

# Italian American Review

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## Italian American Review

John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

The *Italian American Review (IAR)*, a bi-annual, peer-reviewed journal of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, publishes scholarly articles about the history and culture of Italian Americans, as well as other aspects of the Italian diaspora. The journal embraces a wide range of professional concerns and theoretical orientations in the social sciences and in cultural studies.

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WINTER 2011 • VOLUME I • NUMBER I

- v Introduction: *Ricorso* and *Rinascita* in the Twenty-First Century  
JOSEPH SCIORRA

## ARTICLES

- 1 Bellas and Fellas in Cyberspace: Mobilizing Italian Ethnicity  
for Online Youth Culture  
DONALD TRICARICO
- 35 “I Just Want to Sing Your Name”: Woody Guthrie’s Struggles  
with *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*  
JOSEPH P. COSCO
- 52 Artist on Loan: Tommaso Juglaris and the Italian Immigrant  
Experience in America’s Late Gilded Age  
GEOFFREY G. DRUTCHAS

## BOOK REVIEWS

- 90 *White Ethnic New York: Jews, Catholics, and the Shaping of Postwar  
Politics* (Joshua M. Zeitz)  
MARIA C. LIZZI
- 92 *The First Family: Terror, Extortion, Revenge, Murder, and the Birth of  
the American Mafia* (Mike Dash)  
*The Black Hand: Terror by Letter in Chicago* (Robert M. Lombardo)  
*History of the Mafia* (Salvatore Lupo)  
PETER SCHNEIDER
- 97 *The Value of Worthless Lives: Writing Italian American Immigrant  
Autobiographies* (Ilaria Serra)  
SUSANNA SCARPARO
- 99 *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age  
of Terrorism* (Beverly Gage)  
FRASER OTTANELLI

- 100 *Gangster Priest: The Italian American Cinema of Martin Scorsese*  
(Robert Casillo)  
DANA RENGA
- 102 *Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature*  
(Robin Pickering-Iazzi, trans.)  
GINA M. MIELE

#### FILM REVIEWS

- 105 *Hand of God* (Joe Cultrera, Laura Corwin, and Hugh Walsh)  
DAVID M. BOSSMAN
- 106 *Sacco and Vanzetti* (Peter Miller)  
MARCELLA BENCIVENNI
- 109 *Merica* (Federico Ferrone, Michele Manzolini, and  
Francesco Ragazzi)  
TERESA FIORE
- 112 *Ricordati di noi!* (Paul Tana)  
ROBERTO PERIN
- 114 *If Stone Could Speak / Se la pietra sapesse parlare* (Randy Croce)  
TAD TULEJA
- 117 *Closing Time: Storia di un negozio* (Veronica Diaferia)  
JULIA GRELLA O'CONNELL

#### DIGITAL MEDIA REVIEWS

- 120 *Italian Americans in California*  
[www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans](http://www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans)  
*Italian Los Angeles*  
[www.italianlosangeles.org](http://www.italianlosangeles.org)  
*Italians in the Gold Rush and Beyond*  
[www.IGRB.net](http://www.IGRB.net)  
PAOLA ALESSANDRA SENSI-ISOLANI

## *Ricorso* and *Rinascita* in the Twenty-First Century

JOSEPH SCIORRA

We welcome the New Year and the second decade of the twenty-first century by relaunching the *Italian American Review (IAR)*, which has been on hiatus for the past five years.<sup>1</sup> We at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute have been working assiduously since Anthony Julian Tamburri's appointment as dean in 2006 to publish the journal that you now hold in your hands. Putting in place the various elements and resources needed to produce a scholarly journal such as this requires a serious commitment and an extensive time frame. We hope you are as pleased as we are with the results.

While I served as the journal's associate editor upon my arrival at the Institute in the fall of 1999, I was not fully aware of the *IAR's* history. I have taken it upon myself as the journal's new editor to review the past issues in the Institute's library so as to present a condensed history as a way of moving forward. One theme that emerged during this perusal is that the *IAR* has existed in varying states of rebirth. The journal, and to an extent, Italian American Studies, is defined by a continued engagement among a community of individuals to establish, sustain, and re-imagine a field of study.

The *IAR* began in 1951 as the official organ of the Italian Historical Society of America, a filiopietistic organization founded in 1949 by insurance salesman John N. LaCorte. No extant copies exist in the Calandra Institute's library. The Historical Society was dedicated to combating "negative stereotypes" of Italian Americans "by popularizing the lives of the many Italians who have made significant contributions to Western Civilization" ("Italian Historical Society of America, A Brief History," n.d.).<sup>2</sup> With LaCorte's death in 1991, the publication was re-established the following year at Mercy College's Verrazzano Institute (Dobbs Ferry, New York) with Volume 1, Number 1, dated April 17, 1992.<sup>3</sup> The publisher of the bi-annual "successor journal" was the National Italian American Coordinating Association, founded in 1974 to serve a "coordinative role for the national Italian American community" (Massaro 2000, 400), and the "national board of directors" consisted of the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations. Medievalist scholar Thomas E. Vesce of Mercy College served as editor-in-chief. The journal style was that of the Modern Language Association.

The *IAR*'s early affiliation with national voluntary associations engaged in ethnic boosterism is evident in the journal's subtitle: "A Semi-annual Commentary on Italian American Achievement." Publisher Dorothy Cali-Balancio wrote in the first issue: "The publication will continue to be a voice to promote Italian American prestige, preserve its dignity, and demonstrate unity in an academic forum" (Cali-Balancio 1992, 4). In keeping with this mindset, Vesce succinctly referred to the journal's "special feature articles" on Christopher Columbus as focusing on the "condition of 'firstness'" (Vesce 1992, 1). The *IAR* published an array of articles grounded in a "great men" notion of history and culture: Cesare Beccaria, Christopher Columbus, Giovanni Da Verrazzano, and Philip Mazzei. Attention was also given to contemporary personalities in a section entitled "Profiles of Excellence" with biographic essays on actor Armand Assante, author Helen Barolini, scholar Leonard Covello, politician Geraldine Ferraro, singers Liza Minnelli and Frank Sinatra, astronaut Mario Runco, Jr., and others. In addition to book reviews, scholarly articles included "A Statistical Profile of Italians in the USA" by Lydio Tomasi, "Ethnic Issues in Psychotherapy" by Aileen Sirey, and "Italian American Studies: Struggling Toward Empowerment" by Jerome Krase. The journal also offered a place for creative writers, publishing the works of Mario Fratti and Joseph Tusiani.

