

Linguae &

Rivista di lingue e culture moderne

1
2019

Il ruolo e le sfide dei Centri Linguistici universitari – Parte prima *a cura di Enrica Rossi*

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In base alla classificazione dell'ANVUR, *Linguae &* è collocata
nella classe A per tutti i settori dell'Area 10.

Questo fascicolo di *Linguae &* è finanziato con fondi del Centro Linguistico d'Ateneo
dell'Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo.

Il CLA dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II: un racconto

Istituito nel 2001 con l'obiettivo di "contribuire allo sviluppo del plurilinguismo e alla promozione dell'apprendimento delle lingue moderne, ivi compreso l'italiano quale seconda lingua o lingua straniera", il Centro Linguistico di Ateneo dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II negli anni ha progressivamente ampliato le sue competenze e la sua offerta formativa. Nella società multietnica in cui viviamo la crescente internazionalizzazione del mercato del lavoro e la trasformazione del tessuto sociale, che registra una continua immissione di soggetti provenienti da realtà linguistiche e culturali diverse dalla nostra, hanno creato nuovi bisogni che chiamano in causa l'Università come la Scuola. Con l'obiettivo di rispondere alle domande della Comunità Europea e non solo, il CLA ha così promosso e incrementato corsi, saltuariamente aperti anche a utenti esterni, destinati alle certificazioni internazionali, con il conseguente sviluppo di convenzioni con i principali enti certificatori stranieri e italiani.

Proprio nell'ottica di favorire il processo di internazionalizzazione dell'Ateneo, attività in lingua inglese e francese sono state riservate al personale tecnico, sprovvisto in molti casi di un'adeguata preparazione nelle lingue straniere; attività che si sono aggiunte alle normali esercitazioni linguistiche destinate agli iscritti di tutti i corsi di studio in quello che rimane l'impegno principale dei madrelingua (in numero di 25) afferenti alla struttura. Con la sola eccezione del Corso di Studi in Lingue, gli esami si svolgono in modalità *online* presso la sede principale del CLA.

Al contempo, pacchetti di ore in lingua inglese sono previsti per un numero rilevante di docenti che, con sempre maggiore frequenza, sono impegnati in dipartimenti e scuole nell'insegnamento della loro disciplina nella

lingua *passe-partout* per eccellenza. Agli stessi viene offerta una significativa assistenza nella revisione e traduzione di testi in lingua straniera, destinati a convegni, seminari, conferenze.

Il CLA ha poi, da anni, al suo attivo una consistente produzione editoriale con la pubblicazione dei *Quaderni del CLA*, nella consapevolezza di quanto l'esercizio didattico implichi ineludibilmente ricerca e riflessione teorica. I *Quaderni*, pubblicati da case editrici quali Carocci, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Guida editori, sono dedicati alle tematiche delle lingue straniere, in particolare della didattica della lingua italiana come Lingua2/LinguaS, e sintetizzano i lavori della Scuola di Formazione nata nel 2008 e imperniata su una tematica che necessariamente coinvolge le istituzioni proposte alla formazione come la Scuola e l'Università; ad esse spetta il compito di educare alla cittadinanza attiva un numero sempre maggiore di soggetti alla ricerca di migliori possibilità esistenziali, per i quali la conoscenza della nostra lingua rappresenta il primo lasciapassare per una possibile integrazione. In quest'ottica, particolare significato ha assunto il corso di italiano destinato alle detenute straniere della casa circondariale di Pozzuoli, organizzato insieme con il Provveditorato Scolastico per gli Istituti di Pena.

Molti sono i seminari e i corsi imperniati sul tema in questione che hanno registrato una larga partecipazione di docenti della scuola, di ogni ordine e grado. Gli stessi sono abituali utenti della Biblioteca di Italiano L2/LS, che ha sede presso il CLA e destinata esclusivamente a questa disciplina. Alle attività della Biblioteca, istituita nel 2012, si collega la periodica recensione dei testi acquisiti, pubblicate sul sito del Centro che è collegato con la BRAU, la Biblioteca di Ateneo di Area Umanistica.

