

MIRAMAG

A free magazine by Modern Language students

La Sapienza University, Rome



From the editors:

You thought you'd got rid of us, but we're back! With a combination of old and new faces. We are going to take you through a 24-page journey from Russia to Algeria, from Rome to Athens, from theatre to translation and much more.

Fasten your seatbelts and enjoy your flight!

The Editorial Team, MiraMag 13

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http://w3.uniroma1.it/LingueLetterature/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1048%3AAmirafiori-magazine&catid=54&Itemid=107

From Page to Stage

By Sara Morelli

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

A theatre show is not only a performance, but involves work on a play, and requires in-depth knowledge of literature in order to be of artistic value. It is important to understand what the playwright is trying to communicate and choose which aspects of the play you want to emphasize.

Then comes the most difficult part: how to convey your interpretation to the public. This is why actors create different gestures and voices for each character they perform. Actors have to think of everything they do on the stage, how to utter every single word of a play. With a broad knowledge of literature, they are better prepared to act their role. That's why, for those who love acting, studying literature and playing a role are two activities that cannot be separated.

This year I played the role of Portia in *Il Mercante di Venezia*, a production based on Agostino Lombardo's translation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. The Italian production was directed by Giovanni Nardoni and staged at the Ambra alla Garbatella theatre in Rome. I firmly believe that studying literature helped both me and the director, who studied literature at Sapienza University too. After I discovered an essay (in Mariangela Tempera's anthology, *The Merchant of Venice: dal testo alla scena*) that argued that Launcelot is similar to the Italian Harlequin, the director decided to transform him into this Commedia dell'arte character.

Moreover, in the play, there are two really close friends, Antonio and Bassanio. In the Introduction to the ninth edition of his translation of the play, Agostino Lombardo expressed the idea that they were in love, so the director decided to turn their relationship as friends into a relationship as lovers.

Literature also helped me to play the role of Portia. Through my reading of works by

Shakespearian scholars such as Bloom, Lombardo, Tempera and Serpieri, I realized that she has a cunning and persuasive character, and is able to control everything around her, manipulating events to get what she wants. Taking these aspects of her personality into account, I decided to emphasize her sensuality on stage.

When I am on stage, I try to capture my audience by communicating the emotions I feel, and even though this might sound strange, sometimes the best way to do this is to identify with the character you're playing.

If you do this, you will feel that the words you are saying are important, you will want people to understand and remember them, and accordingly, you will use all your energy to communicate with the public.

Playing Portia in this play was my first professional experience. It taught me that Theatre is a jealous lover: you have to dedicate all your energies to it, otherwise you won't ever be satisfied. It is an intense relationship that has to be experienced to the full.

Acting is a way to convey emotions, but also a very important way for actors to acquire self-knowledge and self-confidence: actors must learn to understand their emotions, voices and bodies, and how to put them at the service of their characters.

I spent so many hours creating "my" Portia, that I identified completely with her and, as she is fairly confident, I too felt confident on the stage, even though in real life I am quite shy. Portia, on the other hand, is not afraid of being judged. This is why acting in *Il Mercante di Venezia* made me feel free to do whatever I wanted, unafraid of sounding ridiculous. Not all performances change an actor, but this one changed me because it helped me to realize that I can be confident also in my daily life.

Italian Theatre Reloaded

By Maria Pia Verzillo

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

The lights turn off. Silence in the auditorium. After just a moment, the clear sound of tambourines and drums fills the air, keeping time with music of an unmistakably gypsy genre. On stage, fans and coloured skirts paint the scene: Romani girls are performing a dance, trying to repeat the steps learned. Although they are not precise, the audience greets them with a heartfelt standing ovation.

Only a year ago, a similar scene would have been unthinkable: girls from an ethnic minority, who live in places such as camps for nomads, are now treading the same stage where for decades the most important theatre actors performed and - moreover - they receive applause in the velvet and gold hall as if they were famous artists.

Something has changed here, at Teatro Valle, one of the “temples” of authorial theatre in Rome. This elegant and renowned theatre in the city centre was built in the 18th century and has hosted artists such as Mozart and Pirandello. It is also the oldest theatre in Rome. However, last year its identity was challenged

because of a lack of funds, which led to a group of workers within the fields of theatre and the arts deciding to take the matter into their own hands.

It all started on 14 June 2011 when they occupied the theatre to save it from privatization and to denounce the deteriorating state of Italian culture and politics. Teatro Valle was previously owned and directed by the Ente Teatrale Italiano¹, but the cuts in the most recent State budget led to the suppression of the ETI and to possible privatization of the theatre.

After a few days, those occupying the premises opened the theatre, transforming it into an open space to share innovative art projects “based on

cooperation, on participatory management and on self governance”, as stated on their website.

Since June 2011, Teatro Valle has hosted Italian and international artists such as Dario Fo, the film director Nanni Moretti, the singer Vinicio Capossela, the actor Marco Baliani, the theatre director Peter Stein and many others who have expressed their support for this initiative by offering free performances that were much appreciated by the audience. This is, in my opinion, the main achievement of the occupation: many people who usually would not go to the theatre because of the high cost of tickets are now able to see the best

artists on stage and are now closer to the world of theatre.

But there’s more.

The theatre also hosts workshops, screenings, debates and it is a place in which anyone can propose his or her performance during the weekly open forums organized by its occupants. In these meetings, whoever wishes may not only propose their own initiatives, but also discuss the



Photo by Maria Pia Verzillo, 2012

future of the occupation.

The last step of this journey is the creation of a privately financed foundation. Anyone can become a founding member in the Valle Foundation of the Commons with just ten euros. Furthermore, anyone can contribute online by writing parts of the foundation charter.

But what exactly will the outcome of such a process be? The work is in progress, so, as some people say, the best has yet to come. Stay tuned.

For further information, see:

<http://www.teatrovalleoccupato.it/category/english>

¹ Editor’s note: The ETI was a public body in Italy whose aim was to promote the spread the diffusion of Italian theatre, music and dance.

Remembering Whitney...

By Andrea Scarpino

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

Whitney Houston was one of a kind ... You wait for a face like that, a smile like that, a presence like that and a voice like that for a lifetime.

Clive Davis,
Whitney Houston's mentor and producer

Whitney Houston is a legend and an icon whose success and fame knows no borders or boundaries. She is one of the greatest singers of all time: she sold more than 170 million combined albums, singles and videos worldwide, and won over 411 awards.

I met her once and it was unbelievable. It was May 2010 and she had come to Rome for a concert. I said to myself "I must meet her. I want to be one step away from her", so I went to the airport since I knew that she was coming from Milan that morning.

I was so excited, but also afraid that I wouldn't meet her. I waited for an hour and half, and just when I was losing hope, I saw some people arriving. They were black, and I realized instantly that they were her bodyguards, so she was on her way. The door opened and I saw Krissy, her daughter, her entourage, and finally I saw her. A long black coat, black sunglasses: she really was a diva's diva.

