



**Anna Camaiti Hostert**

**Anna Camaiti Hostert** is an Italian American philosopher and a scholar of **Visual Studies**. She lives and works between Italy and the United States.

## **Biography**

She obtained her degree in Philosophy at the University of Pisa (Italy) defending a dissertation with the philosopher Nicola Badaloni. Then she received a PhD in Literature and Film from the *University of Chicago*. She has taught at *Loyola University Chicago*, at the *University of Illinois Chicago* and the *University of Rome (La Sapienza)* (Italy). She was *Visiting Professor* at the *University of South California* (USC) in Los Angeles and at the Florence campus of the *New York University* (NYU) Tisch School of Cinema. She was also *Distinguished Visiting Professor* at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton. She was Acting Associate Dean at the Loyola University's campus in Rome.

In 1999 she founded along the philosopher Mario Perniola the magazine **Agalma: Magazine of Aesthetic and Cultural Studies** of whose editorial committee she is still a member.<sup>[1]</sup>

Since 1986 she has been part of the Italian Bar Association of Journalists and for several years the press attaché to the Governor of Tuscany Region. Later, she had a TV program about cinema on *RaiSat* channel titled **Metix** from the title of one of her books. She has been a guest at numerous Film Festivals in Italy and of several TV and radio cultural programs. She has collaborated with the director Fiorella Infascelli in the movie *Italiani* presented at the *Venice Film Festival* in 1998.

She has written for the newspaper *Il Manifesto*.

In 2013 she co-founded with Nicola Fano, Gloria Piccioni and Gabriella Mecucci the online culture newspaper **Succedeoggi**, of which she is a columnist. She holds conferences and seminars at many Italian and foreign institutions. In the last few years, she has combined her theoretical and journalistic work with literary and screenwriting activities.

## Thought

### History of philosophy and politics

The initial period of Camaiti Hostert's research focused on the history of political philosophy following the methodological analysis of Nicola Badaloni, under whose tutelage she studied at the University of Pisa. In her first work, *Giuseppe Toniolo. Alle origini del partito cattolico* (1984; *Giuseppe Toniolo. The origins of the Catholic Party*) – that resulted from her dissertation in Philosophy – she traced the intellectual biography of the thinker Giuseppe Toniolo, by retrieving his prominent figure in the Catholic Movement, and casting light on his role in the subsequent foundation of the first Catholic Party in its relationship with the Marxist concept of the main political subject.

The same historical-philosophical perspective defines also the second work by Camaiti Hostert titled *Politica e diritto di resistenza. Kant ed Erhard: democrazia e libertà del soggetto* (1987, *The Politics and the Right of Resistance. Kant and Erhard: Democracy and Human Freedom*). In this work Camaiti Hostert has traced the relationship between the German Jacobinism, of which Johann Benjamin

Erhard is one of the most representative authors, and Kant's theory of Public Right, Political Will and Civil Liberty. Through the concepts of «resistance» and «insurrection», she interprets Erhard's theses as an attempt to build a theory of the antagonistic subject.

### **Cultural studies and identity theory**

Because of her intellectual, academic and existential relation with the United States and with the socio-cultural dynamics of this country, Camaiti Hostert first developed themes related to comparative literature (see for instance her afterword to the American edition of the Dacia Maraini's novel, ***The Silent Duchess***, Feminist Press 1998) and then has moved towards the Cultural Studies with the analysis of the post-colonial theories, especially by focusing on the subaltern subject and on identity construction.

Her research, Camaiti Hostert focuses on socio-philosophical themes studied by many important cultural theorists like Edward Said, Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha and by several political thinkers, like Antonio Gramsci. Her major work in this field of investigation is ***Passing. Dissolvere le identità, superare le differenze (Passing. A Strategy to Dissolve Identities and Remap Differences)***. Dealing with the complex theme of *Alterity* as it relates to the Italian women's movement, especially to the works of Carla Lonzi and the theories of sexual difference, the analysis of *Passing* tackles the feminist studies, particularly the point of convergence between post-colonial and gender studies (Gayatri Spivak, bell hooks, Teresa de Lauretis, Rosi Braidotti) and from that point it expands its reflection to the process of formation of any ethnic and sexual identity.

### **Visual studies and film theory**

Visual Studies - that were born as a field of interdisciplinary research on the wake of the Anglo-American Cultural Studies— have become since the late 1990s the focus of Camaiti Hostert's research. In ***Metix. Cinema globale e cultura visuale (Meltemi 2004, Metix. Global Cinema and Visual Culture)*** - work that collects Camaiti Hostert's findings during those years - she has analyzed the structure of

the vision, the dynamics of the gaze and the processes of images production in contemporary cinema (mainly American cinema, but not only Hollywood).

