Guida alla lettura: An introduction to Numero tre


Buona lettura!

IN THIS ISSUE

2 The Queens College Italian Program

4 Career Quest

5 Italicity

6 Italian Students Award

7 Professori dal vivo

The third issue of Quaderno Culturale, the newsletter of the Italian Program of the Department of European Languages and Literatures, provides information about Italian classes offered by Queens College, interviews with faculty and students, a report from the AISLLI conference, and an article about the Annual Students Awards. We highlight three Spring 2013 classes: Languages of Europe: The Romance Languages (Prof. Hermann Haller), Representation of Women, Spirituality, and Eroticism in Italian Literature (Ms. Laura Visco), and Chasing Daphne: Tracing Mythology in Italian Renaissance Masterpieces (Ms. Luisanna Sardu). For the section Professori dal vivo, we interview Prof. Karina F. Attar, Italian Undergraduate Coordinator. Prof. Attar traces her polyglot cultural education and professional career from Italy to England to the United States. She also talks about her research interests and updates us on her forthcoming publications. In Career Quest, graduate student Vincenzo Cangemi tells us the story of his ever-increasing love for Italian language and civilization, and how he is planning to make a teaching career out of it. Our report from the AISLLI conference focuses on presentations about the so-called “Italicity” of Italian emigrants as well as that of new immigrants in Italy; furthermore, it gives an account of the critical edition of John Florio’s Italian-English dictionary, edited by Hermann Haller. This issue also contains an article about a very special event at the Consulate General of Italy: the Annual Students Award Ceremony, when prizes were given to the best students of Italian from the last academic year. This same event’s pictures are in fact the underlying theme of Quaderno Culturale’s third issue.

Buona lettura!
The Queens College Italian Program

Miguel de Cervantes

It is well known that the best way to achieve fluency in a foreign language is to live in the country where that language is spoken. Therefore, the Italian Program encourages students to participate in study abroad programs in Italy. The University of Perugia, Siena, and Chiostro-Pasca and can be a student’s destination for a summer, a semester, or a year.

Let’s focus here on our Summer Program in Perugia, which gives students the chance to study both Italian language and culture.

Offered by the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute in collaboration with the European Languages and Literatures Department at Queens College and the University for Foreigners of Perugia, this is one of CUNY’s most affordable summer programs, open to all students at CUNY. ELL and the University for Foreigners launched it in the late 1990s, under the supervision of Prof. Haller. ELL’s chair at the time. Each year since then, the University for Foreigners has offered a scholarship to students of Italian at Queens College.

Perugia is a beautiful medieval city in the middle of Italy, not far from Rome. It is famous for its University for Foreigners of Perugia (Università per Stranieri di Perugia), the oldest and most prestigious center of Italian language education—and the location for the summer study abroad program in Italian language and culture. Taught by University for Foreigners faculty, the courses focus on Italian language (including an intensive course) and civilization. They are divided into two summer sessions. For one month of student study, students transfer 6 credits of Italian to CUNY.

Students apply to the program through the QC Education Abroad Office (Joseph Gross, program coordinator, at joseph.gross@qc.cuny.edu, Kielly Room 183), while ELL provides academic advising. Prof. Haller is currently the advisor. Each

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR FALL 2013 COURSE OFFERINGS

Euro 202 | M, W | 1:40-2:55
Languages of Europe: The Romance Languages
Prof. Haller

This course will introduce the students to the wealth of Europe’s multilingual landscape, with a focus on the Romance languages. We will describe the similarities and differences of French, Italian, and Spanish, as well as of other languages and dialects deriving from Latin. Following a broad overview of Romance languages as they are used today, we will look at their structure and trace their origins and evolution through time. We will discuss questions concerning standard versus non-standard languages, language contact in past and present, the mixing of the written use of Romance languages in the Middle Ages, and their spread across the globe through colonization and migration.

We will reflect on the role of Romance languages in the European Union vis-à-vis English as a global language, and on the impact of migration on language change and language use. Students will contribute with their own practice and knowledge of any or more Romance languages or dialects. By working on a semester project they will gain some comparative insight into various Romance languages and dialects. No previous courses in linguistics or Latin are required, but students should have some proficiency with at least one Romance language.

The course counts toward the major and minor in French and Italian.