I started filming the scene with my camera but she was pretty annoyed by that, so I stopped immediately. We went outside and I was one metre away from her, then nearer and nearer until I was just one step away! I showed her an LP of her second album *Whitney*, and she said "Give me a pen!" I did as she said and she then signed the autograph you can see in the photo below. I told her that I was going to her concert that night and she said she was happy about that. Then she got into the car and left.

The concert that night was amazing. Her voice was crystal clear and she was vocally in great

shape. I knew I had had the kind of opportunity you only get once in your life; I knew I would never see another Whitney concert.

This article is my personal tribute to her and her voice. A voice so powerful, so clear, so passionate and so intense that made her unique, in every sense of the word; and as she herself said in an interview on MTV's *All Access* (1999): "There will never be another Aretha. There will never be another Barbra. There won't be another Whitney."



Photo by Andrea Scarpino, 2012

Chit Chat Corner

By Aurora Mazzoni

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

As every year, Hollywood's most important award give-aways took place at the Academy Awards, held in Los Angeles, California. But among the many prizes, the most important were those awarded by *MiraMag*, and we're going to celebrate these right now!

Red Carpet

Tradition has it that before these shows, the stars make their way inside the theatre, stepping across the famous red carpet, where they are stopped by journalists who ask them crucial questions such as: "Tell me about your outfit!" or "Do you think you'll take a vacation after all this hard work?" Yeah, well, poor souls, take a break from this life of labour. However, from the red carpet we can learn many Very Important Things, you know.

The first, pretty obviously, is the deep and stable affair between cinema and fashion, which has produced some interesting results: one of these is Gwyneth Paltrow's elfic dress. Arwen couldn't have done better.



Similarly, nobody can deny the affinity between films and fairy tales. The magic of those enchanted universes is often portrayed onscreen. Unfortunately, it seems that sometimes actors can't get back to reality. This is what happened to *Once Upon A Time* Jennifer Morrison, who's clearly experiencing an identity crisis.



MiraMag Awards

The first two categories reward the best achievements in tapestry. But let the winners show us the importance of reinventing objects.

Busy Philipps won in the category **Best Adaptation of a Sofa Cover**.

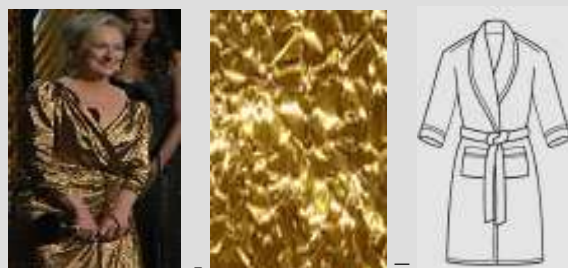


And now, an award which will make all the girls happy. Since the original has already been taken, here's **Best Brad Pitt's Wannabe Evil Twin**. And the award goes to... this guy!



Angelina Jolie won in the **Best Leg** category. A great achievement for America's Next Mom Model!!

Before we end, it is my honour to praise Meryl Streep for the **I've-Just-Come-Out-Of-The-Shower Achievement**. This is something you can't acquire, but it is necessary if you want to succeed in anything in life. Without a bathrobe, how are you supposed to dry yourself and get ready to go out? And this is what Meryl does with astonishing style, with elegance, and mainly with her golden shining bathrobe, which she decided to share with the rest of the world. Touching.



Photos in this article are stills of the Tv Shows: The 84th Annual Academy Awards, The 38th People's Choice Awards, The 18th Screen Actors Guild Awards

Who Wears Dalí's Uniform?

By Annalisa Cioce and Valentina Culla

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

Review of the exhibition:
Dalí: un artista un genio
 Vittoriano Complex, Rome
 9 March - 1 July 2012

Catalan painter Salvador Dalí is well known throughout the world both for his eccentricity and for his ability to draw attention to himself as well as to his art.

His eccentric personality may in fact attract more attention from the general public than his masterpieces do, and since he was well aware of how to exploit his gift, he could be considered to some extent a precursor to Andy Warhol, having mastered the skill of taking advantage of his public.

Dalí embodied the philosophy of surrealism, which allowed him to create a complete turnover of reality, dealing with a dreamy world full of suggestion and merciless realism. His avant-garde perception of the world has become a common heritage, inspiring thousands of people with his insight.

The exhibition, arranged in collaboration with Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, focuses mainly on his relationship with Italy, highlighting this for the first time.

The exhibition is divided into two sections. The first, on the first floor, displays Dalí's paintings, emphasizing the way in which renowned Italian artists of the past, such as Raffaello and Bernini, influenced him. The section on the second floor focuses on the active social life that Dalí had in Italy. Magazines, photos and letters bear witness to his meetings with famous Italian artists of the twentieth last century, such as actress Anna Magnani and director Federico Fellini.

What is perhaps less well-known is that Dalí worked more than once as a set designer in Italy. In 1948, he designed both the sets and costumes for Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, directed by Luchino Visconti, while in 1961 he worked for La Fenice

theatre in Venice. He also contributed to the advertising industry, working with Alessi and Piaggio.

The exhibition displays a wide range of objects, paintings, illustrations and clothes from cinema and theatre, all of which document the painter's many activities in Italy. In our view, however, it would have been interesting if the exhibition had investigated in greater depth the complexity of his personality and artistic genius. But we can imagine that paying homage to a genius as great as Dalí is a rather difficult task.



Photo by Annalisa Cioce, 2012

While overhearing comments made by visitors, we realized that we all shared the same thoughts. As one visitor said to us: "He's a genius. The exhibition could have been better organized, there were too many people in such a small space." Two Spanish visitors added: "The organization of the exhibits doesn't have a logical structure, you have to go forward then come back to

see things."

Before seeing the exhibition, we expected to find a public as eccentric as Dalí, and inspired by his particular personality. So we were disappointed by the fact that the visitors appeared so... ordinary. There were families, numerous students and foreigners. Even their outfits were really normal-looking.

As we entered the exhibition, we were struck by a quotation on the wall that sums up perfectly Dalí's way of being: "A uniform is vital for success. I've rarely sunk to the level of wearing civilian clothes. I always wear my Dalí uniform."

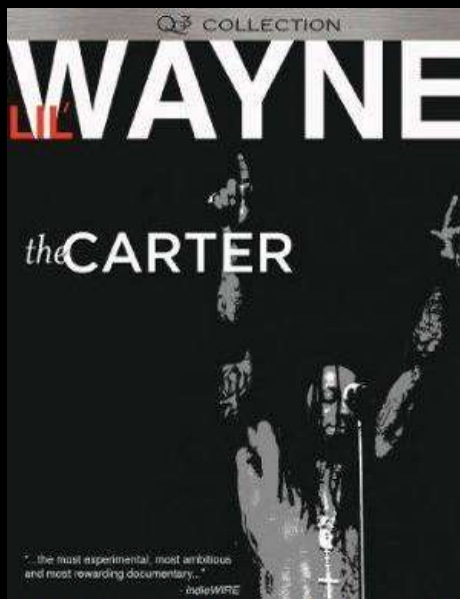
We couldn't help wondering whether Dalí himself would have enjoyed such an ordinary public.

