

Meeting with the Italian writer Dacia Maraini

Dacia Maraini, one of Italy's most renowned writers, presented the theatrical version of her work "Lettere d'amore" at the Dante Alighieri Society in Cambridge on March 4, 2011.

The first half of the evening, organized by PiB, in collaboration with MITaly and the Italian Harvard Society at the Kennedy School, featured an opening discussion with the writer, who spoke of the importance of literature in everyday culture. For Maraini, the Italian language is vital in today's literature, which she believes is still strong, although its most significant effort is made in contrast with an impoverished idiom often used on television "The Italian language is what we are most proud of," she said, citing a research she recently participated which showed Italians' strong attachment to their language. "The Italian language and culture were born even before our country was unified," she said. "Our common language is what makes us Italians."



The writer also talked about current cultural and political events in Italy, such as Roberto Benigni's performance at the 2011 Sanremo music festival, during which the Tuscan actor explained and recited Italy's national anthem, in celebration of the country's 150th anniversary.

Maraini also criticized today's media landscape in Italy, saying television is geared towards a consumer mentality, as opposed to a more rational and thoughtful approach. Despite this, Maraini underlined the significance of recent protests in the country's largest cities. The protests, some of which Maraini herself was part of, were aimed at restoring Italian women's dignity and students' right to education in public schools and universities.



Maraini concluded her talk presenting the second part of the evening, organized by the Dante Alighieri Society of Cambridge: An actress (Annalisa Picconi) would enact readings from "Lettere d'amore," Maraini's literary work combining fiction with real unpublished love letters by Gabriele D'Annunzio to Barbara Leoni.

Among participants at the event were Italy's Consul General for New England, Giuseppe Pastorelli, Giovanni Abbadessa, a manager of PiB who introduced Dacia Maraini, and Nicola Orichuia, PiB Collaborator and editor of *Bostoniano.info*, who moderated the discussion between Maraini and the public. The event's official photographer was Valentina Oppezzo.

