

il Bollettino

dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America



2021 • VOLUME 14 • NUMBER 2

Cari Amici,

Welcome to volume 14.2 of the Calandra Institute's *il Bollettino*! With this issue we mark the end of our fourteenth year publishing this newsletter and the beginning of my fifteenth year as dean of the Institute.

As I look through this issue, I am reminded of so much we do and have done as an Institute, from *Italics* and public programs to conferences and research, and more. Despite all the challenges that have come with the last eighteen months, we have continued our commitment to our mission.

For the first time in a very long time, we are hosting an Italian language course this fall thanks to the largesse of the Consulate General of Italy. We hope to continue this type of offering. So, stay tuned! An Italian Diaspora Studies Bibliography is now available on our website. It is a "living" document that will continue to be updated. As always, we have highlighted the keen essays that appear in the latest issue of our *Italian American Review*, recognized by Italy's national accreditation board, ANVUR, as a "Class A" journal.

This fall we launched a new exhibition, *Il Sommo Poeta*, commemorating the 700th anniversary of the death of Dante Alighieri. In November, we will host the Italian American Studies Association annual conference in hybrid form. In

April we will hold our annual conference, with this edition dedicated to the theme of environmental humanities.

On a more somber note, I wish first to call your attention to the collection of essays dedicated to our late colleague and friend, Robert Viscusi. His voice remains one of the most significant in the study and interpretation of Italian literature and culture. We also note the passing of Leonard Norman Primiano. Leonard was a dear friend of the Calandra Institute. He visited regularly and collaborated with us on various projects.

Our staff continues to respond to the many recent challenges in an adroit manner and with great aplomb. As dean, I can only look back with immense pride, as we bring this Institute to the level of university-wide research Institute that it should indeed be.

We continue to enjoy great support from many. We are most appreciative of the steadfast support of both Chancellor Felix Matos Rodríguez's Office of CUNY and President Frank Wu's Office of Queens College. They and their staff continue to facilitate our greater development in all aspects.

Buona lettura!

Anthony Julian Tamburri
Dean and Distinguished Professor

ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSE

This fall the Institute is hosting a course in advanced Italian-language skills, funded through the Consulate General of Italy in New York City and sponsored in part by the Società Dante Alighieri of New York City. The curriculum is designed to improve language skills through reading fiction in order to write more efficiently, engaging with rapid speech and idiomatic language, and writing short reports, summaries, and compositions on life themes. The course is taught by Elisabetta Zarcone, professor of Italian at Queens College.

DIASPORA STUDIES BIBLIOGRAPHY

A bibliography of publications relevant to the Italian and Italian American diaspora is available on the Institute's website. The bibliography contains more than 1,500 items that cover a wide array of subjects and genres. Go to calandrainstitute.org and, under the Research and Education menu, click on Calandra Italian American and Italian Diaspora Studies Bibliography.

IASA

Italian American Studies Association

The Italian American Studies Association annual conference, Diversity in Italian American Studies: The Status of Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation in Uncertain Times, will take place November 10–13, 2021. This event will be available for participation via Zoom or in person at the Calandra Institute.

The inaugural edition of IASA's annual journal *Diasporic Italy* is forthcoming. *Diasporic Italy* is a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal devoted to the Italian American diaspora, focusing on timely and varied approaches to criticism and analysis of the field by presenting new perspectives and research on transnational issues. It is the official publication of the Italian American Studies Association, published by the University of Illinois Press.

For more information visit italianamericanstudies.net.

Calandra Institute Annual Conference
ECO ITALIE: MATERIAL LANDSCAPES AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINARIES
APRIL 28–30, 2022

SAVE THE DATE

The Calandra Institute's 2022 annual conference will build on the growing scholarship analyzing Italian histories and cultures from the perspective of the environmental humanities (e.g., Iovino's 2016 *Ecocriticism and Italy*; Verdicchio's 2016 *Ecocritical Approaches to Italian Culture and Literature*), the environmental histories of Italian migrations (e.g., "Environments of Italianness" special issue of *Modern Italy* 26.2, 2021), and the ecological dimensions of Italian colonialism and Fascist imperialism (e.g., Saraiva's 2017 *Fascist Pigs*; Malia Hom's 2019 *Empire's Mobius Strip*). Italians operating under diverse historical conditions within the national borders and beyond have participated in varied roles and perspectives in transforming the global environment.