My Rap Thesis

By Matteo Gualino

Graduate, Lingue e culture del mondo moderno

Sometimes in life you come across things like a movie, or a book, that you get really interested in, and some of those times they end up becoming very important for you. When by chance I saw a documentary called *The Carter* on YouTube, I didn't think I was going to write a thesis about it, but I did.



The first thing that I got interested in was the positive reviews I found on the IMDB website, stating that it was something that provided real insights into the life of an

American rapstar. Secondly, the documentary was presented at the Sundance Film Festival so I thought it must be really valuable. *The Huffington Post* (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>) also described it as one of the best hip-hop documentaries ever made. Last but not least, I am fan of Lil' Wayne.

The whole documentary, directed by Adam Bhala Lough, is about Lil' Wayne, what he does, namely rap music, and how he does it. But it's also very introspective, digging into his most intimate feelings. From the public image to the real person. For example, the suffering he went through as a result of the devastation hurricane Katrina brought to his home city, New Orleans, and about his past break-ups. But you also learn about his problems with drugs, in particular the so-called Sizzurp, a drink made out of soda and cough syrup.

The documentary also deals with his past, trying to understand what his childhood was like in

Hollygroove, one of the poorest ghettos in the USA, and it obviously includes some of his songs, such as 'Misunderstood', which is a very introspective one. You also get to know how he got out of the streets and actually became what he is now, a multi-millionaire Hip-Hop artist.

Lil' Wayne is one of the most famous rappers of the last five years. He has multiple platinum records and has thus become insanely rich, of course. But it's still incredible how driven he is about his music. He's still trying to get better, he's learning to play instruments (we can see him playing the drums and the guitar in the documentary) and, as he says, "I gotta get better fo' my fans, I wan' people to expect from me the bes' music, the bes' rap, the bes' songs."

It's not about the money, as he already has enough for three lives. It's not only about the music or about the fame either. You can really understand how he needs his music to fight the demons inside his soul. The demons that probably rose inside him as a young child living in the ghetto. When you really dig into his lyrics and history you realize how much he suffers inside. That's probably why he's a drug addict, that's probably why he's such a rapping genius.

Since this documentary is interesting also from a linguistic point of view, I chose to work on it for my undergraduate thesis, focusing on translating it from English to Italian. Or more specifically, from AfroAmerican Vernacular English, to Italian. Yes, because if you didn't know already, most of the lower class Afroamericans speak their own variety of English, AAVE. When you listen to Lil'Wayne or to most black rappers from the USA you're probably listening to this variety. I feel lucky to have had the chance to write my thesis on something I found interesting.

To find out more about the Sundance Film Festival, check the website: <http://www.sundance.org/festival/>

Background: *Mother and Son*, by Jason Paluck <http://www.paluck.com/>

La Dolce Vita at the Jersey Shore

By Daniele Laudadio

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

What is the first thing that comes into your mind when you think about Italy and Italians in movies or television produced in the US? Pasta? Pizza? Mafia? The Latin lover? Sadly, or luckily, these are common stereotypes identifying Italian people and culture in the world. Think about *The Godfather*, and you'll see all these features masterfully embodied by Don Vito Corleone.

Over the last few years, though, things have been changing. It was 2009 when the US TV show *Jersey Shore* appeared, bringing a new concept of 'Italianness' to the world...

Wait, what? You have never heard about *Jersey Shore*? Are you sure you've been living on Earth for the last four years? Just in case you don't know about this show, here are the basics.

Jersey Shore is an MTV reality series that follows the life of eight young Italian-Americans, four boys and four girls, during their summer holiday in New Jersey. Nothing new under the sun, you'd say: *Big Brother* did the same many years ago.

But there's something more here. The vicissitudes of its protagonists, Snooki, Mike the Situation, Jwoww, Dj Pauly D, Sammi Sweetheart, Vinny, Deena and Ronnie, turned the show into one of the most outrageous ever seen on TV screens: a real offence to Italy and Italian people throughout the world.

Basically, every day these guys do nothing but get tanned, go out, get drunk, have sex, vomit... and again get tanned, go out, get drunk, have sex and vomit! A lifestyle that, in the long run, any ordinary person would disdain. That's why it's not hard to believe that besides the huge number of fans, the *Guidos* and *Guidettes* - as the members of the show call themselves - have a huge number of opponents too.

Beyond doubt, Italian-American communities are those who feel the most damaged by these

people's behaviour. Influential representatives of immigrants from the Bel Paese don't want to have anything to do with the *Guidos* and *Guidettes*.

In an article published on the BBC website (30/7/2010), Finlo Rohrer reported New Jersey State Senator Joe Vitale's comparison of the word *Guido* to the N-word. Just as the N-word is used as a disparaging term for African-Americans, the term *Guido* is regarded by some as a racial insult when referring to Italian immigrants. The protagonists of the show, however, use the names *Guidos* and *Guidettes* to show off their lifestyle of hedonism, suntans and workouts.

In the same article, Joseph del Raso, president of the National Italian-American Foundation, adds that what the cast of the show is sponsoring "is basically a mindless culture [...] that isn't fair as a representation of Italian-Americans."

In my opinion, although the protagonists of the series like to show off their 'Italianness', they are not Italian at all. They have little real knowledge of Italian culture beyond a handful of Italian words repeated in an automatic and incorrect way. Every time there's a toast, and trust me, any reason for them is toast-worthy, you can hear them pronouncing the word *salùt* for the Italian *salute* or the term *braciol* for *bracirole*, any time they have a barbecue. Oh, I almost forgot, *Ciao Bella!* Seriously? *Guidos*, *Guidettes*, that's not Italian!

They are just a portrayal of a certain American lifestyle of inconsiderate, wild fun, which has spread all over the world.

This could be one of the reasons behind the show's huge success. Or, maybe, the appeal of *Jersey Shore* can be traced to the fact that, sometimes, deep down, we all would like to live like they do, at least on a summer vacation in New Jersey.



From Russia with

By Kate Durnova, Ellina Morits, Galia Gorbova

Exchange students from Lomonosov Moscow State University

We are three Russian girls doing our semester abroad in Rome, and here we share with you our experience of Italian life from the inside.

Well, first of all, the Italian lifestyle is very different from the Russian one. The very first thing we noticed is that Italians are not so fond of working. For instance, shops, offices and cafes close just before dinner time. In Russia people take dinner breaks in turn so that no customers have to wait. And now let's take Sundays. Why does almost nothing work on Sundays? For us, it is a total mystery, because in Russia we are used to leading a busy life with the opportunity to get everything we need 24/7. When we came to Italy for the first time, we wanted to go to a supermarket to get some food, but since it was pretty late we ended up with nothing. As it turned out there are no supermarkets open at night.

The next thing that amazed us is *lo sciopero*. Italian strikes happen far too often and leave people with no way to get around the city. You can only wait until it ends. Fortunately, there is usually a schedule and Italians keep to it. But what if you need to get to the airport or a business meeting? In Russia you cannot even imagine the subway not working. Everyone would get super-angry.

Now Italian men. They totally confirm the rumour about being the most courteous, passionate, charismatic, loving and romantic men. We wish Russian men were more like Italian.