With the second issue, Cali-Balancio announced "a 25% increase in volume" between Issues 1.1 and 1.2. She also solicited "your help in convincing the '*pezzi novanta*' (big chiefs) you know to subscribe for your schools and organizations" (Cali-Balancio 1993, 2). By October 1994, the publication of Issue 3.2 was delayed by "several months"; the cause was attributed to the lack of "MONEY" (Cali-Balancio 1994, 3). Funding for that issue and the previous one was provided by a subvention from New York State Senators Guy Vellella and Nicholas Spano. A fund-raising campaign was initiated to underwrite the journal. With Vesce's retirement and the closing of the Verrazzano Institute in 1993, the journal was in need of a new home (Vesce 2009).

In 1996, the *IAR* found that home at the Calandra Institute, with then director Joseph Scelsa serving as publisher and Vincenzo Milione serving as editor. According to Scelsa's preface "Reintroducing *The Italian American Review*," the publication became part of the Institute's "new and expanded mission" (Scelsa 1996, n.p.) in keeping with its designation as a university-wide research institute.<sup>4</sup> A number of changes to the journal became apparent: a redesigned logo, the establishment of an editorial board, and use of the American Psychological Association as the house style. The new subtitle now identified the *IAR* as "A Social Science

Journal of the Italian American Experience.” From that moment, the *IAR* ceased publishing panegyric articles and creative work. Issues 5.1 and 5.2 consisted of the proceedings from the Calandra Institute’s 1995 conference “Italian-American Studies: The State of the Field and New Directions for Development.”

By the fourth issue, 6.2 (1997–1998), the editorship had passed to Philip Cannistraro, who had been appointed the Distinguished Professor of Italian American Studies at Queens College in 1995. Cannistraro expanded the intellectual rigor of the publication, announcing in the “Notes to Contributors” that the *IAR* was now a peer-reviewed journal. In addition, he revamped the editorial board with an extensive list of scholars from academic institutions beyond the City University of New York, including Italian historians working on emigration issues. Cannistraro quickly established his editorial imprimatur by publishing a number of essays by fellow historians, many of whom explored the varied forms of Italian-American politics from anarchism to communism, from fascism to antifascism. He conceptualized a special issue (8.1) on the Italian-American radical press.

Cannistraro was diagnosed with cancer in 2001 and consequently passed away four years later. During that time, he continued to serve as the journal’s editor but, understandably, not always in the same capacity. As a result the journal floundered, with spotty copy editing and issues being published months, even years, late. The last issue, 9.2, while dated Fall/Winter 2002 was actually printed in 2006. The previous year, the Calandra Institute’s acting executive director Peter Vellon sought to revive the journal, appointing historian Nunzio Pernicone of Drexel University as its new editor. In an open letter announcing this initiative, Pernicone wrote that the *IAR* “has languished in a state of crisis for the last several years because of inadequate funding and the prolonged illness of its editor” (Pernicone n.d., n.p.). Pernicone offered a new scholarly publication entitled *The Journal of Italian American Studies*. Unfortunately, this new chapter in Italian American Studies was quickly sabotaged by several vocal Italian-American individuals within the City University of New York and outside of the academy whose larger agenda was to undermine Vellon’s leadership of the Institute; as a result, the publication never saw the light of day.

Dean Tamburri’s appointment signaled a fresh and welcomed beginning at the Institute. He immediately listed the journal’s resurrection as part of his priorities and planned to offer the *IAR*’s editorship to the soon-to-be-appointed Distinguished Professor of Italian American Studies. When Fred Gardaphé was named the new Distinguished Professor in 2008,

Tamburri deemed it inappropriate that a literary scholar serve as the editor of a social science journal. Tamburri named me the *IAR*'s editor because of my social science training as a folklorist and my decade-long association with the journal. (In addition to acting as the associate editor, I served as the guest editor of a special issue, 8.2, on Italian-American folklore.) In addition, he hired several dynamic new staff members whose duties also include working on the *IAR*: Lisa Cicchetti serves as the production manager, providing the journal's bold cover design and handsome layout; and Rosangela Briscese is the invaluable managing editor who has been involved in every step of the process in reviving the *IAR*.

Although we have done away with a subtitle, the primary focus of the current *IAR* remains the social sciences. In keeping with my interdisciplinary training as a scholar of expressive culture, I have expanded the journal's purview to include research on topics relating to the humanities such as film, visual arts, and music, as seen in Joseph Cosco's article on Woody Guthrie's recording *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*. The revamped (and smaller) editorial board reflects this new direction, as does the adaptation of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. We have decided to maintain the journal's standing policy of not publishing literary criticism and creative work. We believe the fellow publications, *VIA* and *Italian Americana*, meet the existing needs for literary production and analysis within the field of Italian American Studies.

I am committed to an ethical professionalism as the journal's editor. That is why you will not see essays by members of the editorial office or editorial board in these pages or read reviews of books penned by those members.<sup>5</sup> Reviews of books, films, and websites (we hope to include exhibitions in the future) will be written by scholars familiar with the subject matter but not personally affiliated with the authors or creators of the respective works. This professional standard is already proving to be a challenge given the relatively small community working in Italian American Studies. The journal has expanded its pool of reviewers beyond those scholars working primarily in Italian American Studies to reflect the growing recognition of the field and its import for other areas of study. We are deeply committed to the blind review process, and Rosangela Briscese and I have gone to great lengths to assure fair and balanced readings of submitted essays that have been deemed suitable by members of the editorial office. We are all indebted to those scholars who have provided thoughtful and constructive reviews of essays submitted to date as a service to the field.<sup>6</sup>

We are particularly grateful to two scholars who have volunteered to serve as review editors: historian Nancy Carnevale for books, and cultural



studies scholar Laura Ruberto for film and digital media. This is a first for the journal, in which individuals outside the supporting institute offer their services to the field, a fact that attests to the growing collegiality within Italian American Studies and the high regard the Calandra Institute has achieved of late.

