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Introduction

Cindy Stanphill, *Editor-in-Chief*

—Itali siam tutti, un popol solo/una sola famiglia.

—Italiani/tutti, e fratelli.¹

...pur troppo, si è fatta l'Italia, ma non si fanno gl'italiani.²

The infamous first line of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, “[h]appy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way,” first published in 1863, just after Italy's unification, could have just as easily been referencing the emerging Italian nation just as much as the social and political clashes in Russia.³ Indeed, pre-unification Italy could have legitimately been considered as a uniquely unhappy family: as a collection of loosely connected yet continuously warring independent nation-states including republics, duchies, and kingdoms that frequently faltered under foreign rule. In fact, as the Austrian prince and statesman Klemens von Metternich famously wrote in 1814, Italy was not a country but a “geographical expression.”⁴ However, while it was not completely united until 1861, the idea of an Italian identity, an “Italianness,” had long been present on the peninsula from both a domestic and a foreign perspective: the idea of Italy, historically a locus of immense cultural production, was a reality despite ever-present turmoil and issues of fractured politics, linguistic inconsistency, and social discrepancies.

In his *Aeneid* Virgil first mentions Italy, “*Italiam quaero patriam*,” foreshadowing Aeneas's role in founding Rome; but it is Dante Alighieri who finally promotes the importance of creating and solidifying an official Italian language in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and who in many ways conceives of Italy as both a cultural and geographical entity with its own evolving language. In due course, Alighieri exemplifies the artistic capability of the Italian language in his *Commedia* by elevating Tuscan from a mere local dialect of Latin into a proper language, the language that was eventually used to write poetic and philosophical works as well as scientific and political treatises.⁵ Later, both Petrarch and Machiavelli write in Italian and Latin and promote a form of Italian nationalism in “*Italia mia*” and *Il principe*. At a later date, and as a more formidable Italian nationalism was brewing in the north, Massimo D'Azeglio notably referred to himself in his memoirs as Italian rather than Milanese. Since unification in 1861, however, Italy has continued to struggle with some of the very same issues that kept it divided for so long: ardent regionalism connected to distinct linguistic and cultural heritages,

as well as local and national political conflicts and disparate economic situations between the north and the south. It is within these parameters, both historical and political, that this volume examines the emergence of an Italian identity and nation, from the Renaissance to the Risorgimento, and from unification up until the twenty-first century.

In January, 2012, the UCLA Italian Graduate Student Association (IGSA) held a conference called *(Dis)Unity in Italy*, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy. We are pleased to present this volume published in conjunction with that IGSA conference including both papers from the conference as well as a range of international articles that work together to put the concept of a unified Italy in dialogue with the sociocultural, literary, geographic and political realities of the country. These papers address the following questions in new and provocative ways encouraging further debate about the Italian nation and Italian identity: What ideas of Italy existed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance? How did they come to inform the actual development of the nation? What were the cultural and political parameters of the Risorgimento and its consequences? Despite the 1861 unification, how have Italians opposed and resisted it? How have Italians embraced a national identity? Has the d'Azeglio dream been fulfilled: have Italians been “created”?

The current volume is divided into two sections in order to reflect the movement from an idea of Italy up until the Risorgimento in part one to the struggle for solidarity after unification in part two—primarily as reflected through the national language. In part one, *Pre-unification Italian Identity and “Italianness,”* James Fishburne’s article, “Shepherding the Flock: Pope Julius II’s Renaissance Vision of a Unified Italy,” looks at the way in which Pope Julius II (1503–1513) used portrait medals and coins to communicate his vision of papal dominion, casting himself as a unifying figure and as the legitimate ruler of Italy. Roberto Rizzo links the literary flowering of the Italian Renaissance with later Risorgimento authors in his article, “‘La patria pericolante’: i romanzi storici del primo Ottocento e la formazione dell’Italia e degli Italiani.” He examines the way in which the literature of a divided Italian peninsula of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries provides a mirror for emerging patriotic narratives and novels during the eighteenth century. Heather Sottong’s article, “The Crowd and Manzoni’s Conception of Cultural Unification,” compares Gustave Le Bon’s book, *The Crowd*, a self-proclaimed scientific work exemplifying the key characteristics of crowds, with Alessandro Manzoni’s use of crowds in his seminal novel, *I promessi sposi*, in order to determine how Manzoni’s ideas regarding crowds informed his conception of unification.