As far as fashion is concerned, Italy really is the ideal place for shopping. Italian fashion designers are famous all over the world. Nonetheless, Italians do not blindly follow fashion trends, but dress according to their personal taste.

Italian food and wine are without doubt among the best in the world. Pizza, pasta, lasagna, risotto, gelato, yummy! Once you taste real Italian wine you can no longer drink the so-called Italian wine sold in Russia. The same applies to food.

But to end on a more positive note, we'd say that Italy is definitely one of the most beautiful countries in the world, with a rich cultural heritage. Wherever you look, you see ancient monuments or works of art created by famous artists, architects, sculptors. Simply walking around the city is a pleasure. Probably this is why so many Italians are artistic. It is difficult not to fall in love with the country and not to come back for a piece of *dolce vita* one more time.

Having spent more than two months in Rome, we're finally starting to live the Roman life. There was this one time when we went out partying and one of our friends got really drunk, and we were surprised and pleased to see how helpful and understanding Italian guys are. Two unknown boys helped us to get her home safely, and they did this just because they're so good-natured, without wanting anything in return. This experience proved to us that young Italian people are kind-hearted and open to new experiences.



Made in Tanzanitaly

By Elisa Di Loreto

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

Mind the label: if you love African-style clothes there's a new brand in the fashion market. *Mani d'Africa* (literally, Hands of Africa) is the name of a project set up by the voluntary association Tulime,



an Italian non-profit organization which has been cooperating with Tanzania since 2001.

By combining different skills, ideas and two different cultures, namely Tanzanian and Italian, *Mani d'Africa* creates unique clothes, including fashionable skirts and trousers, and lovely bags and cases.

"Our success is simply the fruit of careful and continuous work, but, above all, of the feeling of enthusiasm and mutual respect that arose among the artisans involved in the project" says Roberta Pelliccetti, who is in charge of the Italian side of the Tulime project.

Roberta Pelliccetti spent one and a half months in Pomerini village (in the Iringa region of Tanzania), where most of this project is being carried out. In the small village workshop, a new fashion emerged: a fusion between European and African styles. She expressed her initial doubts to *MiraMag* in these words:

At the beginning I was afraid to interfere in the daily work of those involved, and to come across

as being there to teach them something or upset their ordinary everyday activities. On the contrary, a spontaneous exchange emerged, a mixture of creativity and manual ability which enriched everybody, including me.

This new clothing label is now slowly spreading thanks to small local initiatives, in both Italy and Tanzania, and the income goes to the Tulime association to fund this and other projects in support of several villages in the area.

Hopefully, as happened in the case of the Fair Trade concept, the original garments made under the *Mani d'Africa* label will spread around the world, becoming a success story of reciprocal cooperation between two different cultures.

Roberta Pelliccetti says she will probably go back to Tanzania next June, "to develop the project further, but also to make contact once again with the Tanzanian people involved."

For more information about the Tulime Association and the *Mani d'Africa* project, see <http://www.tulime.org>



Product photos provided by Andrea Cardoni, Vice President of Tulime

Algeria: Fifty Years of Independence

By Giacomina Bafera

Lingue e culture del mondo moderno

On 18 March 1962, France and Algeria signed the Evian Agreements. After one hundred and thirty-two years of colonization, these Agreements laid the foundations for the independence proclaimed on 5 July 1962. This year, therefore, is the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence.

France and the Algerian independence



movements experienced a complex conflict which lasted from 1954 to 1962, resulting in civil war involving loyalist

Algerians, who believed in a French Algeria, and their insurrectionist Algerian Muslim counterparts. But what did this war mean for each country?

As far as the French are concerned, they lost their battle, and as is well-known, a defeat is not remembered with pride by any nation. France had believed in a French Algeria for a long time and with this defeat it saw its dream die completely. Besides, this defeat also represented a serious loss in a geopolitical sense: how can you give up such a large country which is so rich in natural resources?

However, we shouldn't consider the situation purely from the French colonial point of view. In Algeria there were, for many generations, the so called *Pieds-Noirs*, the descendants of the European colonizers. It is probably impossible to imagine the pain of these people who had to abandon their property, friends and the country they felt as their own.

On the other hand, there was also a proud Algeria with a strong desire for freedom. The Algerians had lived for a long time without rights, not seen as full citizens until independence day.

Unfortunately, Algeria nowadays seems unable to make the most of its own natural resources. This led R dha Malek, Prime Minister of Algeria in the early 1990s and Spokesman for Algeria at the time of the Evian negotiations, to claim that the Algerian people should have been aware that "la d mocratie ne cr e pas automatiquement le progr s!" ("democracy does not automatically create progress."). The dreams and ambitions of most

young people are now blocked and they are having to face many problems. They cannot create a family or even be independent from their parents. The only solution seems to emigrate, but they don't have enough money for this.

The same situation applies to women, who played a crucial role as in fighting for independence, when they were known as *moudjahidates* (women militants). Nowadays, women's rights are mere words in the Constitution and not put into practice. As journalist Ghania Lassal writes "les mentalit s et les pratiques d'une soci t  patriarcale ont la peau dure"² ("the mentality and practices of a patriarchal society are a tough nut to crack.").

Today, the relationship between France and Algeria is a complex love-hate one, if the past is taken into account. This can be perceived through the works of French and Algerian artists. Towards the end of 1957, Albert Camus wrote these words to Algerian writer Mouloud Feraoun: "Si par-dessus les injustices et les crimes, une communaut  franco-arabe a exist , c'est bien celle que nous avons form e, nous autres  crivains alg riens, dans l' galit  la plus parfaite"³. ("If beyond the injustices and the crimes a French-Arabic community has existed, it is the community we other Algerian writers have created, in an almost perfect equality."). Kateb Yacine, a Berber poet, writes his works in French, without hiding his country's search for identity. This makes me wonder: Has this identity really been achieved?

1 November 1954	Beginning of armed insurrection led by FLN (National Freedom Front).
3 April 1955	Paris proclaimed a state of emergency in Algeria.
7 January 1957	Beginning of Battle of Algiers.
19 September 1958	Creation of a temporary government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA).
23 October 1958	De Gaulle proposes the <i>Paix des Braves</i> .
20 May 1961	Opening of Evian negotiations.
18 March 1962	Signature of Evian Agreements.
19 March 1962	The ceasefire is applied.
5 July 1962	Official Declaration of Algeria's independence.

1. Reported in Tarek Hafid, "Notre r volution est inachev e", *Jeune Afrique* (<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/>).

2. "Encore des batailles   gagner", <http://www.courrierinternational.com/> (15/3/2012).

3. Reported here: <http://www.henri-pouillot.fr/spip.php?article39> (4/6/2010).



A Taste of Greece in the Eternal City



By Mavra Kakoliris

Lingue e culture del mondo moderno

Have you ever been to Greece? Is it your dream to go there one day? If you have not been there yet, don't worry, for you are still in time to "savour" a little piece of Greece. But where? In The Eternal City of course! If you happen to be here in Rome, there are lots of places where you can breathe the magical atmosphere distinctive of one of the most ancient nations, not only for a drink or food, but also to have fun. In almost every district of Rome you can find Greek places, from the traditional tavern to the more innovative kinds of restaurants.