It may strike some as odd to be relaunching a print publication in our digital age. We are investigating how to provide the journal online either through entities like JSTOR or the Calandra Institute's website. On-demand publishing allows us to control the quantity of copies produced thus eliminating overstock, a problem that has plagued the Institute since taking on the journal fifteen years ago.

We invite you to subscribe to the journal and contribute financially to its success. In keeping with the spirit of cultural philanthropy, we wish to thank the American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit and its then president, New York Supreme Court Justice Dominic R. Massaro, for providing a grant in 2006 to assist in the journal's relaunch.

Italian American Studies continues to develop as we consider new perspectives and directions in our understanding of Italian-American history and culture. Areas of study such as race, gender, and trans-nationalism, among others, help us to not only reexamine past narratives with fresh eyes but also to consider previously ignored and unexplored topics. The flag-waving triumphalism of the white ethnic revival that emerged during the 1970s is a suitable subject for study, but it is not the basis for rigorous and sustained scholarship. In this regard, we find ourselves in a new round of reflection and re-evaluation, a *ricorso*, to use eighteenth-century philosopher Giambattista Vico's term, toward an ever-evolving state of becoming.<sup>7</sup> It is my hope that the new *Italian American Review* will serve our collective aspirations for continued and fruitful study of Italian Americans as an arena for intellectual discourse.

## Notes

1. As a result of this considerable interruption, we have decided to number this issue of *IAR* Volume 1, Number 1 (as opposed to resuming the journal's numbering system, which would have made this issue 10.1) at the recommendation of several librarians on best practices for periodical numbering.
2. See also "Brooklyn Academy of Music Program and Magazine" (1949) and Sorrentino (2000, 330-1).
3. The Calandra Institute's library is missing Issues 3.1 and 4.2.
4. See Scelsa (1997, 289-306) and Massaro (1997, 45-55).
5. I am pleased to list here the most recent contributions to Italian American Studies by members of our editorial board and editorial office: Giorgio Bertellini, *Italy in Early*

*American Cinema: Race, Landscape, and the Picturesque* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Nancy Carnevale, *A New Language, A New World: Italian Immigrants in the United States, 1890–1945* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Simone Cinotto, *Terra soffice uva nera: Viti vinicoltori piemontesi in California prima e dopo il Proibizionismo* (Turin: Otto, 2008); Donna Gabaccia (co-editor with Loretta Baldassar), *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010); Fred Gardaphé, *Importato dall'Italia e altre storie* (New York: Idea Publications, 2009); Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Laura E. Ruberto, *Gramsci, Migration, and the Representation of Women's Work in Italy and the U.S.* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010); Joseph Sciorra (editor), *Italian Folk: Vernacular Culture in Italian-American Lives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); Sciorra and Anthony Julian Tamburri (co-edited with Giuliana Muscio and Giovanni Spagnoletti), *Mediated Ethnicity: New Italian-American Cinema* (New York: John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, 2010); and Tamburri, *Una semiotica dell'etnicità. Nuove segnalature per la scrittura italiano/americana* (Florence: Franco Cesati Editore, 2010).

6. Scholars have begun to question peer review, raising concerns about partiality, academic cliques, and the protracted process required to prepare an essay for publication. Some journals are using the Internet to make the review process more transparent and expeditious. See Myers (2009, B4) and Cohen (2010, A1, A3).
7. I am not using the term *ricorso* to apply Vico's three stages of humanity to my history of the IAR or my understanding of Italian American Studies, nor to suggest that we are experiencing either growth or decay, but merely to acknowledge that we are at a moment in our scholarly work that calls for reflection and a re-examination as we move forward. See Gardaphé (1996) for a historization of Italian-American literature using Vico's theories.

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## Bellas and Fellas in Cyberspace: Mobilizing Italian Ethnicity for Online Youth Culture

DONALD TRICARICO

Contemporary youth subcultures are distinguished by styles that express a collective identity. The 1970s disco trend galvanized an Italian-American youth subculture in New York City known as “Guido.” Previous research investigated the symbolic representation of ethnicity in youth styles and ethnic labeling in the public discourse (Tricarico, 1991, 2001, 2007, 2008). The appearance of an Internet chat scene known by the pseudonym *ItalChat* opened a window on the way youth articulate ethnic identity on “the level of rhetoric and in conversation” (Maira 2002, 191). The construction of ethnic boundaries was an ongoing project that constituted ItalChat as a cultural space.

The relationship of ethnicity and youth culture has largely been overlooked in American sociology. Cornell and Hartmann (2007, 211–36) disregard age as a source of “internal differentiation” within ethnic groups and the possibility of youth culture as a “construction site” for ethnic identity. The social anthropologist Jenkins (2008, 68) is alert to the importance of ethnicity for “life-course transitions, particularly before the assumption of social adulthood,” but discussion is limited to schooling and the labor market. However, the intersection of ethnicity and youth popular culture is being mapped in the field of youth studies.<sup>1</sup> A theoretical approach focuses on “youth agency,” or the “meaning-making, narratives, cultural productions, and social engagements” of young people as they “engage popular culture” (Maira and Soep 2004, 246). Contemporary youth cultures are “discursive” formations with invented identities and blended or hybrid styles (Austin and Willard 1998, 4). While the Birmingham School interpreted youth style as a response to class relationships after World War II, subsequent investigations have spotlighted ethnicity (Bennett 2001). Research in the United States has focused on racial minorities, notably George Lipsitz’s studies of Mexican-American Pachucos in the Southwestern United States, which has produced hybrid cultural symbols such as the zoot suit and the “low-rider” automobile. Hip-hop has become the most intriguing ethnic youth subculture in the literature (Rose 1994; Dimitriadis 2001). Sunaina Maira (2002) has called attention to immigrant and second-generation cultures with a study of South Asian “Desi” “party” subculture in New York City that mixes elements of an ethnic heritage and popular culture.