Le nuove disposizioni ministeriali che hanno istituito l'Italiano L2/LS come nuova classe concorsuale, hanno incrementato la domanda di corsi Ditals destinati all'abilitazione nella materia suddetta, a cui si è risposto attraverso la convenzione con l'Università per Stranieri di Siena, già in essere da anni. In contemporanea è aumentata la richiesta di certificazione della conoscenza della lingua italiana da parte di soggetti diversi e di enti che li rappresentano; un tipo di attività svolta insieme con l'Università di Roma 3, a cui sta per aggiungersi anche l'Università di Perugia.

Estensione dell'offerta didattica e sviluppo teorico seguono percorsi convergenti nella strategia culturale della struttura che nell'anno 2017, in collaborazione con l'Università per Stranieri di Siena, ha istituito il "Master Interuniversitario di I livello – Didattica dell'Italiano L2 in contesto migratorio. Nuove competenze per nuove professioni". Il Master, tuttora in corso,

ha l'obiettivo di fornire di adeguati strumenti teorici e pratici non solo chi intraprenda la carriera di docente ma anche coloro che, pur operando da anni come insegnanti, non abbiano ricevuto una formazione in questo settore.

Il Centro si muove nella direzione indicata rispondendo alle finalità dell'Ateneo per la cosiddetta "terza missione", rivolta al territorio e ai tanti soggetti che vi interagiscono e che grazie alla politica culturale della Federico II partecipano delle numerose iniziative messe in campo per avvicinare la comunità sociale alla realtà universitaria. Da questa particolare angolazione ha avuto un significativo rilievo il Cineforum in lingua originale, gratuito e aperto alla città, che nel 2018 ha celebrato il suo primo decennale. Le proiezioni sono accompagnate da sottotitoli in italiano che si sono rivelati un utile esercizio anche per gli studenti ERASMUS, a cui peraltro sono riservate apposite ore di esercitazione, anche in modalità tandem.

La risposta positiva di tanti operatori della scuola, che hanno assistito alle proiezioni con i loro studenti, ha significato un ulteriore ciclo destinato esclusivamente agli iscritti delle scuole secondarie che sulle tematiche illustrate dai film lavorano in seguito con i loro insegnanti; gli studenti sono stati impegnati anche nella produzione di cortometraggi da loro stessi girati e presentati nel corso di incontri seminariali, organizzati dal CLA, tra docenti dell'Ateneo, docenti e studenti della scuola.

Al personale scolastico, in collaborazione con gli uffici provinciali e regionali, e altre strutture dell'Ateneo come il SINAPSI, sono offerti, con frequenza periodica e a titolo gratuito, *workshops* imperniati su aspetti tuttora problematici del mondo della formazione, come le modalità di studio per studenti dislessici – una realtà ancora poco affrontata e che può condizionare pesantemente il percorso di apprendimento anche universitario – o l'insegnamento di una materia non linguistica in versione CLIL. Su questo aspetto, per molti controverso, si sono espressi in convegni e seminari personale del Ministero della Scuola e dell'Università, insegnanti pro e contro, componenti del CLA impegnati in prima persona in alcuni dei corsi destinati dal Ministero alla formazione CLIL.

Ultimamente il CLA, insieme con la CIA (Commissione per l'Internazionalizzazione di Ateneo), ha prodotto due corsi *online*: uno di lingua inglese di livello B1 e un secondo di livello A1/A2 per l'italiano come L2/LS, destinati agli utenti della Federico II. Tra le recenti iniziative del Centro va infine ricordato un nuovo settore, istituito solo un anno fa e rivolto esclusivamente alla traduzione intesa nei suoi aspetti teorici e pratici come attività professionalizzante.

In conclusione, le attività indicate esprimono la politica culturale del CLA della Federico II che sin dai suoi esordi si è posto l'obiettivo di rispondere al valore aggiuntivo attribuito alle competenze linguistiche in una società in trasformazione, in forme che tengano conto anche dello sviluppo delle lingue di specialità, settoriali o microlingue.

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Reassessing a prolific Victorian writer

STEPHEN KNIGHT, *G.W.M. REYNOLDS AND HIS FICTION: THE MAN WHO OUTSOLD DICKENS*, NEW YORK - LONDON, ROUTLEDGE, 2019, pp. 206.