Italian 41 | T, TH | 3:10-4:25
Representation of Women, Spirituality, and Eroticism in Italian Literature
Ms. Viscio

The representation of women in Italian literature over the centuries has been characterized by a dichotomy between the spiritual dimension and the sensual, material one, without too many attempts to reconcile the two experiences—despite some important exceptions. The opposition between the figures of the “donna angelo” and “donna fatale” is one of the most recurrent topics in Italian literature. In this course we will explore how modern and contemporary Italian novelists and poets have dealt with this opposition, and will seek to find patterns, developments, and breakthroughs in the treatment of this matter. Readings will include selections from novels and poems by Gabriele d’Annunzio, Dino Campana, Umberto Saba, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Antonio Pascoli, Alda Morini, Amelia Rosselli, Antonio Porta, Alessandro Manzoni, Antonio Fogazzaro, and Sibilla Aleramo.

Italian 41W | T, TH | 1:40-2:55
Chasing Daphne: Tracing Mythology in Italian Renaissance Masterpieces
Ms. Sardu

During the thriving cultural moment of the Renaissance, scholars were more interested in recovering and studying Latin and Greek literary, historical, and philosophical texts. Ovid’s Metamorphoses, in particular, was treated as source material. By participating in the philosophical debate concerned with reality and deceitfulness, such Italian poets as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, as well as many others, utilized Ovid’s work to express their concern with the nature of transformation. For example, Ariosto’s epic treatment of Ruggero and Astolfo’s education in Orlando Furioso involves not only the metamorphosis of the body, which crosses unexpected barriers from human to plant, to animal, but also the alteration of the self. The scope of this interdisciplinary course will range from the literary treatment of the Ovidian Metamorphoses during the early modern age, to the artistic representation of transformation in paintings, sculptures, and cinema. Issues addressed in the course include the opposition of virility/deceitfulness, man/nature, and fortune/virtue.

To learn more about our program, please visit www.qc.cuny.edu/italian or contact us directly.

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Continued from next page.
Italian for a Teaching Career: An Interview with Vincenzo Cangemi

What was your experience in the Italian Program of the Department of European Languages and Literatures? What did you learn and how is this knowledge useful to you now?

First of all, I would like to thank all of the teaching staff of the Italian Program in LLI at Queens College. The two years leading toward initial certification have acquired valuable skills for teaching language in both middle and high school settings, and I feel well prepared to teach at both levels. I’m interested in this profession because it gives me the opportunity to share my passion for Italian with other students who wish to learn it as a foreign language.

Outside your studies, you have been working for several years as a technician for Radio Maria. Can you describe your working environment and your experience there so far?

Will you continue this work part-time after you receive your teaching certification?

I enjoy working as a radio technician at an Italian radio station because it gives me an opportunity to use my Italian language skills with callers and co-workers. I also get to meet new Italian speakers and help them broadcast their voices to their communities across the United States through radio waves and the Internet. Radio Maria has become like my second major/BA. As I begin a new career, I will consider working there part-time in the future.

Do you have other interests or activities coinciding with your study of Italian that you would like to share with Quoderno Culture’s readers?

I enjoy traveling and exploring new places. I’m particularly interested in exploring places in Italy. A few of my favorite hobbies are following the Italian Serie A soccer league, playing soccer, and reading different types of literature.

Thank you, Vincenzo, for speaking with us today. We wish you much success in your studies and in your future career as a high school Italian teacher.

After the master’s, you want to teach Italian. At what level: elementary, middle, or high school? Why does this profession interest you?

With the help of the secondary education department, I have acquired valuable skills for teaching language in both middle and high school settings, and I feel well prepared to teach at both levels. I’m interested in this profession because it gives me the opportunity to share my passion for Italian with other students who wish to learn it as a foreign language.

What is your experience in the Italian Program of the Department of European Languages and Literatures? What did you learn and how is this knowledge useful to you now?

You graduated from Queens College with a major in Italian. Why did you choose this discipline? Did you also select a minor?