Guido expands the discussion to a European immigrant ethnicity that remains racially ambiguous. Like black and Latino ethnicity, it is still referenced to inner-city slum neighborhoods. Guido has roots in ethnic neighborhood culture in New York City that shapes a route to American popular culture and a relationship to black youth culture. A “concern with the local” (Bucholtz 2002; also Back 1996) counterbalances the focus on diaspora ethnicity found in globalization perspectives (Maira 2002; Sansone 1995).

Guido presents an opportunity to study youth popular culture as a construction site for Italian-American ethnicity. An approach that emphasizes the social construction of ethnicity allows for ethnic social and cultural forms that are adaptive and fluid. In contrast to the assimilation paradigm, it restores meaningful ethnic agency to Italian Americans beyond the immigrant generation. Italian-American youth culture is interpreted as an artifact of local circumstances, in particular demographic and structural circumstances. A broader emphasis on expressive culture is a counterpoint to a deviance perspective both in the scholarly literature and the mass media.<sup>2</sup>

## The Study

Internet chat rooms warrant a “virtual ethnography” casting the researcher as a participant-observer of synchronous interaction (Mann and Stewart 2000, 195–215; Hine 2000). This method facilitates “a better understanding of participants’ ranges of identity performances and the meaning those performances have for them” (Kendall 1999, 71). A chat room is a “site where language takes place” (Mann and Stewart 2000, 195). Language is “the most fundamental means of symbolic work” (Willis 1990, 99), and in chat rooms it typically assumes the form of a conversation—“a fluid, interactive process in which all participants take turns to contribute, shaping the direction and structure of the text jointly as they go along” (Schirato and Yell 2000, 108–9). Meaning in ItalChat was literally created in the “writing” of youth, using keyboards and video monitors. Chat has evolved a vernacular of “written conversations” (Rheingold 1993) that is a hybrid of speech and writing. As such ItalChat was studied in a manner comparable to the “writing cultures” of urban graffiti taggers (Austin 1998) and “the notetaking/passing” of “young girls at school” (Prettyman 1998). Access to this new technoculture gave Italian-American youth the opportunity to become “producers” as well as “consumers” of “common culture” (Willis 1990).

Chat communication can also be apprehended as an “artifact” (Mann and Stewart 2000). It is text that can be printed as hard copy and warrants

content analysis. This especially applies to personal home pages or website pages linked to screen names and accessed from inside the room or in a sort of anteroom where a list of screen names inside the room was available. Home pages were more conducive to stylized presentations of identity because they were asynchronous. As the research progressed, they incorporated digital photography, which added the dimension of meaningful “looks” that became increasingly necessary for “hooking up.”

The Internet was initially conceptualized as a “virtual world” separated from the “physical world” and social divisions such as race, class, and gender (Hine 2000, 144; Mann and Stewart 2000, 215). However, this view has been supplanted by the realization that online and offline experiences are “continuous” (Wilson and Peterson 2002, 450–3; Kendall 1999). ItalChat was embedded in the field of local Italian-American youth culture. Symbols and meanings could be interpreted from a position in “familiar real world cultures” that tempered “the insubstantiality of the virtual venue” (Mann and Stewart 2000, 195–215). Hine (2000, 221) maintains that this is methodologically significant because “the use of different ways of observing and communicating with participants provides a kind of triangulation through which observations can be cross-checked.”

There are complex legal and ethical issues concerning the privacy of Internet communications (Hine 2000; Frankel and Siang 1999; Kraut et al. 2004). The chat rooms are publicly accessible, at least to the ISP subscribers, and produce “published information.” The ISP’s “terms of service” agreement did not preclude the kind of scholarly research conducted for the study. The further step was taken to safeguard the anonymity of individuals in chat space by not using literal quotes and by using pseudonyms wherever possible. A precedent for the latter is found in Jacobson (1999) in order to “disguise digital identities” while trying to preserve the “flavor of images evoked” by screen names. The identity of the ISP and the precise location of ItalChat are also concealed. Issues of privacy are not peculiar to Internet research but shared with offline ethnography (Kraut et al. 2004). Informed consent was not solicited to minimize distraction, an issue that is also present in offline ethnography. However, youth affiliated with the subculture were made aware of my research interests in offline conversations. I initially learned of “the chat room for Guidos” from them and was tendered invitations to join the chat room, which was available to me as a subscriber to the ISP. I first visited ItalChat in late 1999, although formal data collection took place from January 2000 to September 2001. Observation presupposed a low profile achieved by a screen name devoid of youth culture meaning. A strategy of “lurking” for

short durations sought to minimize requests to chat, which were respectfully declined.

Online chat was a nascent youth culture trend when data was collected. A chat scene positioned local Italian-American youth in a youth culture practice that has since evolved into extensive sites for social networking such as Facebook and YouTube. ItalChat occupied a tiny “niche” within the cyberspace universe of a major Internet company owned by a global conglomerate. Commercial ISPs mediate the vastness of the Internet for subscribers. They offer uniform content and the opportunity to participate in interactive formats, chat rooms, and message boards with ISP subscribers. While uniform content gives the Internet experience the properties of a mass medium, chat rooms and message boards function as interactive “niches” (Thornton 1995, 14). In contrast to message boards and even instant messaging, chat rooms mediate synchronous connections to a group of age peers. This media space transposes a culture of “youth formations” predicated on little or no “adult surveillance” into the home (see Austin and Willard 1998). Member-created chat rooms were established and named by individual subscribers under a “terms of service” agreement and were available to millions of subscribers who paid uniform monthly fees. Like other chat rooms sponsored by the ISP, ItalChat was created by “members” rather than by the ISP and assigned a monitor who regulated content. It was embedded in a roster of chat rooms created by members of the Internet service; a survey of this roster revealed a multiplicity of identities including an array of ethnicities, lifestyle interests, and a selection of youth subcultures such as “Goths” and “Thugz.” In contrast to message boards, chat rooms have to be created daily in real time.