Stephen Knight has gifted us with yet another passionately researched, brilliantly written inquiry into the realm of popular fictions. Is G.W.M. Reynolds – a name we immediately associate with *The Mysteries of London* (1844-48) – the king of potboilers or a politically motivated social inquirer? A journalist and the author of thirty-six novels, Reynolds is both a radical – who named two of his sons Kossuth Mazzini and Ledru Rollin! – and an overflowing storyteller whose impact on the Victorian imagination this volume reassesses with gusto and critical insight.

As the author underlines, this is the first monograph on Reynolds, whose role in the development of crime fiction has been sadly undervalued. It was high time a full-length study of this author was produced, although the reasons why this critical feat was not accomplished before are all too clear. Discussing such a prolific and multifaceted writer as Reynolds demands uncommon daring, given the sheer amount of time and energy one needs to read all his works, not to mention the wide-ranging, in-depth competence that is demanded to contextualise them effectively. Knight's critical analysis clearly rests on a huge investment in terms of research, and on the author's lifelong experience as a leading crime fiction scholar, or rather as *the* leading crime fiction scholar.

Little criticism on Reynolds is available. Before Knight's present volume, the only book-length study of the author was *G.W.M. Reynolds: Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Politics, and the Press* (2008), a collection of essays written

under the expert guidance of editors Anne Humpherys and Louis James. Various short studies, however, have subsequently appeared, including Louis James's "From Egan To Reynolds: The shaping of urban 'Mysteries' in England and France, 1821-48" (2010), a chapter on Reynolds in Knight's own *The Mysteries of the Cities* (2012) and Mary L. Shannon's "Spoken Word and Printed Page: G.W.M. Reynolds and 'The Charing-Cross Revolution', 1848" (2014). Reynolds also plays a title role in Shannon's more recent *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew on Wellington Street: The Print Culture of a Victorian Street* (2015). We are witnessing a resurgence of interest in a writer whose multifarious activities failed to gain him a canonical status, although his name soon crystallised into a trademark, as shown by his launching into publishing ventures such as *Reynolds's Magazine*, *Reynolds's Political Instructor* and *Reynolds's Newspaper*, which was widely read – under a cluster of related titles – until 1962.

What attracted Knight to this 'excessive' author is seemingly his ability to combine an overflowing talent for fabulation with an active political commitment, against the backdrop of the period surrounding 1848, the year of revolutions. Knight seems also to have been intrigued by Reynold's exploration of city crime through a narrative formula that does not rely on the detective "as a means of exposition and resolution" (xiii). Like his contemporaries Eugène Sue and Paul Féval, Reynolds was adept at delving into the multiple layers of the urban setting, sensationalising them through a multi-plot storyline. As Knight remarks, Reynolds not only

develops Sue's potent idea of charting the tensions of the new megacity [...] but adds to it an explicit sense of the mistreatment of ordinary people both by the upper and professional classes and through modern social systems and institutions – a much more specific and radical account than the sentimentally moralized narratives that made Dickens prestigious among the influential and inherently conservative. (36)

These lines encapsulate Knight's intention to reassess Reynold's fictional career, shedding light on his radicalism, which distinguishes him from both Sue and Dickens, and which Knight sees as partly being the cause of his canonical marginality.

Although city mysteries of criminal import are central to this critical inquiry, Knight's investigation into Reynolds's works comes to include the realm of fantasy, which the author explored in novels such as *Faust* (1845-46), *Wagner the Wehr-Wolf* (1846-47), and *The Necromancer* (1851-52), all exploiting the sulphurous theme of demonic possession. *Wagner* opens in

sixteenth-century Germany with a line – “The night was dark and tempestuous” – that almost parodically recreates Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s notorious opening of *Paul Clifford* (1830): “It was a dark and stormy night”. This gestures towards Reynolds’s playful appropriation of previous writing, as best exemplified by his *Pickwick Abroad* (1837-38), a trans-authorial sequel that relocates Dickens’s characters in France.

