

Italy in the Second Half of the 19th Century

Bridging New Cultures

Edited by

Francesca Cadel

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Independent Scholar

Curating and Interpreting Culture



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Editors

Francesca Cadel teaches Italian and Film Studies at the University of Calgary, in Canada, after many years teaching in the U.S. (Yale and Columbia). She earned a PhD in Comparative Literature at the CUNY Graduate Center and a Doctorate in Italian from the University of Sorbonne-Paris IV. She has published several works including: *La langue de la poésie. Langue et dialecte chez Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-1975) et Andrea Zanzotto*, Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2001, *La lingua dei desideri. Il dialetto secondo Pier Paolo Pasolini*, Lecce: Manni, 2002, (with Davide Rondoni) *Poeti con nome di donna*, Milano: Rizzoli-BUR, 2008, peer-reviewed articles on Pasolini, Zanzotto, Pound, Morante, interviews (with Andrea Zanzotto, Pina Kalc, Nico Naldini, Antonio Negri among others) and translations: Franco Berardi Bifo, *The Soul at Work*, MIT, 2009 (from Italian into English), Clemente Martini, *Il commediante*, Milan, Mimesis, 2020 (from English into Italian). In collaboration with Paola Nastri, she edited Carlo Collodi's masterpiece *Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino*, New York, Farinelli, 2013. Her current book project is entitled *Dai Quaranta ai Settanta. Un percorso di "Scorciatoie": da Umberto Saba al "Moro" di Pietro Di Donato*, Milano: Mimesis, forthcoming.

Paola Nastri is an Independent Research Scholar at Yale University and at the Center for Research in the Humanities at the New York Public Library. She holds a PhD in Italian Language and Literature from Yale University, where she is a mentor on Cross Campus and an Alumni Schools Committee interviewer for prospective students. Her academic interests encompass seventeenth-to-nineteenth-century Italian literature and culture, interdisciplinarity, interrelations of literatures, figurative arts, visual culture and the nexus of language and literature. Nastri is the author of several essays on literature and language pedagogy and the editor of the Italian textbook *Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino*, Farinelli, 2013 (with Francesca Cadel), and *How to Use Literature in the Italian Language Class*, NeMLA Italian Studies, 2019 (with Paola Quadrini). She has also published *Spazi Riflessivi in Passeggeri Notturni*, Routledge, 2020 (with Daniela Antonucci). She is currently working on a study of passions in literature and the visual arts.

Preface

Cosetta Seno

University of Colorado, Boulder

Paola Nastri and Francesca Cadel are renowned in both the pedagogical and the nineteenth-century Italian Studies fields for their ground-breaking work on *Pinocchio*. Based on many years of teaching experience, *Pinocchio* proved to many skeptical teachers that learning language and culture through literature is an achievable goal if we have the right tools. This volume offers further evidence not only of the vast range of interests of the two editors but also of their competence and passion in presenting a type of work that is becoming increasingly essential in Italian Studies. It is rare in the North American panorama to find scholars who can competently bridge different fields of studies and propose original interdisciplinary work to their audience. Nastri and Cadel managed to precisely do this with their collection of essays. By selecting and editing a series of articles that shed light on some crucial and often under-studied topics of the nineteenth-century Italian culture, they will not only help the *Ottocentisti* in their research but will also benefit those who teach courses in the *Ottocento* make this vibrant century more accessible to students. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in Nineteenth-Century Italian Studies and Italy's government has encouraged scholars worldwide to promote the rediscovery of its under-represented authors. However, as we all know, this is easier said than done, especially in the United States. Sociological and political reasons urge professors to offer courses on times and themes considered more *relevant* in today's society. Yet, I feel this is often due to ideological and cultural prejudice. It is hard to find a period in the history of Italian culture with so much to offer our students. For example, future DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion) experts could greatly benefit from studying the intense debate on women's education and emancipation that happened in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century.