The name “ItalChat” is a pseudonym for two chat rooms that were listed separately on the ISP roster of member-created chat rooms. However, the two rooms had a membership (recognizable by screen names) that moved seamlessly from one to the other and evidenced the same vernacular culture. Both were up and running every evening that I searched the ISP roster during the period of data collection. Accessibility was on a first-come, first-served basis and both rooms operated at full capacity at peak times. A maximum of twenty-three subscribers could be accommodated, although this was subsequently expanded to thirty. I discovered nine other rooms that appeared to be affiliated but their existence was short-lived. The number of rooms in operation seemed to be largely a function of demand rather than ideological or style differences. ItalChat rhythms reflected youth social schedules; weekday usage surged by late afternoon,



suggesting the end of the school day, and was “off the hook” late into the night. The age of ItalChat participants seemed to range from late teens to early twenties when offline leisure options expanded. While age is likely to be embellished online, it could often be checked against other identity presentations (e.g., as college students).

ItalChat can be described as a “life style scene” (Irwin 1977). The foundation of this scene was a “microculture” composed of “flows of meaning which are managed by people in small groups that meet on an everyday basis” (Wulff 1995, 64). While there are noteworthy differences with offline “microcultures” that feature face-to-face interaction, the concept calls attention to the way members “choose cultural concerns that relate to their specific situation and reformulate them on their own terms as far as possible” (64). ItalChat adapted the agenda of an offline youth subculture that revolved around identity display, social networking and sociability, and prospecting for dates and sexual partners.

ItalChat youth invested considerable energy in the stylized presentation of identity. This referenced familiar offline elements, although the Internet occasioned a different kind of spectacle. Stylized presentations routinely appropriated popular media texts, such as the lyrics of a favorite song: “The way I feel is sexual. It can’t be intellectual.” Home pages facilitated on-screen face work and self-advertisement anticipating the popular youth sites Facebook and MySpace. The computer screen provides a virtual wall for cyber writers. Virtual culture allowed for the creation of “expanded identities” (Turkle 1995) and “life-movies” that were more “imaginative” than “expressive” (Gabler 1998).

Born in Italian Skies  
 Sent Down to Brooklyn  
 To Put Sparkles in Your Eyes  
 Freestyle Goddess  
 Livin in this Bensonhurst Fairytale<sup>3</sup>

Fantasy was not only acceptable but expected. However, this was a virtual embellishment of a local cultural script. A local cast of characters was transparent in virtual ItalChat narratives.

ItalChat was a place to “hang out” where the regulars knew your name. It anticipated the structured social networking sites Facebook and MySpace except that it grew out of local peer group networks. ItalChat was not the creation of isolated and “disembodied” individuals. It may have been founded by the members of a specific peer network as a way

to communicate online as a group in real time. Local cliques were transplanted whole. As with my example, many were likely directed to ItalChat by someone offline; two informants purchased a subscription to the ISP to engage offline friends in the new scene. On one occasion a request was issued for “someone” to “leave” the room so that a “friend” could enter. Youth routinely brought local cliques into the picture with “shout outs.” ItalChat participants were often personal acquaintances who knew your surname as well as your first name. An offline informant routinely connected with her offline social circle late at night when she “should be doing school work or going to sleep.” Peer group loyalties centered on the neighborhood (e.g., “Bensonhurst is the best”), which is the cornerstone of a vernacular ethnic culture. There were ubiquitous references to the neighborhoods that map the Italian-American presence in New York City: Morris Park, Throgs Neck in the Bronx; Bensonhurst, Gravesend, Marine Park, Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights in Brooklyn; Astoria, Ridgewood, Howard Beach, Middle Village, Whitestone in Queens. The wide geographic distribution makes it likely that many youth stumbled on the site as ISP members. While a personal referral was not necessary, personal strangers had to be cultural insiders.

Chat room presentations of self and “hanging out” were often a pretext for “hooking up” with the opposite sex: “Chasin the Italian Ladies. Lookin for a Guidette!” Although digital photographs were increasingly prerequisites for hooking up, the limited repertoire of visual cues meant that sexual interest was primarily conveyed through wordplay rather than meaningful looks. Heterosexual interest could be communicated with blunt directness: “Where’s my Guidettes at?” It was often matter of factly scrolled in chat text like the copy for personals’ advertisements: “m/19/Italian”; “18/f/Italian/Bensonhurst.” Relative anonymity may have promoted more blatantly sexualized presentations: “Any ladies in here wanna sex me up?”; “Saving Sperm for Cancun.” While females could follow a romantic tack, they also affected a sexual gaze: “Any nice Italian stallions in here to talk to?”; “I Love Pretty boy Italians”; “Where are the *brascioles*?”<sup>4</sup> Anonymity may have promoted a challenge to a masculinist ideology that framed “Guidettes” as sexual property that could be “used and abused” (Tricarico 1991, 46). In ItalChat, females subverted the masculinist ideology of Guido when they represented as sexual predators and objectified males: “Where are my Guidos!” A “Full-time Guidette” appropriated the cruising rituals of male car culture for “Guido runs.”

The work of hooking up could move to a more private online space for “instant messaging” or to an older communications technology in the telephone and ultimately to an offline encounter. The cultivation of

online prospects served as the major interface with life offline, affording youth dissatisfied with a dwindling pool of eligible Italian Americans in the neighborhood a way to access the burgeoning metropolitan diaspora. Competition for eligible partners promoted self-aggrandizement and invidious distinction: "I'm better than you." There was skirmishing among males posturing for female attention. A virtual altercation once erupted that threatened to move offline:

A: I'll meet you anywhere you want.

B: You're a punk.

A: Ha, Ha.

Competition for dating and sexual partners set the limits of "third-place" sociability.

