

The Department of French and Italian is pleased to announce
A PhD dissertation defense

Carlotta Vacchelli

La funzione-Pazienza. L'influenza di Andrea Pazienza nel graphic novel italiano

Friday, Sept. 11, 2020
10:00 am via Zoom

Abstract:

My dissertation ("The Pazienza-function. Andrea Pazienza's influence on the Italian graphic novel"), focuses on the impact that comics auteur Andrea Pazienza (1956-1988) has had on many aspects of contemporary Italian culture. Foucault's identification of the role of the author as a function of discourse in literary texts is especially relevant to my study, as I apply the concept of "fonction-auteur" ("author-function," *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?*, 1969) to the works of Italian graphic novelists, writers, directors, and musicians, who have been inspired by Pazienza's aesthetics and poetics. To demonstrate his presence in contemporary Italian culture, I employ a combination of close image-text analysis, as well as an historical and cultural reconstruction of Pazienza's myth as an Italian countercultural icon. I argue that a "Pazienza-function" is clearly traceable and that, in view of this idea, it is possible to identify how his work has been received and understood. Pazienza's choice of subject matters, his role as a public intellectual, his precise socio-political views, joined with his critical success – enhanced by his sudden death, make him a very recognizable and malleable icon. In my dissertation, I argue that Pazienza's polygonal manner contributed to the shaping of the current and extremely productive wave of Italian graphic novels, a genre that plays a central role in socio-political debates of national and transnational relevance. The significance of the "Pazienza-function" in the Italian graphic novel has a huge cultural impact: it offers a case study for the rise of authorship in Italian comics; it provides the possibility to trace Italian comics' models and archetypes; finally, it illustrates trends in comics readership.

Committee:

Marco Arnaudo, Chair
Andrea Ciccarelli
Colleen Ryan
Massimo Scalabrini

All committee members are professors in the Department of French & Italian