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### Editor Bios

**Nicoletta Marini-Maio** is Associate Professor of Italian and Film Studies at Dickinson College. She is the recipient of the 2013-2014 Andrew W. Mellon Humanities Forum Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania for her research on the representations of the Moro Affair in film and theater. She is the author of *A Very Seductive Body Politic: Silvio Berlusconi in Cinema* (Milan: Mimesis, 2015) and co-editor and co-translator of *Body of State: A Nation Divided* (Fairleigh-Dickinson, 2011). Her publications include articles and essays on the *years of lead* (1970s), coming-of-age film, auteur cinema, and two pedagogical volumes. She is currently completing a study on *Decamerotici* and, with Ellen Nerenberg, she is co-author and co-principal investigator of *La Nazione Winx: Coltivare la futura consumista* (forthcoming, Rubbettino Editore, 2020). She is co-founder and principal Editor of *g/s/i*.

**Paola Bonifazio** is Associate Professor of Italian at the University of Texas at Austin. In 2011-12, she was a National Endowment for the Humanities/Andrew Mellon Rome Prize Fellow at the American Academy in Rome. Her research interests focus on Italian cinema, including documentary, film theory and history, gender studies, and feminist and postfeminist theories. She is currently working on a book manuscript on the culture of the *fotoromanzo*. Her book *Schooling in Modernity: The Politics of Sponsored Films in Postwar Italy* (University of Toronto Press, 2014) explores short film productions sponsored by state and non-state agencies to promote modernization and industry, and to govern the Italian people's conduct.

**Ellen Nerenberg** is Hollis Professor of Romance Languages & Literatures at Wesleyan University. With *Prison Terms: Representing Confinement During and After Italian Fascism* (University of Toronto Press, 2001), winner of the Howard S. Marraro Prize from the Modern Language Association, she is also author of *Murder Made in Italy: Homicide, Media, and Contemporary Italian Culture* (Indiana University Press, 2012). Her research interests include feminism and postfeminism in Italian and global comparative contexts, television seriality, and screen studies more generally. At present, she is co-author, with Nicoletta Marini-Maio, of *La Nazione Winx: Coltivare la futura consumista* (forthcoming, Rubbettino Editore, 2020). She is co-founder of *g/s/i* and Editor of the *Open Contributions* and *Continuing Discussions* sections.

**Keywords:** queer, feminism, masculinities, motherhood, fotoromanzi, reproduction

**Abstract:** Nicoletta Marini-Maio announces the topic and guest editors of the Themed Section. Paola Bonifazio presents the rationale of the Invited Perspectives. Ellen Nerenberg presents the Open Contributions and introduces the new section, Continuing Discussions, which hosts informed voices on themes developed in previous issues of *g/s/i*.

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This themed issue, titled “Queer Italian Cultures,” originated from a proposal we received from the Queer Italia Network, or Queer Italia Rete (QuIR), a project created and run by Charlotte Ross, Senior Lecturer in Italian Studies at the University of Birmingham; SA Smythe, poet, translator, and scholar of Black European Literary & Cultural Studies, Contemporary Mediterranean Studies, and Black Trans Poetics; and Julia Heim, instructor of Film and Media Studies at SUNY Purchase College, and communications fellow at the Bernard L. Schwartz Institute of Baruch. In the founders’ words, the QuIR project aims at building “an international network of scholars, activists, cultural practitioners, and artists who engage meaningfully with queer sexualities, cultures, scholarship, and politics in Italy, and establish dialogues and collaborations between academics and those working outside of academia.”<sup>1</sup> With funds from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), since its foundation in 2016 the QuIR has been very active in organizing workshops, conferences, and events in Italy, the US, and the UK.

