

Volume 3, Issue 2

Introduction

Open Theme

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Californian Italian Studies is published annually in two issues. Issue 1 has a theme announced in a call on the journal's homepage. Issue 2 is open theme and invites submissions of articles, essays, interviews, translations, responses to previous issues, or other scholarly products on any Italy-related topic which meet one or more of the general criteria laid down for any contribution to the journal. These, as defined in *CIS*'s charter (see the clickable menu in the left-hand column of the journal's homepage), are: interdisciplinarity, comparativity, and criticality.

The first section of the present Issue 2 includes three peer-reviewed essays on post-War engagement with labor, film production, and experimental architecture. Stefano Agnoletto on "Trade Unions and the Welfare State in Italy" explains the Italian "Fourth Way" to the post-War welfare state. Agnoletto focuses on the Italian trade unions' experience after World War II (1945-1960) and the debate around the welfare state by the Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions') (CISL) and its Patronato (trade union aid society), the Istituto Nazionale di Assistenza Sociale (National Institute of Social Assistance) (INAS). Regina Longo examines Marshall Plan films produced in Italy (1948-1955) in their formal, rhetorical, and aesthetic continuities to pre-War Italian films as well as the post-War films' production personnel and histories. Longo's study of Marshall Plan films reveals the links between the networks of filmmakers and capital for state-sponsored film production and propaganda in Italy at the beginning of the Cold War. Amit Wolf studies the Florentine-created, experimentalist architectural groups Superstudio and Archizoom and their critiques of architecture and visual culture called *discorsi per immagini* from 1968 to 1973. Wolf emphasizes their shifting political, formal, and technical positions in an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, and an assessment of what remains relevant today. All three essays engage with ideas and practices of distinctive Italian contributions to post-War politics and culture.

Volume 3, Issue 2 also includes for the first time responses to the previous theme issue. Randolph Starn, co-editor of Volume 2, Issue 1: Italian Futures, introduces two comments on Paul Ginsborg's challenging book, *Salviamo l'Italia* (2010) and the International Video Roundtable discussion on it. Starn reminds us of the context of Ginsborg's book in terms of the 150th anniversary of the Risorgimento and its reception. Recasting and contesting the Risorgimento, as Starn writes, "raises profound questions for understanding national identity and the nation-state, and forces us to come to terms with the relationship between Italy's pasts, presents, and futures." Raymond Grew embraces the idea of "building a movement of civic engagement" that requires not only recovering the positive aspects of the Risorgimento's history and applying a broader, comparative understanding of Italian affairs, but also recognizes the need for the more neglected and difficult tasks of opening a serious engagement with the place of the Church, accepting a more internationalist perspective, coming to grips with the Fascist past, restoring Italian arts and culture to a prominent place, and paying attention to the environment and the natural, archeological, and artistic national patrimony. Norma Bouchard summarizes Ginsborg's argument and emphasizes the weaknesses in his vision, especially as it leaves out

contemporary Italian realities as a “globalized nation” transformed by trans-national and cross-cultural currents. Her concluding quotation from Vincenzo Consolo’s short story, “Porto Venezia,” on the stretch of street, the Corso Buenos Aires, outside the old city gate in Milan, moves us beyond the streets of the *centro storico* to include the sidewalk culture of Milanese immigrants from Eritrean, Arab, Tunisian, Egyptian, Moroccan, Senegalese, and Philippine backgrounds in the new “globalized” Italy and to make comparisons between them and Italian emigrants to Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Each volume of *CIS* has a specific closing date for submissions, for Volume 4: Italian Sound, this is February 1, 2013; for Volume 5: The Sacred in Italian Culture: Forms and Practices, this is February 1, 2014. Items falling under the “Open Theme” rubric may be submitted at any time and will, if accepted for publication, appear in the issue whose closing date they immediately precede. We also welcome submissions that pick up or in some way respond to themes treated in earlier volumes, as well as to specific essays and other contributions published in those issues.