

Let's talk about Science Communication with Domizia Tallone

My name is Domizia Tallone and my pronouns are she her. I'm a science communicator but at the moment I lead guided tours to the Astronomical Museum of Rome in Monte Mario and Monte Porzio Catone. And also feminist and environmental activist. However, I'm still in a situation of economic insecurity, so I still work out my brother's bakery.

You did your master thesis on the presence of women in science communication. Can you tell us more about it?

So the literature available in the United States and Europe describe science communication as a feminized profession. This means that women are a majority in this field, but this also means that science communication is not valued as it should be.

Women now make up the majority of science communicators, but this numerical dominance doesn't not necessarily translate into social or institutional recognition. Women are still mostly found in background or support roles, while visibility and authority in public science communication is male dominated.

So, in scientific institutions, we find good female representation among press officers or a staff communication staff. but the glass ceiling persists in scientific research. So we can say that science communication is a care work and research support.

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For my research, I did several interviews to science communicators and also I did a meta-analysis on some data people from Sissa University. This data are about graduates' people people from the science communication master at Sissa University.

What I found is that I mean the presence of women is in this data in this sample is around 66% and increasing over time. So we can we find that women are a majority in science communication also in Italy.

But that field lacks social and economic recognition. And this lack of recognition is present even within a scientific community itself. Um I mean, that seems that science communication means is what you do when you are you cannot do science. Yeah, at the same time there is another question about science communication.

There is a double threshold of access to the profession. The profession is less paid than research and requires scientific education and strong soft skills. And this is this suggests that science communication may be hostile to some social and economic classes.

So in this context, it would be necessary to expand this research and include other marginalized groups. Indeed, my work has several limitations. It focuses on only on gender within a binary framework and doesn't not consider other marginalization or other kind of marginalization.

And yeah, as Rasekoala an English black woman science communicator points out while science communication has seen much more space for women over the last 20 years these openings this opening stops at white women.

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So I think there is still much work to be done and this work will necessarily challenge science as an institution.

And in your opinion, what women can bring to science communication?

Yeah. I think that women can bring gender studies in science communication and I hope also decolonial studies. because we really need this in in Italy.
And I think that women can bring also new perspectives to the way science is understood and practiced and narrated.

And why are you so passionate about it?

First of all, I'm a woman and yeah I'm also, I have a master degree in astrophysics and cosmology. And very fast I turn I turn to science communication because I often feel uncomfortable when speaking about scientific research.

Over time, however, my interest become in science communication become real and meaningful. What I really like in science communication and sociology of science is that I can speak about science with more freedom. And I can also imagine a future in which the power that comes from scientific knowledge can be shared more equally.

If I think about technological and scientific power thinking about big tech, if they were more barely shared. I believe the world would be a more peaceful, healthier, and also less polluted place.

What is the biggest challenge facing feminist today?

It's really difficult to answer to this question. Um, I I can respond. I can answer all in my experience and in my context that is Italy.

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The biggest internal challenge now for Italian feminist feminism is to be truly intersectional. We still give too little space to racialized women and we have to work more on decolonization. We In Italy, we don't speak much of decolonization and we have a past in it.

So, um that's the internal challenge in a in the feminism.. The external challenge is cultural, I think. I think we um it's something about giving a to men a reason, a movement, a motivation that makes them into this process. I think now they are out of this process sometimes often.

And this is a moment of great destruction. And while we as women have feminism, men even those who embrace this struggle do not have the same tools or energies for change themselves. I don't think that we as a women we have to give them this movement.

I think should be men of movement. No has a protagonist, of course. But yeah, I think they need it. And I think it's the same in science, you know, where there is an additional barrier to change. Science considers itself as positive, democratic, institutional institution driven by a love of knowledge.

But this narrative is partial, situated and biased. It's difficult to make scientists understand that meritocracy does not exist even within scientific institutions. And transfeminism ideas are still almost completely absent in the sciences.

Scientists should Vabbè, in my humble opinion, scientists should read Donna Haraway and more generally engage with more critical tools from the philosophy of science. Yeah.

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So, the next challenge maybe, I don't know, in 10 years in the future, what will be?

Yeah. Uh, it's also this difficult ones It's hard to say.

I think in on one hand, it feels like things are changing are changing very fast, but on the other in Italy rights such as the right to abortion are at risk again. And it feels me with anger and frustration to have to keep fighting battles that we talk at already being won.

Right now, I don't feel full of trust or hope Especially when I think about all the people who are still oppressed by the ongoing colonial forces. I will not feel in peace to the world with the world or confident. I don't feel uh I mean I will chat.

I don't feel in peace with the world. and or confident about the future until Palestinian or Sudanese can feel the same. So, I think may in 10 years we will more free in Italy, in Europe and yeah, that's cool. But I don't think in 10 years Palestine will be free.

So, the challenge may will be the same than now. So, yeah, for now I'm not full of hope or trust to the in the future. I think that no one of the one of the people that I interview feel confident or hopeful about the future.

Can you tell me three names of women who in your opinion have made feminist history? Okay.

Yeah. Um I don't like telling history through the identification of movements with individual leaders. So, I believe that that movements and the history of humanity are rarely told us collective stories. I don't like the narrative of genius or the protagonist.

I think is a traditional way of writing history and traditional for me, is also means male white individualistic way to tell a story, no?

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For this reason, I will name the association “donne e scienza” that is an association of scientists and women born from the Union of University Collectives of Women. and later transforming into a social network. And then I will say Rivolta Femminile.

And then I also I think that black American feminism all that movement from 60s and 90s age is very important.

Is there anything else that you want to add and that I haven't asked about?

Uh. Mah. Maybe regarding the question about the challenges in 10 years from now, I will say that for me, it would be about being less angry. I hope to be less angry in 10 years. And then the other is that thank you for this this interview for this moment.

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