One of the most popular inexpensive Greek restaurant is **Kalapà**, open daily. This little place, known for its many take-away specialities, is situated in the heart of the Pigneto neighbourhood, in via Ascoli Piceno. It's very famous for its potato *Kumpir*, for example, which is potato stuffed with feta (Greek cheese), olives, tomatoes and tzatziki - a very tasty sauce with yogurt and cucumber. But its real innovation is that it has blended together Greek and Italian cuisine.

Another good restaurant is **Egeo** (tel. 06-273807), near Piazza Maggiore, behind Pigneto. This is a traditional tavern. Here you can taste traditional Greek dishes such as Moussaka - a layered oven-baked casserole dish made with vegetables and meat - or the traditional Mezedes, little nibbles something

like Spanish tapas. Every Friday and Saturday this tavern organizes live shows of Greek music and dance, so you can enjoy your meal to the sound of Rebetiko music.

Of the handful of Greek restaurants in Rome, the

tiny Ouzeri (tel. 06-5816378) is often considered the best. Overshadowed by lively Trastevere restaurants around the corner, it's easy to miss it, so watch out for its name scribbled in tiny Greek writing over the door: Ουζερί. But if you want to enter, you will have to take out an annual membership, which costs 1 euro and 50 cents.



Photo by Mavra Kakoliris, 2012

Traditionally, in the ouzeris people go to drink Ouzo or Retsina and to eat Mezedes. But in this association, there are various dishes on the menu. What's more, the Bouzouki music is likely to get you into a good mood.

There are plenty more great Greek restaurants you can try, such as **Akropolis** (06-58332600) in Trastevere in via Francesco a Ripa, or **Ippokrates** (06-6482 4179 / 349.8355867) in via Piave 30. So what else can I say? Go and try them and... **Καλή όρεξη!**

Around the World on a Budget

By Gilda Mancuso

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

By surfing the web for a few days, I discovered that there are many different ways of travelling for free, or at least in the cheapest way ever. In this article, you'll find some helpful hints on new, alternative ways of travelling. Forget about travel agencies and scheduled airline flights and try to turn yourselves into a twenty-first century Jack Kerouac...

Hitch-hiking on the web

Recently I also found out that Italy is becoming quite familiar with a phenomenon already well known all over the world: it's called Carpooling. There are plenty of websites offering the opportunity for drivers and passengers to meet and share travel costs. This may be very useful for people who travel constantly for work: motorway costs and fuel halved and fellow travellers found.

Many private and public companies have a section on their notice boards where employees can ask for or give a lift to their colleagues. Carpooling is also an adventurous, affordable and environmentally friendly expedient for students keen to travel on a small budget.

The carpooling phenomenon, also known as carsharing, ridesharing, liftsharing and covoiturage, is constantly growing because of the economic crisis or maybe because the Internet is making communication easier!

Sharing your journey with other people is primarily an opportunity to save money, meet new people... starting your adventure even before reaching your destination.

Being a driver or lift giver has many advantages too, if you consider the fact that you share the journey but also the costs of fuel and toll charges, and you don't get bored while driving for many hours.

Think about how much this reduces traffic and what a great advantage this is for the environment!

roadsharing.com one of the most famous carpooling promoters, indicates the amount of CO² released, alongside the distance and the

estimated time of the journey.

Carpooling may be less adventurous than hitchhiking on the side of the road, but it's safer. You can choose your driver, contact him or her directly before jumping into his/her car.

Europe's largest ridesharing network is carpooling.com, but there are so many others: postoinauto.it, hitchhikers.org, or just google "carpooling".



Photo by Gilda Mancuso, 2012

Become a "work-awayer"

If you're wondering how to spend your summer abroad, here's a good money-saving tip: workaway.info. This website offers a wide range of opportunities for those who want to travel worldwide and experience new cultures and landscapes. Their database, available in English, French and German, contains the details of

hundreds of individuals, organizations and families who offer food and board in exchange for a few hours of work each day. Register on the website (a registration fee is required, €22, valid for two years) and start looking for your potential host.

The philosophy of workaway.info is this:

A few hours honest help per day in exchange for food and accommodation and an opportunity to learn about the local lifestyle and community, with friendly hosts in varying situations and surroundings.

Volunteering abroad

If you are looking for a more specific place to find opportunities for volunteering abroad, here are some suggestions. There are so many different organizations and programmes you can choose: some of them are short-term, others are longer, some require a fee - to cover travel expenses, food and accommodation - while others are free.

Short-term projects (similar to those you find on workaway.info) are available on [Willing Workers On Organic Farms](http://WillingWorkersOnOrganicFarms). This is a network of national organizations that helps volunteers to find a place on organic farms around the world in exchange for room and board at the farm. Volunteers pay travel costs and a membership fee to join the organization.

sci-italia.it is an NGO, officially recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which promotes short-term work camps in many different fields. lunaria.org too organizes summer work camps in Italy and abroad. Both promote European Voluntary Service (EVS), dedicated to young people aged 18 to 30, giving young Europeans the chance to express their abilities through full-time, unpaid voluntary activities in a foreign country.

Christian Associations also organize volunteering Camps: the website of Sapienza Chapel, for example, proposes summer camps organized by Lega Missionaria Studenti.

Couch-surfing

Couch-surfing is another sociable and cheap way to travel. It's a network of people looking for a couch, a spare room, or just a small piece of land to pitch their tent on; a network that could help you to find a place to sleep for free and also a way for travellers to go around the world. Maybe the amazing thing about couch-surfing is the opportunity to learn about the local culture, not just as a tourist.

Visit couchsurfing.org, register then create your profile (similar to what you do on Facebook) to let your host get to know you before inviting you to sleep on their couch.

Being a host could be an amazing experience as well. In an interview on couchsurfing.org, an Indian girl, a couch-surfer who later became a host, said "couch-surfing is like bringing a piece of the world to our living room."

Couch-surfing and Workaway, both cheap ways to travel, may also be the only chance you have to visit a city or a country, live in it, get to know it through the people who live there, learning things from them that you would never find in a tourist guidebook.

These are just a few of the opportunities the Internet provides if you're interested in travelling on a small budget, working abroad during the summer or during a gap year, and visiting cities and experiencing them from a different perspective.

They all exploit the Internet's capacities to create a network of people and a platform where every user (a lift-giver or a hitchhiker, a host or a worker, a host or a couch-surfer) creates their own profile and is ready to receive feedback. Another feature is that previous users express their opinions, providing useful references.

These are not just cheap ways of travelling but real opportunities to have an intercultural experience, in a spirit of mutual enrichment for both hosts and guests. Now, switch your laptop off, pack and leave!

Catch 'em while they're Young

By Sonia Lo Russo

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

As one of my high school teachers once told me, “The best way to understand the culture of a people is to learn their language.” I think nothing is truer, as language is the tool that builds bridges between different peoples and is the only way that cultures can learn from each other. If you agree, then you will certainly understand the importance of teaching a foreign language to children.