Exceptionally free from literary inhibitions, as proved by his erotically charged scenes, Reynolds is vibrant with narrative energy, which translates into a staccato plot rhythm. *Wagner* is a case in point. After opening in Germany’s Black Forest, with scenes of grandiose darkness that echo P.B. Shelley’s juvenile romances, the novel’s first chapter suddenly takes us to the deathbed of a Florentine nobleman, at the suitably Gothic time of midnight. The melodramatic imagination – as Peter Brooks called it in a famous book – acknowledges no boundaries. This freedom of movement is a recurring characteristic of Reynolds’s narratives, including *The Mysteries of London* – which again takes us to Italy – and *The Coral Island* (1848-49), whose action ranges from Naples to the Pacific. This tendency to embrace a wide temporal and spatial scope, this easiness in dealing with distance (both in historical and in exotic terms) interestingly resonates with the present age of global novels, confirming the need to reassess a writer who has been simplistically confined to the realm of the popular.

The Days of Hogarth (1847-48), which was significantly subtitled *The Mysteries of Old London* – likewise exemplifies the imaginative freedom and daring of an author whose extraordinary narrative powers entwined and synergised with his social and political concerns. Hogarth’s four cycles – *A Harlot’s Progress*, *A Rake’s Progress*, *Marriage à la Mode* and *Industry and Idleness* – are woven by Reynolds into a huge social fresco through the introduction of a framing narrative, a central figure who interacts with Hogarth’s characters. In contrast with the above-mentioned romances, *The Days of Hogarth* testifies to the realistic side of Reynolds’s historical imagination, his attempt to historicise both the topography and institutions of London, which also transpires from *The Mysteries of the Court of London* (1848-56). Spanning the period between the 1790s and 1820s, this text dares to shed lurid light on the misdeeds of the royal family itself, focusing on the Prince Regent, George III’s first son, who Reynolds dubs as a “Leviathan of voluptuousness, profligacy, and scoundrelism” (99). Other aristocratic forms of misbehaviour are no less voluptuously brought to light in a book that also encompasses the dark side of the middle classes and even professional criminals.

Encyclopaedic, but also ethically-driven, in his zest for story-telling, Reynolds subsequently focused on the plight of ordinary workers. *The Seamstress* (1850) inaugurates the season of Reynolds's so-called *memoirs* – *Mary Price* (1851-52), *Joseph Wilmot* (1853-55), *Rosa Lambert* (1853-54) and *Ellen Percy* (1855-57), where the repeated focus on women effectively combines with social concerns. After penning a few less politically engaged novels, in his last fifteen years Reynolds devoted himself solely to journalism. While some regard this swerve from fiction as a sign of achieved financial security, Knight wonders whether it should also be related to the death of the author's wife, who "probably did much careful editing on his rapidly produced but well-finished texts" (192). I like to mention this because it sheds light on Reynolds's journalistic attitude to authorship as teamwork.

Throughout the pages of *G.W.M. Reynolds and His Fiction*, Knight's critically insightful, theoretically wise and wisely witty prose makes once again an engaging read, also thanks to the accompanying illustrations from Reynolds's original editions. The critic's generous references to plot details, moreover, contribute to qualify this precious study as a compass that enables us to approach Reynolds's dauntingly voluminous and scantily mapped work with more confidence and efficacy. There is solid ground to hope that this book will prove a stepping stone to further critical forays into the imagination of a writer whose serial creativity interestingly resonates with the narrative dynamics of present-day mass genres.

Maurizio Ascari

Alice and Pinocchio from Local to Glocal

LAURA TOSI (WITH PETER HUNT), *THE FABULOUS JOURNEYS OF ALICE AND PINOCCHIO: EXPLORING THEIR PARALLEL WORLDS*, JEFFERSON, NC: MCFARLAND & CO, 2018, pp. x + 227.

In the age of Brexit, a comparative study of Alice and Pinocchio is doubly welcome because of the dialogue it creates between two classics for children that are deemed both universal and representative of national character. A delight to read, thanks to the authors' cleverly insightful critical commentaries and to the sparkling quality of their writing, *The Fabulous Journeys of*

Alice and Pinocchio is rooted in the lifetime of research Laura Tosi and Peter Hunt have devoted to children's and young adults' literature, not to mention a previous playful foray into the deconstruction of national stereotypes (*As Fit as a Fish: The English and Italians Revealed*, 2015).