The education of children and children literature in its many manifestations was another crucial issue in late nineteenth-century Italy. The Unification made visible many dramatic discrepancies between the North and the South of Italy. If some sort of balance had to be reached, it had to be achieved through education and culture. What could be more *relevant* in today's divided society?

I have been teaching at the University of Colorado Boulder for many years, and I know first-hand how hard it is to propose and teach a course on the *Ottocento*. One significant obstacle is finding the primary texts translated into

English. This is especially true for ‘minor’ authors who can, however, offer an original and indispensable point of view on a specific problem. But it is also true for ‘major’ authors whose translations in English may have become dated.

The other significant difficulty, even when we teach our classes in Italian, is finding critical articles to help the students bridge the gap between their culture and the Italian one. In my experience, this happens more quickly if we use an interdisciplinary teaching methodology. The many topics explored in this volume offer an essential bridge between Italian Literature and other disciplines such as Women’s Studies, Education, Media Studies, Theater, and others. In recent years pedagogy experts have been talking about ‘transformative learning’ as a way to teach our students to understand themselves and their world in new ways. The book will help us teachers achieve this ambitious goal while helping us scholars gain new perspectives on this critical period of Italian history and culture.

Introduction

Paola Nastri

Independent Scholar

The idea for this book originated from a successful panel on the second half of nineteenth-century Italian literature and culture held at the Northeast Modern Language Association Convention in Boston, in March 2020. What followed was a call for book chapters, with many fascinating and diversified proposals that validated the interest on the subject.

This book offers a variety of critical perspectives from national and international scholars and their contributions provide a multifaced reflection on this vibrant and creative period of the nineteenth century in Italy. These reflections represent new scholarship and research, which will prove to be an invaluable resource for an academic audience and student population interested in Italian Studies, as well as an excellent text for other interdisciplinary studies. Within these pages, lesser-known writers are introduced alongside more renowned authors, contributing to highlight the many and different facets of the period in which the interaction of literature, the arts and culture, become vital forces for great changes in the literary, political, and cultural Italian landscape of the time.

Tumultuous national events, uncertainty and fear dominated the second half of the nineteenth century in Italy, but it is also a time characterized by resilience, creativity, and courage that gave rise to a vibrant cultural environment in which writers and artists helped fashion a new and modern culture, ushering in the later achievements of the twentieth century. Presented as a series of intercultural, interdisciplinary, and literary essays, this book explores the social and cultural dimensions of a unique period in Italian history, while focusing on a variety of themes spanning from Risorgimento and education to children's textbooks and publishing companies, from women's rights to theater and archival studies, to Verga and the representation of the South of Italy. Divided into four parts, the narrative of the book contributes to and expands upon recent scholarly writings on the period. My hope is that this book will encourage further theoretical discussions, prompt a critical reassessment of Italian literature and culture of the nineteenth century and provide alternative ways to approach and analyze authors and themes that have contributed to the birth of a new and modern Italian culture and nation.

Part One, “Books and Magazines for the Education of School Children and the Birth of New Publishing Companies,” features essays on *Cuore* by Edmondo De Amicis and *Le avventure di Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi, two texts which are fundamental for the formation of an Italian citizenship awareness. Furthermore, this section includes contributions on the extraordinary success of children books publishing. In “Edmondo De Amicis’ *Cuore*: Education after Risorgimento,” Ernesto Livorni expands on De Amicis’ definition of national identity by focusing on the patriotic themes and stories designed to teach and guide the reader to become a good citizen. Rossana Dedola, in “Geppetto e Collodi all’inseguimento di Pinocchio,” sheds light on the preparatory phase for the making of the “burattino” (puppet) and other characters of *Pinocchio*, as well as its educational objectives—teaching its young readers the value of work, study and obedience. In “La rivista *Le Prime Letture* (1870-1878): la formazione di giovani lettori ‘virtuosi e colti del pari,’” Sabrina Fava explores the editorial strategy of the short-lived children’s periodical, *Le Prime Letture*, its educational and cultural objectives, the relevance of its illustrious collaborators and its readership. Letterio Todaro, in “A Mirror of Modernization: The Stunning Rise of the Children’s Books Publishing and the Unique Case of the Biondo Brothers’ Publishing Company in ‘felicissima’ Palermo,” draws a detailed picture of the Biondo Brothers, entrepreneurs and innovative publishers of schoolbooks and children’s literature, who also had a pioneering role in architectural patronage and civic engagement.