In his 1930 fictionalized autobiography, *Jews without Money*, author Michael Gold speaks briefly about Italian immigrants' predilection for urban horticulture in the concrete wasteland that was once New York City's Lower East Side: "The Italians raised red and pink geraniums in

tomato cans. The Jews could have, too, but hadn't the desire. When an excavation was being dug for a new tenement, the Italians swarmed there with pots, hungry for the new earth. Some of them grew bean vines and morning glories." This literary anecdote hints at the transposition and adaptation of agricultural knowledge and skills in Italian migratory spaces. It also suggests opportunities for examining related topics from different temporal and spatial points in Italian environmental histories and cultures.

Agriculture is only one way to reconstruct the relationship between Italy and/or Italians and their environments. Indeed, in addition to horticulture, the realms of labor, migration, science, and the marketplace have been relevant in shaping Italian socio-ecological narratives and spaces. Italians have historically reimagined, reproduced, and transformed their identities alongside the environments they traversed, worked, and longed for, and continue to do so in the twenty-first century, creating hybrid spaces of Italianness around the world.

Panel presentations from the 2021 annual conference, which was held virtually from April 5-21, 2021, are now available online. Go to calandrainstitute.org. Under the Public Programs menu, click on Annual Conference.

ITALICS: TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

SUMMER 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

In August *Italics* visited Raffetto's of New York City, the Italian pasta shop on Houston Street. Patriarch Marcello Raffetto opened M. Raffetto & Bros. in the heart of Greenwich Village in 1906. Over the course of 110 years many dedicated family members and relatives have kept the business going, through two World Wars and the Great Depression to the Vietnam War and into the web revolution, and it continues to thrive today.

In the early years three basic products were made: egg noodles, Genoan meat and spinach ravioli, and Neapolitan cheese ravioli. Dry egg noodles were made with the roller machine purchased in 1916 that is still used today. Although dry noodles were discontinued in the 1970s, Raffetto's now produces fifty different kinds of pasta, including pumpkin ravioli, black squid ink linguine, and rosemary pappardelle, following the same principles that have guided their family's philosophy since 1906: Use the best quality ingredients to produce the best quality pasta.



Italics premieres the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 pm and is rebroadcast the following Wednesday at 10:30 am and 4:30 pm, Saturday at 7:30 am, and Sunday at 6:30 pm on CUNY TV Channels 25.3, 30, 75, and 77 in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

Italics can be viewed on demand at



tv.cuny.edu/media/italics



youtube.com/ItalicsTV

The Whitening of an Italian (American) Sheik: Performing Race and Gender in Rudolph Valentino's Sheik Films

TATIANA PETROVICH NJEGOSH

Rudolph Valentino (1895–1926), born Rodolfo Pietro Filiberto Guglielmi to a fairly affluent Southern Italian family in Castellaneta (Apulia), immigrated to the United States in 1913 and ascended to stardom with *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921) and *The Sheik* (1921). Between the end of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth century, US and Italian institutional racisms operated in both countries as well as in the Italian colonies in Africa through the emergence of race as scientific and legal category within a strict, binary polarization between the white race and the Black race. As a paradoxical result, Italians and Italian Americans were assigned and assigned themselves to both sides of the color line or in the gray spaces in between. Miriam Hansen (1991) and Giorgio Bertellini (2005, 2011, 2019) have investigated the gendered, classed dynamics of racialization activated by Valentino as cinematic image and

public persona. Both Hansen and Bertellini showed how Valentino's unprecedented, peculiar reception contributed to and was shaped by new forms of white female (Hansen) and male (Bertellini) spectatorships, simultaneously confirming and dismissing the accepted, normative hierarchies of gender, sexuality, and race. As I argue and demonstrate focusing on the *Sheik* films (which to Hansen mark a significant shift in Valentino's reception, inaugurating his perception in "ethnic-racial" terms [Hansen 1991, 257]), *The Sheik* and *The Son of the Sheik* (1926) stage race as a transnational, performative sign defying the category's biological basis and the supposedly natural, qualitative difference between the white race and the Black race through a revisionary continuum between Italians, Italian Americans, African Americans, and white women based on emotional sympathy.

