

UCLA

Carte Italiane

Title

Introduction

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5rv463mz>

Journal

Carte Italiane, 2(5)

ISSN

0737-9412

Authors

Carey, Sarah A.
Hennessey, Brendan W.

Publication Date

2009

DOI

10.5070/C925011369

Peer reviewed

Introduction

By Sarah A. Carey and Brendan W. Hennessey

This year, the editors of CARTE ITALIANE decided to go back to basics. For Volume 5 in our new series, we returned to one of the founding aims of the journal: to provide a forum for some of the best work in the field of Italian Studies from the past year. Rather than concentrate on a specific theme, author, or artistic movement, we wanted a volume that would span the spectrum – a publication that would showcase the wide range of interests among contemporary Italianists and facilitate dialogue within our diverse community.

Our collection of international contributions begins with Claudia Romanelli's analysis of one of Boccaccio's lesser-known stories from the *Decameron* – the *novella* of Tedaldo degli Elisei, which approaches the themes of courtly love and religious customs with an unusually sober tone, unofficially functioning as a sort of compendium of medieval thought on *ars religiosa* and *ars amatoria*. The courtly exchange of poetry between the painter and poet Il Bronzino and Laura Battiferri in the Cinquecento is analyzed by Cristina Varisco through her concurrent visual “reading” of Bronzino's portrait of the female poet. Christina Petraglia and Cinzia Samà explore the roles of women in the Italian theatrical tradition – from the importance of fashion and the construction of female identity in Carlo Goldoni's comedies to the rise of provocative female playwrights such as Natalia Ginzburg in the 20th Century and their explorations of femininity, sexuality and difference.

Lucia Re outlines the complex formation of political, literary, and gender identities that took place in Italy during the years immediately following the Risorgimento. Her article explores Italy's unique cultural and historical landscape during this period and analyzes the varied responses to national unification that produced a new and heterogeneous narrative impulse. The ideological clash between *verismo* and artistic experimentation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the problem of geographic division are both addressed by Jonathan Hiller in his comparison of several operatic adaptations of Giovanni Verga's *Cavalleria rusticana*. Reality and fiction are likewise explored by Marilena De

Chiara as she presents an analysis of Luigi Pirandello's unfinished drama *I giganti della montagna* and the fine line that is drawn between real life and theatrical creation in Pirandello's literary aesthetics. The aesthetic and ontological implications of 20th century Italian poetry are presented by Patrizia Lissoni as she discusses the work and theory of Edoardo Cacciatore, whose poetic output evolves from a close interrogation of the quotidian to a more philosophical and profound vision of human experience through the "re-discovery" and "re-conquest" of reality.

In her article on Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's *Il Gattopardo*, Renata Palermo engages in a close-reading of the work, paying close attention to literary devices such as repetition in order to explore cyclical themes of nature and the ideological implications of the Risorgimento in Italian culture. The issue of Italian emigration is explored by Evelyn Ferraro in her work on author Ebe Cagli Seidenberg, whose novel *Il Tempo dei Dioscuri* centers on questions of exile, deracination and national identity through the intersection of literature, painting and a poetics of "suspension." The complicated nature of Italian identity is also addressed in Monica Hanna's analysis of Antonio Tabucchi's first novel, *Piazza d'Italia*, which posits the work as a kind of resistance history of the Italian nation that draws upon traditions of storytelling, cinematic representation, and Gramscian historical models.

The selected readings offered in this edition of CARTE ITALIANE encompass a wide array of literary, philosophical, and historical issues that contribute to the current discussions of Italian literature circulating in North America and abroad. Special thanks in our collaborative effort this issue go to graduate students Brittany Asaro, Andrea Bini, Carmen Gomez, Melina Madrigal, Jessica Strom and Emma Van Ness, who helped in the editing process. We also would like to acknowledge the support of faculty members Thomas Harrison, Lucia Re and the current chair of the Italian Department at UCLA, Dominic Thomas. We sincerely hope that Volume 5 continues the long tradition of scholarly dialogue that CARTE ITALIANE has provided for decades, establishing an axis around which the prevailing discourses that define the field of Italian Studies can revolve.