

Scholars' Biographies

MARTINA DI FLORIO is a Lecturer of Italian Studies at Trinity College, in Hartford, Connecticut. She holds a degree in Classics from the University of Bologna (Italy) and a PhD in Italian Studies from the University of Connecticut. She has frequently taught courses on Dante, whose images, perspectives, and symbolism persistently continues to inform all her classes. Her articles appeared in *Di generazione in generazione: una storia con le donne per la famiglia e la società* (2006); *Nemla Italian Studies* (2009–2010); *L'Altro e l'Altrove nella cultura italiana* (2011), and in *Voices in Italian Americana* (2014—with R.G. Caponetto). She is co-author, with Giusy Di Filippo, of *Migrazioni contemporanee. Testi e Contesti* (Farinelli, 2017).

SONIA FANUCCHI is a Lecturer in the Department of English at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She has a long-standing passion for Dante and the ways in which this text has been mediated through various contexts, which she has explored in her research in Victorian Medievalism and anti-Catholicism, including her MA on Dantesque figurations in Dickens and her PhD entitled, *Realism and Ritual in the rhetoric of fiction: anti-theatricality and anti-Catholicism in Bronte, Newman and Dickens*. Her interest in Dante has also inspired various pedagogical projects, including a popular course at second year level which led to the publication of a 2013 article published in *English Academy Review* and entitled, *Conversations among the Living Dead: Counterpoint in Action in the English Curriculum*. Her most recent article entitled, *Re-membering history: allegory as sacrament in Inferno's Prologue scene* is due to be published in

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the latest edition of *Religion and Literature* and explores her growing interest in Dante's language of memory and particularly how this affects our perception of his allegory, a line of thought that has inspired a further research project on *Inferno*, on which she is currently working. In addition to her own research, Sonia remains dedicated to developing a South African community of young Dante scholars and enthusiasts and in nurturing the Dante Society of South Africa. To this end, she is pursuing connections between South African writers and the *Commedia*, particularly in the context of the fascination with Medievalism at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

VICTOR HOULISTON is Professor Emeritus of English Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He graduated from Magdalen College, Oxford in 1986, with a doctoral thesis on the Elizabethan physician and man of letters Thomas Moffet, and has subsequently published widely on Shakespeare, Donne and the early English Jesuits, especially Robert Persons. His monograph *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons's Jesuit Polemic* was published in 2007. He is currently directing the Persons correspondence project, with the first volume of a multi-lingual edition appearing in 2017, a second volume under review and a third in preparation. He is also leading a team engaged in producing a translation of Persons's Latin works.

FRANCO MASCIANDARO, Professor Emeritus, Italian Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Connecticut, is the author of *La problematica del tempo nella "Commedia"* (Longo Editore, 1976), *Dante as Dramatist: The Myth of the Earthly Paradise and Tragic Vision* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), *La conoscenza viva: Letture fenomenologiche da Dante a Machiavelli* (Longo Editore, 1998), *The Stranger as Friend: The Poetics of Friendship in Homer, Dante, and Boccaccio* (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2013), and co-author, with Peter Booth, of *Dante / Hafiz: Readings on the Sigh, the Gaze, and Beauty*, edited by Nicola Masciandaro and Oyku Tekten (Pinsapo Press, 2017).

MARCO MEDUGNO currently teaches as a Associate Lecturer at Newcastle University (UK). After the bachelor's and master's degrees in Modern Literature and Philology at the University of Padua, he earned a 1st Level master's degree in Intercultural Studies with a thesis on Italian postcolonial literature. In 2020, he received his PhD at Newcastle University, with the thesis *Building Multilocal Belongings: A Comparative Study of Somali Postcolonial Novels in English and Italian*. He published articles in *From the European South*, *Italian Studies in Southern Africa* and *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, and organized the Newcastle Postcolonial Research Group (NPRG) meetings at his university.

CHRIS THURMAN is a Professor of English and Director of the Tsikinya-Chaka Centre in the School of Literature, Language and Media at the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, South Africa). He is also an arts columnist for *Business Day*. Thurman is the editor of *South African Essays on 'Universal'*

Shakespeare (2014), *Sport versus Art: A South African Contest* (2010) and twelve volumes of the journal *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*. His other books are the monograph *Guy Butler: Reassessing a South African Literary Life* (2010); *Text Bites*, an anthology for high schools (2009); and two collections of arts journalism, *At Large: Reviewing the Arts in South Africa* (2012) and *Still at Large: Dispatches from South Africa's Frontiers of Politics and Art* (2017). As President of the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa, he was founder of the online platform Shakespeare ZA.

GIOVANNA TRENTO holds PhD *magna cum laude* of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France (Social Anthropology) and a PhD of the Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Naples, Italy (African Studies). She also holds a Master in Literature *magna cum laude* of the Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza", Rome, Italy (History of Contemporary Art, with a thesis on Contemporary African Art). She received a Ford Foundation Post-doctoral Fellowship (Programme on the Study of the Humanities in Africa) issued by the Centre for Humanities Research, University of the Western Cape, South Africa. She has been a Lecturer in Italian Studies, School of Languages and Literatures, University of Cape Town, South Africa. She is currently an independent scholar based in Rome, Italy. Among others, she authored a book on Pier Paolo Pasolini's constructions and representations of Africa and the Pan-South: *Pasolini e l'Africa, l'Africa di Pasolini. Panmeridionalismo e rappresentazioni dell'Africa postcoloniale* (2010). She conducted field researches in Ethiopia among the descendents of Italian soldiers, during Italian occupation and colonialism in the Horn of Africa.

ANITA VIRGA is Senior Lecturer in the Italian Department at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut in 2015. She has published various book chapters and articles on Italian cinema and literature in academic journals such as *Italian Studies*, *Italian Studies in Southern Africa*, *Spunti e ricerche*, *Lingue e Letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente*, *Tydskrif vir letterkunde*, *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, *English Studies in Africa* and *Italica*, and a monograph titled *Subalternità siciliana nella scrittura di Luigi Capuana e Giovanni Verga* (Firenze University Press, 2017). She was the President of Association of Professional Italianists (API in South Africa) from 2015 to 2017 and she has been the Editor of the journal *Italian Studies in Southern Africa* since 2018. Her research interests are postcolonialism, migration, black identity, blended learning, Dante in Africa, Sicilian literature and cinema, Luigi Capuana and Giovanni Verga.