According to Camaiti Hostert's theory Visual Studies show the similarities between the analysis of the visual culture and the analysis of the construction of cultural, gender and ethnic identities and differences, with particular attention to the unmasking of visual stereotypes that have represented the various forms of marginality.

This work is linked to Camaiti Hostert's parallel research into the field of Film Studies regarding this domain of studies, the two particularly relevant essays collection (both edited in 2002) are ***Sentire il cinema (2002; Feeling Cinema)*** - entirely composed of Camaiti Hostert's essays and interviews (with directors such Bernardo Bertolucci, Fiorella Infascelli, Wilma Labate and Mario Martone) – and ***Scene italoamericane. Rappresentazioni cinematografiche degli italiani d'America*** edited with the Italian American scholar Anthony Julian Tamburri (Luca Sossella editore 2002, American edition ***Screening Ethnicity. Cinematographic Representations of Italian Americans in the United States***, Bordighera Press, 2002 <sup>[9]</sup>), including essays by Ben Lawton, Fred Gardaphé, Alberto Abruzzese among others as well as by Camaiti Hostert and Tamburri.

In the last years she dedicated her attention to the challenging language of TV series, publishing in 2017 the book ***Trump non è una fiction. La nuova America raccontata attraverso le serie televisive (Trump in not a fiction. The new America told through the TV series)*** (Mimesis 2017)

To the role of mass media and the construction of a personal image is dedicated her last book written with Enzo Antonio Cicchino. Its theme is the numerous similarities between Donald Trump and Benito Mussolini ***Trump e moschetto. Immagini, fake news e mass media: armi di due populisti a confronto***, ( Mimesis 2020) translated into English in 2022 by Farleigh Dickinson University Press with the title ***Trump and Mussolini. Images, Fake News and Mass Media as Weapons in the Hands of Two Populists*** published by Farleigh Dickinson University Press

Selected works by Anna Camaiti Hostert:

- *Giuseppe Toniolo. Alle origini del partito cattolico*, Pisa, ETS, 1984

- *Politica e diritto di resistenza. Kant ed Erhard: democrazia e libertà del soggetto*, Pisa, Servizio Editoriale Universitario, 1987.
- *Passing. Dissolvere le identità, superare le differenze*, Roma, Castelvecchi, 1996. (2<sup>a</sup> ed. Roma, Meltemi 2006.; translated into English. *Passing. A Strategy to Dissolve Identities and Remap Differences*, Madison, Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007.
- *Afterword* to the American edition of Dacia Maraini's book *The Silent Duchess*, New York, Feminist Press, 1998 [*Postfazione* alla edizione americana di D. Maraini, *La lunga vita di Marianna Ucrìa*].
- «Il tempo, la musica, le cose:intervista a Bernardo Bertolucci» in *Agalma. Rivista di estetica e studi culturali*, No 1, giugno 2000.
- «Pulp Passion and Rusty Feelings» in *Agalma. Rivista di estetica e studi culturali*, No 1, giugno 2000.
- *Sentire il cinema*, Firenze, Casalini-Cadmo, 2002.
- with A. J. Tamburri (eds.) *Scene italoamericane. Rappresentazioni cinematografiche degli italiani d'America*, Roma, Luca Sossella editore, 2002. (trad.ing. *Screening Ethnicity. Cinematographic Representation of Italian Americans in the United States*, Florida Atlantic University -Boca Raton, Bordighera Press, 2002.
- *Introduzione* all'edizione italiana di N. Mirzoeff, *Introduzione alla cultura visuale*, Roma, Meltemi, 2002.
- «L'identità in sottrazione» in V. Zagarrìo (ed.) *Trevico-Cinecittà. L'avventuroso viaggio di Ettore Scola*, Venezia, Marsilio 2002.
- *Metix. Cinema globale e cultura visuale*, Meltemi, Roma, 2004.

- «Identità di genere nel cinema italoamerican: Nancy Savoca e Marylou Tibaldo Buongiorno», in G. Muscio e G. Spagnoletti (eds.), *Quei bravi ragazzi. Il cinema italoamericano contemporaneo*, Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 2007.
- *Trump non è una fiction. La nuova America raccontata attraverso le serie televisive*, Milano-Udine, Mimesis, 2017.
- *La vita nelle cose*, Mantova, MnM Print Edizioni, 2019.
- *Trump e moschetto. Immagini, fake news e mass media: armi di due populist a confronto* Milano Mimesis 2020; (translated into English.) *Trump and Mussolini. Images, fake News as weapons on the Hands of Two Populists* Madison, Farleigh Dickinson University Press 2022