The Editors of *g/s/i* responded with enthusiasm to the QuIR’s call for meaningful collaborations. *g/s/i* centers on publishing research on gendered identities and the ways they intersect with and produce Italian politics, culture, and society by way of a variety of cultural productions, discourses, and practices spanning historical, social, and geopolitical boundaries. In this particular moment, when oppressive policies are being (re)enacted and violent discourses and social practices against non-normative individuals have become the new standard in Italy, in the US, and in other western countries, we are proud to share a suitable venue and our resources with the QuIR project. Charlotte Ross, SA Smythe, and Julia Heim are Guest Editors of this issue’s Themed Section as well as our partners in a collaborative effort that, for those of us at *g/s/i*, also validates our feminist ethos. Participating in the coordination of the peer review and authors’ revision processes has been exhilarating. We are grateful to the authors for their innovative work and the peer reviewers for their rigorous as well generous professional feedback.

With this Themed issue, we join the QuIR project team in denouncing the Italian government’s pernicious attempts to reestablish discriminatory and marginalizing policies with the aim to “escludere coloro che non rientrano nella costruzione di persone italiane come necessariamente bianche, cisgender, cristiane ed eterosessuali” (exclude those who don’t fit with understandings of Italians as necessarily white, cisgender, Christian and heterosexual).<sup>2</sup> We are glad that through projects like the *g/s/i* issue on “Queer Italian Cultures,” we can support and give more visibility to a transnational dialogue that is more important than ever.

Editorial, Invited Perspectives  
PAOLA BONIFAZIO

In this issue, Invited Perspectives brings together contributions that are pertinent to the current Themed Section and others that advance the conversation opened by the 2018 theme of maternity, fertility, and reproduction.

The first three articles included are relevant to the broad field of Queer Italian Studies, speaking of current events, cultural productions and intellectual encounters that are happening today

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<sup>1</sup> See “Queer Italia Network,” accessed August 1, 2019, <https://queeritalia.com>.

<sup>2</sup> “Lettera aperta” (Open Letter) to the Italian government published in *Il Manifesto* in 2018 and in “Queer Italian Network,” accessed August 1, 2019, <https://queeritalia.com/open-letter/>.

in Italy, in a transnational framework. Egon Botteghi's "Metastasio per trans" is written from a personal perspective, in light of the author's own experience in theatrical performances, but also rigorously draws from scholarly research on the "musicians" (a euphemism used for the castrated singers). Botteghi's analysis of past and present texts and performances traces a genealogy of the "musicians" repertoire from the late sixteenth century to today. In Botteghi's view, by singing Metastasio's poems on the tunes of baroque composers with their own trans voice, trans persons can experience a moment of re-appropriation, as the musicians repertoire turns into a kind of lingua franca for trans experiences.

A second article consists of an interview between Queer and Translation Studies scholar Michela Baldo and Stefania Arcara and Deborah Ardilli, the co-translators and co-editors of *Trilogia SCUM* (2017), the complete works by radical lesbian feminist Valerie Solanas. Through their conversation, Baldo, Arcara, and Ardilli highlight the performative aspects of this project translation, both in the sense of the connections that it has created between the editors and other individuals (artists and activists), and in terms of its importance for current Italian feminisms. In this respect, Ardilli and Arcara's edited translation of Solanas' pieces (including the original uncensored version of the 1967 *SCUM Manifesto*) aims at reconstituting the legitimacy of the author as a feminist writer, a title of which she had been stripped by those who manipulated and discarded her work in the past.

Finally, Alessandra Montalbano's illustrated essay is a vivid first-hand account of the events that took place on the last weekend of March 2019 in Verona, where the local branch of the international feminist movement *Non Una Di Meno* (NUDM) had organized a three-day mobilization titled *Verona Città Transfemminista* (Verona, Trans-Feminist City) at the same time of (and in opposition to) the *XIII World Congress of Families* (WCF), a designated hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) for its anti-LGBT ideology. Montalbano's analysis of the events draws from her conversation with Laura Sebastio, one of the local organizers of *Verona Città Transfemminista*, while reconstructing the context (legal, cultural, and political) within which the largest demonstration that Verona had ever seen becomes, in her view, the visible evidence of an historical moment for feminism, both in Italy and in the world.