Photo supplied by Sonia Lo Russo

I am a university student of modern languages and the mother of two children. I decided to start teaching English to both my children when they were almost 1 year old, since research has proven that the sooner you start the better. Chomsky and Krashen told us about LAD, a language acquisition device that we all have, and which works thanks to external input and plays a fundamental role in learning one (or more) languages. So even if babies do not speak yet, they are able to assimilate foreign languages. They can learn in a playful and fun way, through songs, cartoons, and above all with the help of their parents.

Unfortunately, not all Italian parents understand how important the study of foreign languages is for their children, or if they do, only a small number of them actively help their children learn another language.

Nor does the Italian school system place enough importance on the teaching of foreign languages. In most state schools, the study of a second language entails achieving a certain mark: there is no interest, it seems, in getting students to learn how to actually speak and use the language.

In their first years at primary school, children spend only 1 hour a week on English. What's more, in the majority of primary schools, English teachers will only have taken one 60-hour English course - hardly enough to be considered an expert in any subject. Even at middle school, foreign languages are considered a luxury rather than a necessity.

This situation of neglect creates a great linguistic divide that separates Italy's schoolchildren from the many countries where children can speak more than one language. This certainly doesn't help social, cultural and economic development, not does it help provide opportunities for Italy's young people when they leave school.

It seems to me that it is time we understood the importance of teaching languages to our children in early age. Children quickly grow accustomed to the sounds and speech patterns of other languages and are able to assimilate them easily. Learning a language for a child is a natural and spontaneous activity. Let's enable our children to become citizens of the world!

Beyond Grammar Books

By Aurora Mazzoni

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

Who said that a grammar book is irreplaceable if you want to learn a language? Well, come to think of it, many do! In my opinion and experience, involvement came first.

The first things which brought me closer to the English language were music and, most of all, mangas. When I was younger and I first developed something close to a personal taste in music, MTV became my favourite channel. Most of the songs it played, however, were in English, and at the beginning I remember I only imitated the sounds I heard. But, since I felt stupid, I began to look for lyrics. Finally, sounds met words. I was sooo satisfied, and it didn't take long for meaning to join the dynamic-duo! Looking back, music was the best way to memorize locutions and constructions, rather than single words.

As for mangas, I think there is more than meets the eye. I discovered mangas by chance. I entered a comic books shop out of curiosity and bought one. Being a very impatient person, I couldn't wait a month (sometimes even two, sometimes a date to be defined) to read more of the story, so I started looking for more chapters online. I don't actually know if this is illegal, although technically it shouldn't be, since the English translations I found on www.dailymanga.org were not protected by



Drawing by Aurora Mazzoni, 2012

copyright (said the girl who ended up behind bars...!).

In any case, having pictures associated with dialogues was very useful for me. On the one hand because the use of a dictionary was reduced to a minimum and that boosted my linguistic-self-esteem (I believe in the importance of user-friendliness), thus motivating me to keep on reading. On the other hand, my interest in the story motivated me to find out more about it.

Besides, the 'comics imprinting principle' (I'll patent it!) is often used in students' books. When I was in high school we had this sci-fi comic strip, called *The Search*, about an alien kid who was shipwrecked on Earth and tried to find a way back home. The problem with *The Search* was that it was

less gripping than a Smurfs' comic strip. Nothing compared to mangas.

Meanwhile, MTV was still my favorite channel and at that time it had a lot of crazy shows (who remembers *Dismissed*, or *NEXT??*) which were not dubbed but just subtitled. What could be better for learning spoken language than spoken language? Hm...

All this happened before I discovered file sharing (yes, yes, I know!) and, only years later, video streaming (Have you guys signed the petition to bring Megavideo back?), which opened up a whole new world to me. I used to watch

series on TV but, because of the forementioned impatience, I started to look online for spoilers and soon discovered that it was possible to watch new episodes as well. After all, Italy had never



Photo by Serena Caporuscio, 2012

been in step with any TV series: if the original one was on season 4, we were watching the pilot! The amazing thing about series is that you can specialize in vocabulary according to your interests: medicine, law, crime investigation, intelligence, history, psychology.







But let's keep up with my account. After file sharing came the tube. YouTube is, and has been since the start, the greatest resource for video broadcasting/sharing. Nowadays you can be sure that if anything is going to happen to you, the world not only knows first, but it has already rated and commented on it! YouTube, as well as MTV shows, is useful for learning spoken language, since a lot of people have their own channel where they post video-diaries, comment

videos and parodies. The most entertaining in my opinion are the ones by MadtvOnFox, barelypolitical, LisaNova and KassemG.

As time went by, my interest in language and in its history broadened. The question "What was it like before?" became something I wanted to find an answer to. Also history (which I hated back in high school) started to fascinate me. And since I'm curious, very curious, history books were obviously not enough. I wanted something written by someone who had experienced the events. There are many websites showing old documents but the most interesting is www.archive.org. This site collects copyright-free documents from all over the world digitized by universities or Google Books. You can view them online or you can download them for free: an amazing source for history-curious students and translator wannabes, isn't it?

I'm not saying that a grammar book is totally unnecessary. I just think it should be used in retrospect, maybe to check if we have understood things correctly, to explain something or to connect things. But I think that learning by heart an infinite list of verbs or rules is an exercise that may help to improve memory but not language. All of these things will not be retained long in the mind if no experience is attached to it. Long story short: participation takes it all.

If you want to become a specialist, here's a list of TV series that can help you!

Medical Drama	Behavioural Analysis	Crime
		
Law	Teen Drama	Sci-fi
		

What does it Take to be a Teacher?

Interview with Marina Morbiducci, TESOL-Italy President (2008-2010)



By Cristiana La Selva

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

What is TESOL? Why is it important?

TESOL is the acronym for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; TESOL-Italy is one of over 100 hundred affiliates of TESOL International Association (US based counting over 12,000 members worldwide); aiming at excellence in English language teaching, TESOL-Italy fosters professional growth and community understanding of the role of language in a progressively changing environment, respecting individual language rights, diversity and multiculturalism. It promotes interaction of research and reflective practice for educational improvement, enhancing innovation and creativity in an academically rigorous environment.

How did you first get interested in teaching?

Soon after my degree in Italy and a Fulbright graduate scholarship in the US, I tried different professions: from secretary to interpreter, from editorial assistant to cinema press-agent. In all these jobs I found that my inquisitive nature was not fully employed, and my desire for new knowledge never fully satisfied. When I started teaching, I realized that you have to keep those two paths – research and knowledge - always open and alert... Plus, the pedagogical value intrinsically required in any form of good teaching is just unique!

Grammar and active practice of the language: what is the relationship between the two? Is one of the approaches more important than the other?

In my view, grammar and practice do not constitute a binary opposition. Far from representing a dichotomy in language learning, they are to be considered two sides (both necessary) of the same coin. You might have heard of Diane Larsen Freeman's *From Grammar to Gramaring*, a book that I recommend reading: there you find that the two poles dynamically interact, attract and impinge on each other. As the years pass, I find myself more and more intrigued by the notion of "grammar" in its different approaches, and I warmly hope I'm transmitting such passion to my students.