### Ethnicity and Youth Identity

Social identity is the answer to the question, "Who are we?" (Nagel 1998). Italian ethnicity was necessary for legitimate access to ItalChat. ItalChat presentations unequivocally signified that "we" were, above all, "Italian." It was made clear in the room name on the ISP roster. It was overtly and repeatedly stated in a setting where language mattered and nonverbal cues were missing. It was routinely asserted in personal advertisements inserted into the chat room scroll: "male/Italian/19." It was a necessary feature of identity presentation, and considerable energy was invested in transacting ethnicity on the computer screen. Failure to communicate the proper ethnic signals elicited questions: "Are you Italian?" and "Is everyone Italian in here?"

Although an Italian identity was necessary and presented as self-evident and natural, it was not sufficient as a credential. The collective claim to being Italian ("we") was implicitly coded to signify a local youth subculture. Insiders could infer this from meaningful symbolism conveyed in screen names such as "BrooklynItalian" and "ItalianGQ." Since ItalChat was designed to achieve a critical mass of subcultural youth, it was important to communicate the insider meaning of "Italian." This was available in "Guido," a common Italian male name that marks a local Italian-American youth subculture since the 1980s. Guido signaled a meaningful connection between popular culture, especially cool youth styles, and Italian ethnicity:

Its all about spikey haired Guidos, fly cars, cafes, Being Italian, How well you shake it, expensive clothes, looking Bello/Bella, XTC, and Da House musick.

The Guido name exercises a local monopoly on the appropriation of Italian ethnicity for a youth culture strategy; the name “Cugine” (“cousin”), which was popular in the 1980s, and another kinship term “Goombah” were not commonly used in ItalChat. Guido had wide currency in ItalChat and true “insiders” knew the code. It supplied a dominant theme, a building block, for screen name architecture (“BrooklynGuido”). “Guido” and the female derivative “Guidette” signaled insider credentials (“Where my Guidos at?”) and articulated a more exclusive subcultural boundary (“If you’re not a Guido get out”).<sup>5</sup>

While Guido implied “being Italian,” it did not name a room. Several attempts to open a room in the name of Guido failed to attract a substantial and consistent following and were short-lived. This likely reflected dissatisfaction with an identity that was stigmatized in the public discourse and, more importantly, in local youth culture scenes for its street culture pose (Tricarico 2007). A lengthy thread on an Internet message board sponsored by Club NYC, an organization that represented the New York City dance club industry, framed Guidos as a “major problem”: “The club scene in NYC has gone down hill so fast. Why? In one word Guidos.” Guidos did mount a counterattack: “We need more Guidos to fill NYC Clubs”; “It’s all about the Guidos in ’98!” However, a youth identified as “Italian” expressed disenchantment with Guido as an ethnic symbol: “Italian does not equal Guido, grow up.” I did not witness an outright referendum on this issue in ItalChat and encountered only one repudiation of Guido: “IM A GINNY NOT A GUIDO SO DON’T TELL ME ‘HOW U DOIN’. THAT GOES OUT TO ALL OF THE GUIDOS THAT LISTEN TO WACKTU [a play on commercial FM radio station WKTU] AND FREESTYLE.” Moreover, this objection posted on a personal web page expresses minor insider differences of style (i.e., jargon and musical taste) and avoids harsh moral accusations. There was increasingly widespread use of historic ethnic insults, especially “guinea,” but without generating an overarching identity (see below). These historic epithets were compatible with Guido as one ItalChat youth made clear: “I’m just the ordinary Guinea and Guido I guess.” The lack of consensus about a youth identity symbol enhanced the value of ethnic solidarity.

### Ethnicity as a Device of Style Linkage

Being Italian was situated in a youth style performed offline. Guido coalesced in a collective response to disco in the 1970s. Club culture was quintessentially Guido and had totemic status in ItalChat:

There is no better music than freestyle.

House music is life. Without it there is No Life.

Dance music supplied a central identity motif: "ItalianFreestyleBella." Dance song lyrics were quoted in chat text and sampled for home pages, recalling the lyrics hand-painted on "Guidomobiles" in the 1980s. One home page evoked the physical milieu of the dance club with a digital graphic of an iconic glittering silver disco ball rotating against a wall of luminescent color, recalling the miniature disco balls suspended from the rear-view mirrors of the "Guidomobiles." Clubbing, the ritual of privileging local dance club venues as youth culture practice, was celebrated as the quintessential act of "subcultural production." Clubbing credentials were submitted as subcultural capital:

Its clubs, clubs, and more clubs.

We tear up the Dance Floor.

Loyalties were expressed for clubs currently patronized by subcultural Italians such as *Sound Factory*: "You Can't Compare That Club To Anything." On club nights there was excited anticipation:

Factory

Off

The

Hook

Tonite

[scrolled]<sup>6</sup>

Rendezvous were arranged: "It's club night my Guidos. Anyone going to the *Palladium* tonite?" Individuals identified as "club promoters" extended invitations for their "guest list." Clubbing was the reference point for a distinctive "Italian look." The home page profile of a nineteen-year-old female adapted a MasterCard television advertisement that manipulated ethnic signifiers to dramatize conspicuous stylish expenditure:

\*Price List\*

Versace Top \$379

Prada Thong \$95

Moschino Pants \$95

Dolce and Gabbana Bra \$119

Gucci Purse \$320

Cabrio GLX \$27,000

The Look When I Step Out of My Car

\*Priceless\*<sup>7</sup>

Male screen names reference to the men's fashion magazine *GQ*, an arbiter of the Guido club look (e.g., "GQGuinea").

Club culture hedonism was expressed in the nomenclature of "hottie." ItalChat discourse reconciled a conspicuously sexual persona with ethnicity: "Where are my Italian Hotties!" The term especially identified a female sexual gaze in the heightened sensual environment of the dance club ("Im at the clubs hanging out with all the hotties"). Appropriation by females flouted traditional patriarchal authority with "turn heads" and "break hearts." The nomenclature also repudiated the derivative Guidette label and was extended to Italian males, weakening Guido as an identity symbol in the process. The Hottie symbol was invoked for one of the two long-running ItalChat rooms, suggesting the ascendance of club culture hedonism over masculinist Guido street values. "Hottie cool" was referenced through home page links to a local dance club industry website that sponsored contests for the "hottest" contestants, males as well as females, represented in digital photographs.