Two articles expand on the Invited Section in the 2018 issue. In "Raccontare una maternità diversa," Italian documentary filmmaker Rossella Schillaci reflects on her experience inside a special block within Turin, Italy's jail, where convicted mothers can choose to have their children living with them in a cell until they are three years old. Conceived, researched and filmed soon after Schillaci had her own child, *Ninna nanna prigioniera* (2016) challenges our preconceived notions of both motherhood and childhood, while exposing the dramatic and violent reality of lives behind bars.

Albeit radically different in its approach, the essay "Maternità, relazione, vulnerabilità: Una prospettiva filosofica" by Anna Argirò questions (like Schillaci's first person account) the meaning of motherhood, in this case, as a political, ethical, as well as existential paradigm. Argirò begins with an overview of contemporary feminist philosophies and their approaches to subjectivity to address motherhood as a philosophical category. Ultimately, in light of Italian feminist thought, Adriana Cavarero's in particular, Argirò emphasizes the relational aspect of motherhood and argues that by freeing the concept from the reproductive function we can begin to reshape our understanding of the feminine subject. Both Schillaci's and Argirò's contributions offer valuable insights on the cultural and social as well as theoretical dilemmas that emerge once maternity is confronted with (or emancipated from, according to Argirò) its biological status, and worked through to highlight its relevance vis-à-vis the human condition.

One last article exceeds, so to speak, the boundaries of the themed sections (past and present). Titled "Fare fotoromanzi," this interview with Francesca Giombini, screenwriter and authors of *fotoromanzi*, bridges my own scholarly account of these media productions with the point of view of a professional in their business. Our goal is not only to bring attention to an area of Italian culture that,

with only few exceptions, has been dismissed or trashed on the basis of cultural and gender hierarchies. In addition, we hope to demonstrate the relevance of perspectives outside of academia to cultural analyses that are meant to be both scholarly rigorous and aimed at a wide audience.

Editorial, Open Section and Continuing Discussions

ELLEN NERENBERG

The Open Section of *g/s/i* provides space for submissions that are not linked to the stated theme of the current issue but which help enact the journal's mission of presenting scholarship about gendered identities and the ways they intersect with and produce Italian politics, culture, and society. Like essays published in the Themed Section and Continuing Discussions, those featured in the Open Section have also undergone a double-blind review process. The first of this issue's two articles in the Open Section is Paola D'Amora's "Italian Office Workers from Comedy Italian Style to Ugo Fantozzi: A Gendered Perspective." Here D'Amora takes as her subject the *habitus* and *habitat* of masculinities as they are presented in a corpus of films dating from the late 1950s and the 1970s. As she explores cinematic constructions of "successful" and "inept" masculinities, D'Amora expands scholarship on the visualization of Italian masculinities across two discrete historical periods. In the second offering of the Open Section in this issue, Ioana Raluca Larco examines the intersections of gender, agency, and embodiment in Clara Sereni's 1987 novel, *Casalinghitudine*. How do food, nourishment, and perceptions of the body that are both "healthy" and "unhealthy" manifest in Sereni's novel? How do the novel's formal choices inform the intersections between embodiment, gender, affiliation. These are some of the questions that Raluca Larco's meditates upon.

Christopher Atwood's essay, "Meglio fascista che frocio: Denouncing the National Family in Modern Italy," bridges the theme from *g/s/I* 5 (2018), "Reproduction, Fertility, and Parenthood: The Italian Case" and the theme of the current issue. How rhetorics of Italy's far right, as espoused by Alessandra Mussolini, provide Atwood with the opportunity to examines anxieties over reproductivity and queer and immigrant bodies, where the former are vilified for inclinations toward non-reproductivity and the latter criticized for a perceived "over" productivity.