Can you tell us anything about the new MIUR project called TFA (Tirocinio Formativo Attivo), which is about to start? What do you think of this? (For

further reference see

<http://www.istruzione.it/web/ministero/cs020312>)

Of course. I'm involved in the committee created by Sapienza University for this project. Since it's a new kind of project, it's difficult to foresee its factual outcomes; indubitably, the large number of candidates and the complexity of the tasks required make it problematic to ensure quality throughout the process in all its aspects: assessment and evaluation, selection procedures, pre-service teacher training and in-service professional development. These are all very delicate and complex issues but you see, when there were the national competitions for tenured teaching, we weren't happy at all; when there was the SSIS we were not fully satisfied; and when there was nothing, that was the worst of all...

Can you tell us something about your personal adventures in teaching?

You use the term "adventure" and, to some extent, I agree with the scenario such a word describes: teaching is in fact a process of constant exploration, whose path will lead you to places not known in advance, with goals, fulfillment and achievements unimagined beforehand. Actually, the acquisition, consolidation and transformation of the necessary skills for successful teaching over time are a life-long learning process which never ends. This is what I like most about my profession: being one of the oldest missions, it always urges you on to the new...

Any advice for students that would like to become teachers?

When I started my profession, I thought that I wanted to become an innovative teacher allowing my creativity to guide me all the way through, keeping inevitable obstacles and general discouragement at bay; these concepts I think still hold strong... Experience, supported by vividly genuine beliefs, and a sense of enduring consistency, will help you focalize in your professional goals.

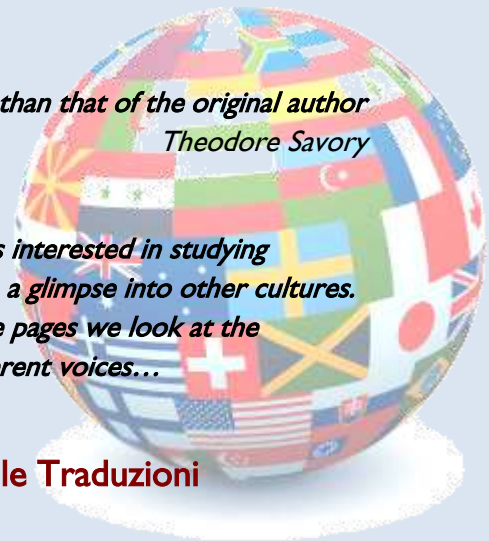
Marina Morbiducci, PhD, assistant professor in English Language, Linguistics and Translation, Sapienza University, Rome; TESOL-Italy President (2008-2010); MIUR teacher trainer; translator of experimental poetry.

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Translation Kaleidoscope

The translator's task is much harder than that of the original author
Theodore Savory

What is translation? What does it mean to be a translator? Why are students interested in studying translation? Translation is a service, a need, a passion, a curiosity, an interest, a glimpse into other cultures. Translation means working on a text for hours, days, maybe months. In these pages we look at the experience of translating from different perspectives, listening to several different voices...



Interview with Simona Cives, director of Casa delle Traduzioni

By Jennifer Buono and Veronica Chiarenza

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

What is Casa delle Traduzioni?

Casa delle Traduzioni, which opened on 23 June last year, is a new library specializing in translation. It is part of Rome's Library Network (*Biblioteche di Roma*). As already happens at Translation Centers all over Europe, at Casa delle Traduzioni we organize cultural activities, workshops and meetings for both professional translators and students interested in this kind of work.

What is its main purpose?

Casa delle Traduzioni has two goals: on one hand to support translators by providing them with all the available tools; on the other hand to promote

and increase recognition of the Italian language in an international context. For this reason, we provide hospitality for foreign translators at the *Foresteria*, guest accommodation on the library premises. The only

requirement is a translation contract for an Italian publication, particularly literary works.

What kinds of activities and meetings do you organize specifically?

First of all, we organize translation workshops. We already had two of these at the opening of the library: the first was a translation workshop from Spanish, held by Professor Ilide Carmignani, and the other was from English, in collaboration with important translators such as Daniele

Petruccioli and Andreina Lombardi Bom. We also present recent publications and hold meetings in which translation issues are discussed in detail. For instance, last February we held a five-part seminar called "Traduttori e Editori a Roma", which offered professional translators

the opportunity to exchange opinions with publishers in order to strengthen their partnership.



Photo by Jennifer Buono, 2012

What kind of books does the Casa delle Traduzioni offer its users?

This library is divided into two sections: in the first there are reference books, such as monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and some specialized dictionaries, encyclopedias and data bases. These sources are for reference only. The books in the other section are available on loan. We have a wide range of books related to Translation Studies, useful for professional translators and students. Casa delle Traduzioni also houses two substantial collections donated by Voland and Europe Editions publishing houses, who decided to support our library. Casa delle Traduzioni is also fortunate to benefit from Elsa Morante's collected works, about 60 books in all, donated by Carlo Cecchi, her legal heir. And last but not least, there is a collection of books by Milena Agus and translated into several different languages, donated by Nottetempo publishing house.

Who are the users of the Casa delle Traduzioni?

The library is frequented mostly by students and professional translators, but we would like more university students to come here. To encourage them, we are planning a series of meetings with Translation Studies lecturers from Rome's universities. In this way we hope to broaden our activities but also to give students the chance of getting to know the library. Seven translation workshops for students have been organized jointly by Casa delle traduzioni and Sapienza University between April and May this year:



A work area within the library

literary translation is the main focus, with an emphasis on poetry, fiction and theatre.

What advice would you offer a student undertaking a career in translation?

In my opinion there are three important steps to be taken: the first is to combine academic studies with workshops organized by professional translators. The second is to attend the main conferences on translation that take place every year in Italy. For example, Le giornate della traduzione letteraria (lit. Translation Days) in Urbino, in which the minute details of some translations are discussed; the so-called Autore Invisibile (lit. Invisible Author) meeting in Turin and the section reserved for children's books at the Bologna Book Fair. The last step is to sign up on translators' forums such as Biblit which today has more than 2500 members. I think translators should avoid the isolation in which they usually work and try to create networks in order to exchange translation experiences with their fellow translators.

Casa delle Traduzioni is open to people from all countries. If Italian is not your mother tongue, we recommend the Italian conversation sessions that will take place every Wednesday from 30 May to 27 June, 10.00-12.00. To register or obtain further information, contact Simona Cives by 15 May.

Casa delle Traduzioni is in **Via degli Avignonesi, 32**

Opening hours

Tuesday: 9.30 – 14.30

Wednesday: 9.30 – 18.30

Friday: 9.30 – 14.30

Contacts

e-mail: casadelletraduzioni@bibliotechediroma.it

Tel: (0039) 06 45430235 – 06 45460720



One-day Interpreter for Salvatore Totino

By Marco Palermo

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

Studying foreign languages can open up many opportunities: travelling with ease, teaching, working for international companies, for the media and, sometimes, for famous people.