### Poaching Hip-hop

Club culture styles were taken for granted or naturalized as subcultural practice. However, hip-hop was a new symbolic repertoire for Italian-American youth at the time of the study. Indeed, it was only beginning to cross-over to white youth. New York City's Italian-American youth have had a formative relationship with urban black musical culture that began with jazz and became marked with a turn to doo-wop in the 1950s followed by soul and disco. It was not surprising that Guidos began appropriating hip-hop prior to the seismic crossover of white youth in the late 1990s. This entailed more than a style shift since local Italian-American youth identities have become increasingly opposed to "blackness" (Tricarico 2001). ItalChat furnished new resources to resolve this contradiction. Characteristically, ethnicity did the heavy lifting for the appropriation of hip-hop.

Interest in hip-hop focused on the stylized "gangsta" idiom. Gangsta is a rap genre that flaunts themes of "ganglife, or more generally, life in the ghetto from the perspective of the criminal (or liminal, transgressive) figure" and has even defined "a new genre" called "don rap" that ironically mines Mafia themes (Krimms 2000, 70-83). Gangsta music and music videos have proliferated in the mainstream media, graphically depicting the "playa principles" embraced by "the pimp," "the hustler," and "the mack" (George 1998, 50). ItalChat youth evidenced intimate identification with black street culture images; thus, a self-proclaimed

Guido lived in *Crooklyn*, the title of an autobiographical Spike Lee film, and Bronx Guidos borrowed the hip-hop designation “Boogie Down Bronx.”

The words and narratives authored by another youth category expanded the expressive capabilities of Italian-American youth, including a new vocabulary of personality traits (“phat,” “fly”), new performance repertoires (“illin’” and “sweatin’”), and new gendered poses (“playas” and “pimps,” “hoes” and “bitches”). There seemed to be sheer enjoyment in using the words of gangstas. ItalChat gangstas used the expression “aight,” a southern folk corruption of “alright,” dropped final consonants (“pimpin’”), and substituted “a” for “er” (“playa”) and “z” for “s” (“boyz”), with the latter often exaggerated as a final consonant (“Boyzzz”). They adopted the use of the verb form “to be” that ItalChat chatters identified as “Ebonics”: “Be pimpin hoers nationwide.” Perhaps nothing indicates their embrace of urban black youth jargon more than the use of the word “nigga,” a symbolic reversal of a racist epithet intended to resignify an aggressive, genuine blackness: “Sup my niggaz,” “I love my tru niggaz,” “F\_\_K You Niggaz who hate me.”

In a setting that privileged words, gangsta furnished a cool lexicon for a youth culture pose committed to hedonistic consumption: “I’m into chillin, cruising, pimpin, partying, drinkin, blazin.” It established an idiom for dramatizing values of consumption and masculine power that were at the center of the Guido performance:

Pimpin da Benz . . . Spendin da phat cash  
My pockets are always fully loaded like a gun.  
Pimpen the Bitchez

However, ItalChat youth were not content to mimic gangsta as “wiggers.” Instead, they naturalized appropriations with subcultural markers:

I’m a gangsta. 100% Italian.  
Full-time Guido. Pimpin da Hotties  
wack . . . phat . . . strunz  
Im a playa for life, a real Guido  
Im Italyz Finest. GOODFELLAS. Pimpin the Girls.  
Wassup to my peeps. Forza Italia  
Giocatore [“player”] Anthony

Italianizing gangsta was also evident in the substitution of the historic ethnic epithets wop, dago, and especially “guinea” for the central gangsta identity “nigga”:

ILlest Guinea  
GinnyPimp  
Ginzos have da phat cash  
USweatDisGuinea  
I'm a straight-up Ginny!  
For All U Wannabe Giniz Go F\*CK Yourselfzzz.

While the use of epithets like guinea suggest mimicking of gangsta, a “bad” ethnicity had been formulated by a Bronx street gang called “The Golden Guineas” in the 1960s. It was also articulated by a local DJ in the late 1980s for a song called “Guido Rap” that featured the verse “Hey Guinea, Guinea.”

Gangsta furnished a cool new idiom for articulating the place-referenced youth identities rooted in the ethnic neighborhood, a central motif in urban Italian-American culture:

Representin Astoria to the fullest. Big ups to my Astoria crew.  
Shout to my guineas in Bensonhurst  
Bensonhurst in Da House

At the same time, Italian neighborhood culture was reformulated in terms of the “ghettocentric” core of gangsta hip-hop (Rivera 2003, 98): “What up my ghetto people?” Italian urban places were reframed by gangsta idioms and myth. One male referred to himself as “straight outta Brooklyn” in lieu of the rap group Public Enemy’s original reference to “Compton,” California. Bensonhurst became known as “da Hurst,” a play on the “da hood,” the primordial place “Where a guinea can be a guinea.” Italian neighborhoods were reborn in the language of gangsta:

Bad Asstoria  
Throgz Neck  
Thugz Neck  
Howard Bitch  
Howard Biatch

Italian-American “ghettocentricity” crossed the city line to Nassau County (Long Island): “Floral Park, New York, Da Suburban Ghetto.” A “GangstaPrincess” from relatively affluent Whitestone staked a claim to “High Class ghetto chic.”

