

# MASSIMILIANO STRAMAGLIA

University of Macerata, Italy

obtained in 2009 his PhD in “Formative Dynamics and Education to Politics” at the University of Bari (Italy). He was Research Fellow, Researcher and Associate Professor at the University of Macerata (Italy). Since 3rd July 2017 he is Full Professor in “Theories and science of education and social education”. From 21th March 2016 to 31th October 2021 he was the President of the Degree Programmes in “Education Sciences” and “Pedagogical Sciences” at the Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Sciences of the University of Macerata. In 2015 he was a Visiting Professor at the State University of São Paulo (UNESP, Brazil), based in Marilia. In 2022 he was an Erasmus Teacher at the University Pablo de Olavide (UPO, Spain), based in Seville. Since 4th February 2020 he is Coordinator of the “Centre for Documentation, Research and Didactics in the Field of Educational and Training Professions” (CIRDIFOR) at the University of Macerata.



**MADONNA'S LGBTQ +  
ACTIVISM.**

**A SOCIO- CULTURAL  
APPROACH**



## Abstract | Resumo

Since the beginning of her career, Madonna Ciccone has reserved much of her artistic output for the global gay community. Born as an outsider character and a close friend of Keith Haring, she chose to overcome all the barriers of the bourgeois society. Therefore, she decided to give a punk, non-conformist and rebellious image of herself, thanks to the linguistic game of her first name. She managed to embody both the sexy icon and the suburban tomboy at the same time. When she released the album *Like a Prayer* (1989), Madonna included in the booklet an insert dedicated to AIDS prevention (The Facts About AIDS), considered the gay plague during those years. In the documentary *Truth or Dare* (1991), Madonna benevolently describes her gay dancers, standing up for them but also saying that: 'Gays are bad', as a mother might say of her own unruly children. Madonna herself has always played with her real or presumed bisexuality, to send the message that all sexual orientations have the right to express themselves. Not surprising, *Bob The Drag Queen* is opening her shows *The Celebration Tour* (2023). This research takes into consideration the numerous cultural studies on Madonna's character and the ways in which Madonna has supported the LGBTQ+ community through her performances. Beginning with a careful reconstruction of the state of the art of scholarly studies on Madonna, the aim of this presentation is to explain how Madonna uniquely embodies the masculine stereotypes of the feminine as identified by Johann Jakob Bachofen (the Ether, the Sadist, the Nurturer) in a post-feminist key: a new and inclusive look at the principles of the feminine and difference. After having introduced the symbolic meanings of the archetypes of femininity, the study concentrates on demonstrating how it is possible, on the communicative and socio-cultural levels, to assume the three indicated guises without ever contradicting oneself. Madonna is, on the contrary, credible, right up to the "degree zero of universal communication", i.e. *The Mother*, the generator of life and death, the origin and the end of Everything. This discourse encounters the Freudian thesis on the 'Disturbing' and arrives at a redefinition of some of the cultural symbols that have sustained the LGBTQ+ community in the face of cases and risks of marginalisation and exclusion and the condition of a social minority deprived of fundamental rights. Finally, 'degree zero' is elevated to produce some fundamental meanings, which can also be considered useful in rewriting the history of gender minorities, beyond the consumerist or economicist perspective. Madonna has moved Vladimir Putin, Sergio Mattarella and has been excommunicated and censored in Italy. She is not just a pop character, but a true icon of the art in motion/the art as movement/the art as a form of resistance (in 2019 Madonna also sang *Ciao bella*, a tribute to the partisans). As in a crescendo, the concepts that seem to emerge from her performances are 'integration', 'inclusion', 'interculture' and 'transition'.

Keywords | Palavras-chave: cultural studies | education | feminism | Madonna

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