiari»*, Napoli, Liguori, 2000.
- MARCHESI, Giambattista, *Studi e ricerche intorno ai nostri romanzieri del '700, coll'aggiunta di una bibliografia dei romanzieri editi in Italia in quel secolo*, Bergamo, Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1903.
- MARCHESI, Giambattista, *Romanzieri e romanzi del Settecento*, Introd. *Un secolo di romanzo* by Luca Toschi, and *Rassegna bibliografica sul romanzo del '700* by Maura Gori, Roma, Vecchiarelli [anastatic reprint edition 1903], 1991.
- MARMONTEL, Jean François, *Incas ou la destruction de l'Empire du Pérou*, Paris, Lacombe, 1777; Italian translation by Venezia, Palese, 1778.
- MELZI, Gaetano, *Dizionario di opere anonime e pseudonime di scrittori italiani o come che sia aventi relazione all'Italia*, Vol. I, Milano, Pirola, 1848.
- MORACE, Aldo Maria, *Il prisma dell'apparenza. La narrativa di Antonio Piazza*, Napoli, Liguori, 2002.
- ORLANDO, Francesco, *Illuminismo, Barocco e retorica freudiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1997.
- ORTOLANI, Giuseppe, *Settecento: per una lettura dell'abate Chiari*, Venezia, Fontana, 1905.
- PIAZZA, Antonio, *Narcisa o la virtù coronata dal premio, operetta tratta dall'inglese e pubblicata da Antonio Piazza*, Venezia, Bassaglia, 1780.
- RAMBELLI, Paolo, "Sulla 'princeps' de 'La filosofessa italiana' di Pietro Chiari", «The Italianist», 24.1 (2004), pp. 20-30.
- RICORDA, Ricciarda, "I romanzi «americani» di Pietro Chiari". In Angela CARACCILO ARICÒ (ed.), *L'impatto della scoperta dell'America nella cultura veneziana*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1990, pp. 321-342.
- SCANNAPIECO, Anna, *Per un catalogo dei libri editi da Giacomo Antonio Venaccia (1751-1785)*, «Problemi di critica goldoniana», 4.4 (1997), pp. 72-152.
- SENNI, Riccardo, *Per "L'Americana Ramminga". Analisi e interpretazione del romanzo attribuito a Pietro Chiari*, University of Pisa thesis, a. a. 2007-2008, Pisa, 2008.
- TAGLIAPIETRA, Andrea, "La catastrofe e la filosofia", in VOLTAIRE, ROUSSEAU, KANT, *Sulla catastrofe. L'illuminismo e la filosofia del disastro*, introduction by Andrea

Tagliapietra, translation by Silvia Manzoni and Elisa Tetamo, with an essay by Paola Giacomoni, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2004, pp. IX-XXXIX.

TAVAZZI, Valeria. *Il romanzo in gara: echi delle polemiche teatrali nella narrativa di Pietro Chiari e Antonio Piazza*, preface by Piermario Vescovo, Roma, Bulzoni, 2010.

TODOROV, Tzvetan, *La conquête de l'Amérique. Le problème de l'autre*, Paris, Seuil, 1982.

ZAVA, Alberto, "Introduzione", in Pietro CHIARI, *La donna che non si trova, o sia le avventure di Madama Delingh, scritte da lei medesima*, ed. Alberto Zava, San Cesario di Lecce, Manni, 2007, pp. 9-29.

*Alessio Giannanti*

*Università di Sassari*

[alessiogiannanti@libero.it](mailto:alessiogiannanti@libero.it)