The essays in Part Two, “Emancipation of Women and Innovative Representations of Female Characters,” focus on women writers and female characters who have left an innovative mark in the Italian literary history. Loredana Palma in “Un contributo al dibattito sulla questione femminile nel secondo Ottocento: Aurelia Folliero De Luna Cimino e Fanny Salazar Zampini” shares insights on the writings of Aurelia Folliero and Fanny Salazar and their contribution to the debate on female emancipation and women’s rights in Italy. In “Carolina Invernizio’s *Nina, la poliziotta dilettante*: Bridging Mystery and Serial Romance Novels,” Eleonora Buonocore examines the first woman investigator in Italian literature, showcasing a new multifaced view of a female character as she blends the characteristics of serial romance novels and detective stories. Maria Cristina Alberti, in “L’evoluzione della figura femminile fra tradizione e innovazione in *Le confessioni di un italiano* di Ippolito Nievo e *Un anno di scuola* di Giani Stuparich,” elaborates on the evolution of Pisana and Edda, two protagonists who defy conventions and embody the contradictions of a rapidly changing world.

Part Three, “Theater, an Archivist and Historian,” touches on the theater spaces and practices as instruments of unification and education, and the role of an archivist as collector of history. Antonella Valoroso, in “Uno sguardo dal

palcoscenico: il teatro 'mondiale' di Adelaide Ristori,” offers her reflections on Ristori’s career as an actress and becoming an ambassador of Italian culture and her contribution to the construction of a national identity. Focusing on the complex figure of marquis, statesman and historian Gino Capponi, Lisa Ferrante Perrone’s essay, “‘Per divinare l’Italia futura’: Gino Capponi as Archivist and Collector,” plunges into the value of archival studies, how documents are collected, and the fundamental role this science plays in the building of the conscience of a nation.

The last two essays in Part Four, “Giovanni Verga and the South of Italy,” delve into the realm of *Verismo*. In “Viewing the South: The Role of *Verismo* and the Illustrative Arts in Shaping Post-Unification Italian Culture,” Susan Amatangelo examines the visual cultural dimension of Verga’s literary production, elaborating on his polyhedral interests in cinema, theater and photography, and his collaboration with the illustrator Arnaldo Ferraguti. Cristina Carnemolla’s contribution “The South as an Idyllic Nightmare: Giovanni Verga’s “*Fantasticheria*” (1879)” presents a close reading of Verga’s eponymous short story, focusing on a fictionalized vision of the South of Italy that appears to Northerners as a place exotically charged, attractive and disturbing all at one time.

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Authors

Maria Cristina Alberti is a teacher and an independent scholar in the fields of English and Italian literature with interest in the study of female characters. She graduated in English literature at the University of Florence and studied Sciences of Communication at the University of Siena. Upon receiving a diploma in teaching Italian as a second language from the Università per Stranieri in Perugia, she lived in Boston for one year and taught Italian language and culture at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. She has written articles for literary and cultural magazines such as *Elapsus*, *Le Lingue del mondo*, *Dismisura* and *Educazione permanente*. She is also engaged in cultural and political projects in favor of the female condition, publishing videos and texts of creative writing. Recently, she has participated in the AAIS Congress in Bologna 2022 with a paper on “Pisana” in *Le confessioni di un italiano* by Ippolito Nievo.

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