The Effects of Ethnic Identification on the Collegiate Experience of Italian Americans: A Qualitative Study

SUSAN M. ANTONELLI

This study examined the collegiate experience of nine strongly ethnically identified Italian American college students and sought to understand how they made sense of their experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who graduated from a bachelor's degree program in the United States within the last five years. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was selected as the research approach, as it provided the opportunity to understand the participants' lived experiences. Four themes emerged from a careful analysis of the interviews: Identity Development; Commitment to Ethnic Identity and Preservation of Customs and Culture; Peer, Academic, and Co-Curricular Collegiate Experience; and Familial Expectations and Personal

Achievement Goals. The findings of this study confirm published research related to Italian American ethnic identity persistence, family relationships, and work ethic, and they revealed new findings related to the experience of Italian American college students today. Findings suggest that Italian American college students have a complicated understanding of their own whiteness; feel connected to their ethnic identity and responsible for the preservation of Italian customs and culture; and have high ambitions for their professional achievement. Furthermore, findings of this study suggest that these individuals' college experience was complicated by their ethnic identity and impacted their sense of belonging among peers and faculty.

FRANCESCO DURANTE AWARD FOR ITALIAN AMERICAN HISTORY / LITERATURE / CULTURE

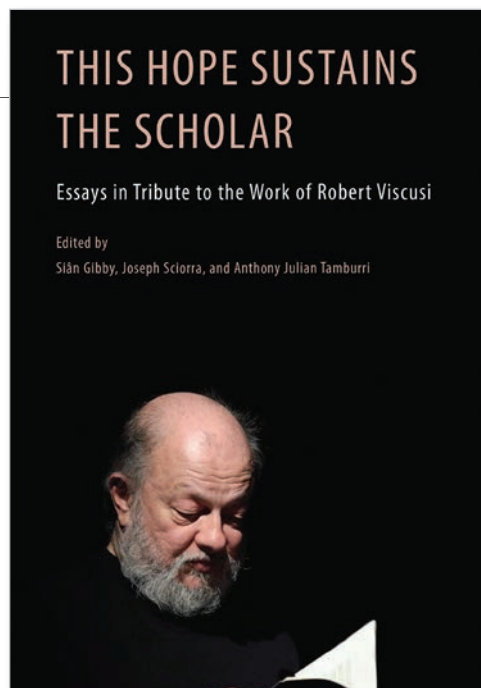
A prize of \$1,000 will be awarded for the best original, analytical essay pertaining to Italian American history or culture. The essay, in English or Italian, must not exceed 7,500 words, including notes and bibliography. Unpublished essays as well as those published January 2020–November 30, 2021 will be considered.

Submissions are due no later than November 30, 2021. Applicants must be advanced doctoral students or recently (up to five years) conferred doctorates. Candidates should plan to receive their award and speak at a conference at the Calandra Institute in spring 2022.

Email inquiries and submissions to: calandra@qc.cuny.edu.

In June 2021, Maria Silvia Marini interviewed NICHOLAS GROSSO for *Passaporto Nansen*, an Italian literary journal. The issue was dedicated to the Salerno Literary Festival and also features interviews with Dacia Mariani, winner of the Strega and Campiello awards in Italy, as well as Gianluigi Simonetti, a professor of contemporary Italian literature at the University of L'Aquila. The interview covers artisanal books, ongoing research at Oxford Brookes University, publishing projects, and translation. The interview in its English translation can be found at literaturha.us/news-list/2021/the-past-the-occasion-of-the-future.

ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI delivered the keynote address at the Centro di Ricerca Interdipartimentale di Studi Americani's international conference, "Ricostruire: i luoghi di memoria nelle Americhe." He authored *The Columbus Affair: Imperatives for an Italian/American Agenda* (Casa Lago Press, 2021) and *Signing Italian/American Cinema: A More Focused Look* (Ovunque Siamo Press, 2021).