Photography was also used as a tool in the quest to unify Italy during the nineteenth century. Kamal Zargar investigates the role of photography in defining a past glory with a nationalistic future during the crucial period leading up to the Risorgimento in his article, “The Role of Photography in the Transformation

and Preservation of Venice.” Addressing the ever-poignant Southern Question, Santiago Parga-Linares in, “Representations of Sicily in the Contemporary Narrative of the Risorgimento,” explores how Sicilian land, culture and population are depicted in three key narrative texts of the twentieth century, Lampedusa’s *Il Gattopardo*, Sciascia’s *Il quarantotto* and De Cataldo’s *I traditori*, to better understand how those texts participate in the cultural, social, political and literary phenomenon known as Meridionalismo.

The articles in the second section of this volume, *La questione della lingua*, problematize the notion of a national language by placing it in dialogue with ongoing debates about Italian identity and the developing immigrant culture in contemporary Italy. Cedric J. Oliva discusses the effects of a (dis)unity that reaches outside of the Italian borders in “Peripheral (Dis)Unity: The Italian Influences on Corsican Linguistic and Cultural Developments.” Oliva seeks to define the level of “Italianness” of Corsicans through a sociolinguistic and socio-cultural approach to near languages and near cultures. In so doing, he looks at the Italian influences on Corsica elucidating a history of ‘Disunity’ *from* and ‘Unity’ *with* Italy. Working within the Italian borders, Wanda Santini proposes a polemically motivated meta- and social-linguistic reflection in “L’Italia agra delle antilingue: forme della dis-integrazione nella narrativa di Luciano Bianciardi.”

This volume concludes with two articles analyzing language, dialect, and contemporary Italian identity. Lorenzo Mari and Polina Shvanyukova, in “Linguistic Encounters Now and Then: Amara Lakhous and Tahar Lamri Engage in the Debate on (Dis)United Italy,” investigate the use of Italian dialects in two novels written by contemporary Italophone writers, *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a piazza Vittorio* by Amara Lakhous and *I sessanta nomi dell’amore* written by Tahar Lamri, both published in 2006. Mari and Shvanyukova examine the ways in which literary, cultural and political uses of dialect challenge the dominant, canonical culture. They specifically highlight the various ways in which Lakhous and Lamri question the concept of “Italianness” and monolithic national culture in the context of rapidly changing cultural dynamics in contemporary Italy. Beatrice Barbalato confronts the modern concept of “Italianness” with a past conception of Italian identity in her article, “Il capitombolo di Mazzini: “Pro Patria” di Ascanio Celestini.”

I would like to especially thank the 2012 editorial board for their hard work and support in putting together this exciting volume of *Carte Italiane*, which will be the last under my direction: Brittany Asaro, Andrew Hiltzik, Andy Newton, Nicole Robinson, Monica Streifer, and Camilla Zamboni. Their energy and enthusiasm have been an integral part of this collaborative effort that promotes new and innovative scholarship among graduate students working in the field of Italian studies today. I would also like to acknowledge William Morosi for the cover design and typesetting, Junior Bustamante for the conference poster design,

and express my deep gratitude to Stacey Meeker, Director of Publications at GSA, for her continued support of our journal. I extend many thanks to Department Chair Professor Thomas Harrison and Professor Lucia Re for their guidance throughout the editorial process.

Finally, we are all very proud of the success of this year's conference and would like send our deepest appreciation to our keynote speaker Professor Laura Wittman Ph.D., Stanford University, California, for her captivating talk, "The Unknown Soldier Returns: Mutilation, Spectacle, and Mystical Body of the Italian Nation." We would also like to thank all of the conference participants for their interesting and thought-provoking papers. We appreciate the generous support of the Department of Italian at UCLA, the Campus Programs Committee (CPC), GSA, and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CMRS).

Notes

1. Edmond Garratt Gardner, *The National Idea in Italian Literature* (Manchester: The University Press, 1921) 24. Gardner's published speech includes this citation taken from Vincenzo Monti's tragedy *Caio Gracco*.

2. Massimo Taparelli D'Azeglio, "Origine e scopo dell'opera" in *I miei ricordi* (PDF), (Firenze, Barbera, 1891) 9.

3. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. E. Hudson Long (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966).

4. I initially found this citation in Gardner, 2. It was first used by Metternich in his *Memorandum to the Great Powers*, Aug. 2, 1814. See also his Letter to Count Prokesch-Osten, Nov. 19, 1819. *Correspondence of Prokesch*. II. 313; also as "L'Italie est un nom géographique" (Italy is only a geographical expression," Prince Metternich to Lord Palmerston, 1847. Further citations at <http://www.bartleby.com/78/438.html>: accessed January 9, 2013.

5. Virgil, *Aeneid*, ed. Randall T. Ganiban (Newbury Port: Focus Publishing, 2009) 65; I, 378-380.