In the fall of 2006, I enrolled at Queens College as an undergraduate interested in learning the basics of the Italian language. As I continued working toward my college degree, my love for Italian culture, history, literature, and language grew and inspired me to complete a Bachelor’s in Italian. My studies filled me with a passion to teach Italian. My degree, my love for Italian culture, history, learning the basics of the Italian language, and my passion for Italian teachers at Queens College. Their enthusiasm has nurtured in my heart, I wish to serve students I enrolled in the Adolescent studies filled me with a passion to teach Italian. My MA program. First of all, I would like to thank all of the teaching staff of the Italian Program in LLI at Queens College. The two years leading toward initial certification have acquired valuable skills for teaching language in both middle and high school settings, and I feel well prepared to teach at both levels. I’m interested in this profession because it gives me the opportunity to share my passion for Italian with other students who wish to learn it as a foreign language.

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Continued from page 5

L’Italia accetta che esistano degli italiani con credi religiosi diversi, con o senza le pelle nere. Si prestano egregiamente, infine, a stimolare la riflessione critica sui tratti della società studiata e di quella in cui gli studenti vivono, e dunque alla comparazione consapevole dei diversi modi di pensare e di vivere. Le interrogazioni si riportano alla sfida multiculturale.

La maggior parte dei fini della vita universitaria e del congresso ASILSA ha quindi trattato l’italità degli emigranti italiani e quella degli immigrati in Italia, essenzialmente esaminando le rispettive produzioni letterarie. Vi sono però state anche delle presentazioni che hanno preso in considerazione aspetti di carattere più prettamente linguistico, sociologico o lessicografico. Tra queste, corri il soggetto di segnalare quella di Hermann Heller, che si è fatto apprezzare per la ricchezza di stimoli che è il rigore filo-

dologna convinto, promosse la lingua e la cultura italiana non solo in qualità di insegnante ma pure come lessicografo, scrittore e traduttore, e non solo dall’italiano fisici infatti – tra le altre cose – conoscevano inglesi gli Eliazz di Montaigne.

L’opera per cui viene ricordato ha tuttavia decisamente che a fare con la lingua italiana si tratta di A World of Words, il più completo dizionario italiano-inglese mai pubblicato fino ad allora, contenente più di 46.000 lemmi italiani ed un numero ancora più elevato di voci inglesi. L’originalità dell’opera sta soprattutto nella scelta assai ampia e decisamente poco conformista delle fonti, che pone accanto alla produzione letteraria di autori essenzialmente contemporanei (Tasso, Castiglione, Della Casa, Ariosto, ma pure Boccaccio) tutta una serie di opere specialistiche appartenenti ad una grande varietà di campi del sapere e dell’agire unificati dalla botanica, la medicina, la mineralogia, l’astronomia, l’arte, la religione e la sessualità. Abbandonano inoltre i prevedibili e le espressioni idiomatiche, i gallicismi e gli ippismi. Un’imposizione dunque che pur certamente, che include anche voci di lingua regionale: come il veneziano, il romanese, il napoletano ed il bimodale. Anche la varietà dei registri sociolinguistici appare straordinaria: accanto ai termini scientifici trovano posto parole popolarmente connotate, che comprendono parrezze esempi di turpiloquio. Si può in conclusione affermare che la personalità, l’attività e l’opera di Giovanni Florio rappresentano la sprematura dell’italità, per come sono riuscite a connotare tratti locali e globali, e che coniugare tratti locali e globali. e che del’italicità, per come sono riuscite a

Imagined author John Flavio  •  Jennifer Bostonian (Intermediate Course)

* * *

Luisanna Sarducastangia

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by Italo Calvino, tuttavia decisamente a che fare con la lingua italiana si tratta di A World of Words, il più completo dizionario italiano-inglese mai pubblicato fino ad allora, contenente più di 46.000 lemmi italiani ed un numero ancora più elevato di voci inglesi. L’originalità dell’opera sta soprattutto nella scelta assai ampia e decisamente poco conformista delle fonti, che pone accanto alla produzione letteraria di autori essenzialmente contemporanei (Tasso, Castiglione, Della Casa, Ariosto, ma pure Boccaccio) tutta una serie di opere specialistiche appartenenti ad una grande varietà di campi del sapere e dell’agire unificati dalla botanica, la medicina, la mineralogia, l’astronomia, l’arte, la religione e la sessualità. Abbandonano inoltre i prevedibili e le espressioni idiomatiche, i gallicismi e gli ippismi. Un’imposizione dunque che pur certamente, che include anche voci di lingua regionale: come il veneziano, il romanese, il napoletano ed il bimodale. Anche la varietà dei registri sociolinguistici appare straordinaria: accanto ai termini scientifici trovano posto parole popolarmente connotate, che comprendono parrezze esempi di turpiloquio. Si può in conclusione affermare che la personalità, l’attività e l’opera di Giovanni Florio rappresentano la sprematura dell’italità, per come sono riuscite a connotare tratti locali e globali, e che coniugare tratti locali e globali. e che del’italicità, per come sono riuscite a
group that includes students at different stages in their graduate studies. Finally, it is crucial for graduate students to find a faculty mentor, whether at their home institution and department, or beyond, who is generous and frank.