TRIBUTE TO COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND ROBERT VISCUSI

Bordighera Press recently published *This Hope Sustains the Scholar: Essays in Tribute to the Work of Robert Viscusi*, edited by Siân Gibby, Joseph Sciorra, and Anthony Julian Tamburri, in honor of beloved colleague and friend Robert Viscusi (1941–2020). This collaboration presents essays written by Mary Jo Bona, Peter Carravetta, Donna M. Chirico, Francesco Durante, Donna Gabaccia, Fred Gardaphé, Paolo Giordano, Donatella Izzo, James Periconi, Joseph Sciorra, and Anthony Julian Tamburri.

The volume is described by Dana Spiotta, author of *Wayward*, as “an engaging, astute collection of essays that shows the Italian American imaginary in all its particularity.”

Jonathan Galassi, former president and publisher of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, poignantly notes, “It is moving to read these brilliant and wide-ranging essays, critical and personal, in honor of a pathbreaking writer and thinker. Robert Viscusi understood deeply how fundamental the troubled Italian American nexus is to a true understanding of our troubled, unresolved culture.”

IN MEMORIAM

LEONARD NORMAN PRIMIANO died on July 25, 2021. A renowned folklorist and religious studies scholar, he joined the Cabrini University faculty in 1993 and served as department chair and professor of religious studies until his retirement in 2021. He taught courses in the history of Christianity, vernacular religion, religious folklife, sectarian religion, and contemporary American religion.

Primiano's teaching career earned numerous accolades including the Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award (1999) and Kennedy Center Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Award (2014). His research and scholarship earned additional recognition including election as a Fellow of the American Folklore Society and service as cochair of the Folklore and Religion Seminar of the American Academy of Religion.

Primiano served on the editorial board of the Calandra Institute's journal *Italian American Review*. In 2011–2012, the Institute mounted the exhibit *Graces Received: Painted and Metal Ex-votos from Italy*, which featured Italian ex-votos from Primiano's collection.

Leonard Norman Primiano's impact on students, colleagues, and all who knew him is immeasurable. He will be dearly missed.



Congratulations to Adriana Trigiani and Angelo Vivolo

The Calandra Institute congratulates Adriana Trigiani and Angelo Vivolo on their new roles in New York State government. Trigiani has been confirmed as a member of the New York State Council on the Arts, and Vivolo will be serving on the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York.

Adriana Trigiani is a seven-time New York Times best-selling author. Angelo Vivolo is chairman of the Board of Governors of the Columbus Citizens Foundation.

We look forward to working with both of them as they assume these significant positions. Auguri!



Amuri: The Sacred Flavors of Sicily

Amuri: The Sacred Flavors of Sicily (2014) is a short documentary film that celebrates and preserves the recipes and slow food traditions of Sicily's religious festivals. The film was directed by Palermo-born Giacomo Costa and produced by the Anna Tasca Lanza Cooking School.

The filmmakers traveled from the modern city of Palermo to the ancient Greek city of Siracusa, from small towns near Mount Etna to central mountain villages, from

the remote island of Pantelleria, close to the coast of Africa, to the island of Lipari in the Aeolian islands.

Amuri's yearlong journey through Sicily reveals living communities rarely seen by outsiders and traditions that have outlasted centuries of invasion, earthquake, and corruption. From the sculptural village breads of Saint Joseph Day in March to the clatter of snails cooked in Palermo for Santa Rosalia in July, the documentary takes viewers on a rare and delightful adventure.

Sicilian religious festivals contain culinary legacies central to the region's land, society, and economy. While *Amuri* is a uniquely Sicilian story, it is analogous to narratives playing out on every continent that ask whether the ancient slow food traditions will be a vital part of the future. This snapshot of history informs possible ways to answer yes.

For more information visit sacredflavorsofsicilyfilm.weebly.com.