These advantages, together with my dream of being an interpreter, encouraged me to keep studying foreign languages, which is why I also took a course in interpreting and translating.

I had my first experience with foreign languages and translation when people from my town, knowing that English is my mother tongue, asked me to help them translate emails and phone calls. Once I started the job I felt that interpreting was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. More people started to ask me for more translations, but there is one day I will never forget: the day I had the chance to be Salvatore Totino's personal interpreter.

Salvatore Totino is the director of photography of many famous films, including *Cinderella Man*, *Any Given Sunday*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels and Demons*, and the recently released *Safe House*, starring Danzel Washington.

Salvatore and I met in my town (Gioiosa Jonica - a small town on the Jonian coast of Calabria) when he came with his family to receive an honorary citizenship. During his stay, my mother was supposed to be his personal interpreter, and the organizers of the event had planned for him a few talks and a tour of the city.

My mother was not available that day, however, and I was asked to substitute her. When they contacted me and explained what I had to do, I was speechless. I wasn't really sure if I was good enough for such an important task. Before the tour, I met Mr Totino who said he was sure that I was going to do a great job. His relaxed manner and tone of voice encouraged me so much that when I started translating the guide's words, the translation came out in a very natural and fluent way. He made me feel very comfortable, which was exactly what I needed to do a good job.

At the end of the tour, Mr Totino congratulated



Photo supplied by Salvatore Totino

me on my work, and advised me to keep on studying so that one day I would become an excellent interpreter.

From that experience I learned many things, especially about how interpreting skills can be improved: work on your English, be careful to avoid grammar mistakes, use the correct tone of voice, learn when and how to simplify long sentences, and take into account the person for you are translating for.

Since then Sal and I have become friends. He was the person who explained to me the importance of starting from small and simple things that can help build a brilliant career, and the importance of working hard every day, never losing your passion for what you're doing. His words had a huge influence on my life and educational decisions, and so I will never forget them, just as I will never forget the person who pronounced them.

An experience like this is important for someone interested in studying foreign languages and in becoming an interpreter. It is from these kinds of experiences that you can learn an enormous number of things, and meet new people refuels your passion for your job and your life.

I can never thank Salvatore Totino enough for the opportunity he gave me and the effect it had on me.

Hearing Images

By Gabriella Donnarumma

Scienze linguistiche, letterarie e della traduzione

While watching movies and TV programmes in their original language, it is a common practice for non-native speakers to make use of subtitles to get the written translation of the dialogue. These captions, usually displayed at the bottom of the screen, also allow viewers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to follow what's being said and understand the images on the screen.

But have you ever wondered how scenes without dialogues or sound effects are understood by people with limited or no visual capacities? In other words, how can blind and partially sighted people get the whole picture of the story?

That was a question I had never asked myself until two years ago, when a lecture held at my University by Dr. Agnieszka Chmiel, a Polish scholar of translation studies and audiovisual translation, opened my eyes to a new perspective by introducing me to audio description.

The technique of audio description is used for making theatre, movies and TV programmes accessible to blind and visually impaired people. More precisely, it is an additional narration that conveys the actions, body language and costumes of the characters, and describes the scenery. It normally occurs between the dialogues and does not interfere with important sound and music



Photo supplied by Daniele Laudadio, 2012

effects.

Nowadays, several countries are benefiting from this service. In Italy, RAI is the only TV broadcaster that airs audio-described programmes. Film festivals such as the Roma Fiction Fest and Rome's International Film Festival offer a fully accessible schedule.

The creation of audio description is a long and complex process that involves the work of several people, usually in teams of three, including one blind person to indicate where the description is needed and how much and what kind of information is necessary.

How to do AD	
1.	Choose your material carefully. Not all TV programmes are suitable for audio-description, for example. Some are too fast-moving, and some have too many dialogues. Some films require almost continuous description and this can prove tiring to listen to.
2.	The next step is to watch the programme. The describers should try to view the whole of it before starting on the actual description, in order to get a general picture of the story and take note of the pauses where the description will be inserted.
3.	After that, a draft script is made. The audio-describers should take into account that individuals seek different levels of detail and content from description and these differences are most noticeable with age and degree of visual impairment. She or he should try to describe all the visual points and difficult sounds, but avoid explaining the obvious parts. The golden rules of description are: describe what is there, do not give personal opinions and never talk over dialogues or commentary.
4.	Once the draft has been completed, it needs to be reviewed. After this it should be rehearsed live several times in order to ascertain recording times.
5.	At this stage, the background volume of the programme's audio component needs to be reduced so that the description can be heard clearly.
6.	The script is then recorded. Recording requires concentration and attention to delivery. Good audio descriptions should be unobtrusive and neutral, but not lifeless or monotonous and it should be in keeping with the nature of the programme. It must not be hurried; every word should be clear, audible and carefully timed.
7.	Finally, the most important thing to do is to listen back to the recording. This ensures that each description has been recorded without mistakes, omissions or imperfect delivery.

Composing audio description is a truly creative activity, since audiodescribers create a completely new text starting from an audiovisual product. I personally experienced the problems involved when I tried to audiodescribe a movie myself. With the help of a blind friend, I analyzed the first eight minutes of the movie *Lost in Translation* (dir. Sofia Coppola, 2003).

Film beginnings are usually the most interesting and challenging. They contain many narrative important clues, since the plot, characters and location are shown for the first time. Since it is not always possible to relate everything that appears on the screen, I focused mainly on the actions of the characters, rather than on their physical features, trying to give all the necessary information. For example, when it came to sudden scene changes, the only possible solution was to describe the scene in advance,

and when action and dialogue occurred at the same time, I overlapped audiodescription with less important dialogues, in order to ensure comprehension of what was going on.

This was definitely a great challenge, especially when it came to lexical choice and identifying the most appropriate intonation and pronunciation for conveying the rhythm and style of the movie. What surprised me most, however, was the fact that my blind friend was almost completely unaware of the functioning of this technique and of the AD services provided in Italy.

Since Audio Description aims to be a powerful instrument for the integration of blind people, then maybe a more efficient information campaign is required. It would be good if more people could get involved in this new world of accessibility, something this article has tried to encourage.

The Way You Face Life Makes A Difference

By Osvaldo Di Pietrantonio

Lingue e culture del mondo moderno

Do you stop to think about every little problem? No, you do not! You don't do ballistic calculations when playing football with friends and you don't, even remotely, think of chemical formulas while preparing the dough for a pizza.

Why don't you do the same thing when you face more complicated situations?

I want to tell you about an episode that took place recently at Villa Mirafiori. Early one morning, which, for Modern Language students means any time before 11 am, while waiting to enter room 3, we found that both doors were locked from the inside. We asked the caretaker but he had no keys. No one knew what to do, but then one student took off his backpack, entered through the open window and opened the door.

The weirdest thing for that student was to see the astonished faces of his fellow-students and his English teacher, who even asked him to write an article about the incident. They were astonished about something he found perfectly normal.

I do not think I am crazy, at least not yet, and I don't think I have much to teach anyone but if I had to extract a moral from this story, would be: "Stop thinking and do something."



Photo supplied by Osvaldo Di Pietrantonio