**You wrote your dissertation on the Italian novella tradition. Can you tell us a little bit about it?**

My dissertation, titled *Dangerous Liaisons: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Italian Novella*, focused on representations of Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim amorous relations in a selection of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian novellas, from Masuccio Salernitano’s *Novellino*, one of the first books printed in Naples in 1475, to Giambattista Giraldi’s *Ecatommitthi*, which appeared in 1565 and includes the novella that inspired Shakespeare’s *Othello*. Romance, sex, adultery, unrequited passion, star-crossed love, marriage, and on occasion the birth of offspring from such unions—all of these are common narrative threads in the Italian novella tradition, which most narrowly defined spans the fourteenth through the early seventeenth centuries. By introducing the potential for assimilation, conversion, intermarriage, and miscegenation, novellas of intimate liaisons that cross religious, ethnic, and cultural boundaries complicate questions of cultural identity, doctrinal difference, and interfaith contact. I have always been fascinated by storytelling traditions, from fairy tales such as those collected by the Brothers Grimm to frame tale narratives like the *Arabian Nights*. I have also long been interested in the history of multiculturalism in all its manifestations. My dissertation gave me the opportunity to explore both as they pertain to early modern Italian history and literature.

**What is your most recent book about?**

I am currently working on two books. The first is based on my dissertation: I added a chapter on Christian-Muslim liaisons in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and a concluding section on the frame story of Basile’s early seventeenth-century *Pentamerone*. I significantly expanded my analysis of all the novellas by taking a closer look at relevant Mediterranean historical and sociocultural contexts, including trade, piracy, and slavery; religious conversion and apostasy; diplomacy and armed conflicts; the shift from manuscript culture to the printed book; and the Counter-Reformation. Finally, I familiarized myself with the work of scholars outside my discipline (for instance, in anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, critical race studies, and postcolonial studies) focused on interfaith and cross-cultural relations, and whose different objects of study and methodological approaches can complicate and enrich those of traditional literary analysis. The second book is a volume of collected articles, which I am co-editing with a colleague, on theorizing and offering practical pedagogical strategies for teaching medieval and early modern cross-cultural encounters in undergraduate and graduate classes. The volume includes articles from scholars/instructors specializing in a wide range of fields, including sociopolitical history, religious history, art history, and English, French, Iberian, Italian, and Theater Studies. I’m really excited about this project: It’s the first time I am working on collected essays, and the first time I am working so closely with a colleague on writing (we are co-authoring the introduction) and editing essays. We are both finding it extremely inspiring and gratifying to collaborate with each other and with our contributors. It is a book theoretically and practically committed to the idea that innovative research must find its way into the classroom and that—for students and instructors alike—the study of past cultures can illuminate our present, and vice versa.

**How do you integrate your research material into your language and literature classes?**

It very much depends on the type of course. For an intermediate language course, I sometimes select a story from the *Decameron*, giving students both the original and an adapted version. In an upper-level course surveying medieval prose literature, or in a course dedicated to the novella tradition, we usually focus on a selection of representative texts and spend quite a bit of time parsing through the genre’s characteristically long-winded and convoluted prose, discussing thematic, structural, and rhetorical shifts across the tradition, and learning about the historical contexts in which the works were written. In my MA course on “The *Decameron* and the Italian Novella,” and in courses on literature taught in translation (such as 41W and 45W), we read the *Decameron* from cover to cover, as well as selections from later collections. It is in these courses that I most frequently introduce the material from my research to date—Mediterranean cross-cultural and interfaith encounters—in more detail.

Prof. Attar, thank you for sharing your time with us. Surely, our readers will find your interview insightful and useful. We look forward to reading your works!