Silvia Federici: Scholar, Professor, Activist

Silvia Federici is an Italian and American scholar, teacher, and activist. She is a professor emerita and teaching fellow at Hofstra University. Federici was born in Parma, Italy, in 1942, and moved to the United States in 1967 with a Fulbright scholarship to complete her PhD in philosophy at the University at Buffalo. She taught at the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria, and was professor of political philosophy and international studies at Hofstra University's New College.

Federici's *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Autonomedia, 2004) expands on the work of Leopoldina Fortunati investigating the reasons for the witch hunts of the late Middle Ages. In this treatise she weaves together the story of primitive accumulation, expropriation and capitalist economy, women's unpaid labor, and the historical struggle for the commons. Central to Federici's concerns are gender, racial, and colonial hierarchies. She provides a framework for understanding the work of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and other institutions as engaging in a renewed cycle of primitive accumulation by which everything held in common—from water, to seeds, to genetic code—becomes privatized in what amounts to a new round of enclosures.

Recent works, published by PM Press, include *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women*, and *Patriarchy of the Wage*. Federici was recently cited in *The New York Times Magazine* ("The Lockdown Showed How the Economy Exploits Women. She Already Knew," by Jordan Kisner, February 17, 2021) and *The New Yorker* ("The Future of Work, Human History and the Hunger for Land," by Francisco Cantú, January 11, 2021).



IL SOMMO POETA: DANTE ALIGHIERI, 1321–2021

In September 2021 the Calandra Institute's galleria opened an exhibition, *Il Sommo Poeta: Dante Alighieri, 1321–2021*, featuring works by forty Italian illustrators and cartoonists of international renown, curated by Luigi Politano. The exhibition was made possible with support from the Comitato Nazionale per le celebrazioni dei 700 anni dalla morte di Dante Alighieri. The project was organized by Associazione Libreria in Viaggio, in collaboration with Libreria del Viaggiatore, Round Robin Editrice, and Museo del Fumetto Cosenza.



E l'altre stelle by Luca Ralli



I tre specchi by Anna Cercignano



La lonza
by La Tram



Specchio
by Mattia Ammirati



La prima terzina
by Davide Toffolo



L'ora degli amanti
by Michela Di Cecio

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JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE

The *Italian American Review* features scholarly articles about Italian American history and culture, as well as other aspects of the Italian diaspora. The journal embraces a wide range of professional concerns and theoretical orientations in the social sciences and cultural studies. The *Italian American Review* publishes book, film, and digital media reviews and is currently accepting article submissions.

For more information, go to
calandrainstitute.org.
Under the Publications menu,
click on *Italian American Review*.



ARTICLES

The Whitening of an Italian (American) Sheik: Performing Race and Gender in Rudolph Valentino's *Sheik* Films
TATIANA PETROVICH NJEGOSH

The Effects of Ethnic Identification on the Collegiate Experience of Italian Americans: A Qualitative Study
SUSAN M. ANTONELLI

NOTES

Remembering Robert Viscusi: Erudition, Largesse, Beneficence
ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI

Ernest Cuneo, the Forgotten Brain Truster
SALVATORE J. LAGUMINA

BOOK REVIEWS

Global Tarantella: Reinventing Southern Italian Folk Music and Dances (Incoronata Inserra)
FULVIA CARUSO

Little Italy in the Great War: Philadelphia's Italians on the Battlefield and Home Front (Richard N. Juliani)
CHRISTOPHER CAPOZZOLA

Sense of Origins: A Study of New York's Young Italian Americans (Rosemary Serra)
DOUGLAS HARTMANN

The Fishing Net and the Spider Web: Mediterranean Imaginaries and the Making of Italians (Claudio Fogu)
Italy's Sea: Empire and Nation in the Mediterranean, 1895–1945 (Valerie McGuire)
KONSTANTINA ZANOU

Tony Soprano's America: Gangsters, Guns, and Money (M. Keith Booker and Isra Daraiseh)
FRANCO RICCI

Italians in Australia: History, Memory, Identity (Francesco Ricatti)
SIMONE BATTISTON

FILM REVIEWS

America's Last Little Italy: The Hill (Joseph Puleo)
JEROME KRASE

DIGITAL MEDIA REVIEW

Una Storia Segreta (Lawrence DiStasi, Project Director)
JESSICA LEE