The book relies on the theoretical framework of imagology, which investigates the formation and dissemination of national stereotypes through discourses and representations, notably within the field of literature. Juxtaposing Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) with Carlo Collodi's *Le avventure di Pinocchio* (1883) is a fascinating and rewarding critical enterprise, first and foremost because of the light it sheds on the Victorian period and on post-unified Italy, a climactic time in terms of nation-making. This study expands on the socio-political context in which Carroll and Collodi – or better, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson and Carlo Lorenzini – moved, delving into the latter's active engagement in the Risorgimento and his subsequent efforts to promote Italianness through children's literature.

As Tosi explains, *The Fabulous Journeys of Alice and Pinocchio* pursues the notion of metamorphosis, as experienced not only by the title characters of these two classics, due to their bodily mutations, which mirror the process of growing, but by the books themselves in their shift from national culture to a transcultural/global reception. Our heroine and hero started travelling very soon, since *Alice* made her appearance in Italy already in 1872, while *Pinocchio* was first translated into English in 1892. What makes a discussion of these seemingly childish, but actually elusive, books through the lens of imagology even more complex is the fact that they “ask the reader to look at their worlds and their respective images of Italianness and Englishness as defamiliarized” (13). The two novels are marked by internal faultlines that problematize their reception. While *Pinocchio* can be regarded as stereotypically Italian in his being “a creature of impulse and passion” (17), his profile is complicated already by its being at one and the same time “a rebel and a conservative” (17), whose social anarchism contrasts with family loyalty. *Alice*, on the other hand, proves poised and self-confident in the face of the wide array of eccentrics she is confronted with, but this inner balance ill matches both her repeated bodily changes and the unreliability of adults. Some of the texts' complexities have been erased in the process of dissemination, as shown by the hugely popular Disney adaptation of *Pinocchio*, which visually reframes the story in central Europe, to the point that many US viewers are not even aware of its Italian origin.

What this study further delves into is the generic dimension of these two novels, which it shows to be rooted in time-honoured genres such as the folk-tale and the fairy-tale, but also to be conducive to the development of fantasy. The pages Tosi devotes to the resurging interest for fairy tales that marked post-unification Italy, as part of the ongoing attempt to create national culture out of regional diversity, are in themselves enlightening. They also set the ground for her subsequent discussion of Collodi's appropriation and subversion of tradition, notably in view of his 1875 translation of Perrault's *Contes* and other fairy tales. As Tosi claims, "Collodi's reworking of Perrault in *Pinocchio* is often ironic and/or parodic" (96) and a similarly disingenuous attitude marks Carroll's relation with tradition, which Tosi defines as "an intricate texture of parody and satire" (100).

The final part of the book is divided into two chapters that pursue divergent critical perspectives. The first focuses on the "portability" (145) of *Pinocchio* and *Alice* – i.e. their ability to travel transtextually, remaining recognisable while also lending themselves to new hybridisations with different characters and settings, as recently shown by a number of Postmodernist texts. Stefano Benni's *La bottiglia magica* (2016), in which the two characters meet, is a case in point, in addition to Angela Carter's and Robert Coover's revisitations of *Alice* and *Pinocchio*, which are discussed in depth in this study. The second chapter goes back to nineteenth-century children's literature, abandoning the galaxy of fantasy in order to address the issue of realism through the parallel development of school stories and adventure stories in Great Britain and Italy. A comparison between Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) and Edmondo De Amicis's *Cuore* (1886) explores these school stories as the first "that, quite transparently, subordinated strategies for pupils' character formation to a superior ideal of their nation's character formation". (168) Some comparative reflections on Emilio Salgari's and G.A. Henty's attitudes to otherness and the empire round up this chapter.

My account of this multifaceted volume would not be complete if I failed to mention what is presented as an appendix: Peter Hunt's "Strange Meeting in Wonder-Tuscany", a charmingly clever piece of creative writing depicting the transnational encounter between *Alice* and *Pinocchio*.

In the space of few pages one can hardly render the intellectually stimulating complexity of this study, in which *Alice* and *Pinocchio* are presented against the backdrop of their time, but also through the negotiations that led to their transformation into global myths. Theoretically sophisticated and

cogently argued, this book is equally engaging, as if Alice and Pinocchio had left their impish trace in the mind of their critics, reminding them – and us – that if we learn by mistakes, as shown by these cautionary tales, we also learn, undoubtedly, by playing...

Maurizio Ascari