Gangsta restored aggressive masculinity to a youth culture pose compromised by disco styles shaped by gay men. Gangsta reinforced the hypermasculine bent of Guido, especially its street code and the sexism and misogyny of its gender strategy. However, females also assumed a gangsta pose reconciled with ethnicity:



Puttana Princess

Dis Bella Runs Da Hood

Puppa Bella Be Makin You Sweat

[“*puttana*” is a derogatory Italian word signifying “whore”; “*puppa*” is Sicilian for “little doll”]

Gangsta “Bedda” (Sicilian for Bella) paid tribute to the home country: “Dese Palermo streets raised me crazy like whoa.” Gangsta bellas challenged the derivative Guidette persona with a female sexual gaze:

I Pimp da Fellaz

Im the one that makes all the pigeonz drool and all you scrubs look like foolz

Watch your man cause guys be sweatin us like whoa

Tell me why these hoez don’t like me

The stylized jargon of gangsta critiqued the male hegemony inherent in Guido:

Y is it wen a guyz a playa hes considered a PrO

But wen a Girl take ha turn

SHeS considered a Ho

A brazen sexuality eschewed any pretense of being a good Italian daughter:

If your girl only knew

that you waz tryna get wif me

and if your girl could only see

How you be dissin her ta talk to me

Wha would she do

Stop Jocken

### Elaborating Ethnic Difference

In urban youth scenes, identity performances tend to be on the surface. Ethnicity is symbolically represented in styles and signified by obvious markers like flags and decals. In a discursive setting, however, ethnic meanings were elaborated and ethnic discourse became a performance strategy. Ethnic constructs in ItalChat referenced a local ethnic culture but also mass media representations. Ethnic discourse revealed a demand for essential themes. Ethnic idioms were invariably mined for youth culture difference and distinction.

ItalChat youth demonstrated scant interest in the “materials from the past” that ethnic groups typically use to construct cultural bound-

aries (Nagel 1998, 58). The “little traditions” of *la famiglia* that Covello (1967) placed at the social and moral “center” of Italian life in New York City in the 1930s echoed only intermittently in ItalChat: “What meat does your mother put in the sauce?” The primordial value of *famiglia* was compromised by youth culture concerns like web page “shout outs” that acknowledged family members alongside “my peeps” (friends) and gangsta idioms such as “R.I.P. Nonna.” In a space organized for hooking up, there was only one guy looking for “Sweet Italian girls that still have some morals, can cook, knows respect.” The persona of the “Italian Princess,” which reworks an ethnic stereotype for Jewish Americans, was an arriviste distortion of traditional family morality. The Princess is “Daddy’s Little Girl,” an identity that challenges the primacy of the Guido boyfriend in the name of fathers who “spoil” their daughters with consumption (i.e., “shopping”). They are “too spoiled to work.” Ethnic meaning was also extracted from the name “Bella,” which is Italian for a “beautiful woman/girl” and is a term of endearment within the Italian family. While “hottie” can be construed as a *puttana*, like Guidette, Bella re-appropriates iconic family values. It was a further assault on the male power of Guido notably in slogans such as “Bellas B4 Fellas” and “Fellas Come and Go But Bellas Are Forever.” *Bella* inspired a derivative identity for males: “Chillin with Mah Bellas and Mah Fellas.” While “fella” could be read as ethnic street culture (i.e., the Mafia movie *Goodfellas*), gendered discourse produced the male derivative *Bello*.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the central importance of the home country for Desi youth (Maira, 2002), local urban places authenticated ethnic identity in ItalChat: “Sal from Bensonhurst,” “BrooklynGinzo,” and “BronxBella.” Bensonhurst was anointed as quintessentially Italian:

Bensonhurst, the home of the Italians  
 Bensonhurst . . . where an Italian can be an Italian  
 Where the real Italians are at.

As the city’s most populous Italian-American community (roughly 100,000 in 1990 and 60,000 in 2000), Bensonhurst is to Guido what the south Bronx is to hip-hop. Its ethnic authenticity was validated in the 1980s song “Bensonhurst, 86th Street” by a “Guido rapper” that celebrated the vitality of a cruising scene in the vicinity of Italian cafes. The iconic status of Bensonhurst is enhanced as the city’s Italian-American “last stand,” the place where Al Sharpton was wounded in 1989 in a knife attack while leading a march through local streets to protest the death of an African-American teenager in a street fight (Tricarico 2001). Still, while Bensonhurst

was a place to “be Italian,” there were other places such as dance clubs and chat rooms where an Italian youth can be “cool.”

ItalChat representations exhibited the vernacular culture of these Italian-American urban spaces. This featured a jargon formed by the collision of Italian peasant dialects and lower class New York City “street” English. An ethnic neighborhood speech style used in ItalChat incorporated snippets of a lower class Italian-American vernacular comparable to “Spanglish” indicating that the way English is spoken becomes a basis for ethnic identity beyond the immigrant generation. ItalChat routinely included phrases such as “Che brutto!” and common scatological references such as “vafanculo,” “brasciole,” “strunzo,” and “puttana” that were frequently misspelled (“compare” as “goombah” or “goumba”) or mangled by chat room linguistic conventions (“Kbrutto”). The crux of a stylized speech pattern was English vernacular as spoken in inner city Italian-American neighborhoods. At the time of the study, this was signaled by the phrases “fuggedabout(t)it” (“forget about it”) and “How you doin’?” The latter became a stock greeting in ItalChat, instantly establishing subcultural credentials. Vernacular Italian-American was spoken by the “organic” Guido personalities on local dance music station WKTU FM, “Brooklyn’s Own” Joe Causi and Goomba Johnny.

ItalChat opened a window on the importance of mainstream media culture for constructing ethnicity. While there were references to Italian-American celebrities such as Mike Piazza of the hometown New York Mets, the most important media frames were fictional Mafia narratives. Hollywood productions such as *Goodfellas* and *The Godfather* and the HBO TV series *The Sopranos* inspired online life-movies in ItalChat. In one session, five of twenty-three screen names included the words “capo,” “wiseguy,” “Mafia” (twice), and “Gotti.” Perhaps reflecting its absorption by the entertainment media, the Mafia was a source of fanciful poses:

Question: What’s your job?

Answer: I’m a hitman for the mob! LOL.

Mafia imagery was occasionally appropriated for the female pose. Thus, “MafiaBella” called her girlfriends “Mafiettes” and fashioned a gender-appropriate Mafia fantasy: “For as far back as I can remember, I wanted to marry a gangster.” Compound names linked Mafia imagery to youth culture values such as being “sexy” or the “club” life. Mafia media narratives illustrated a traditional ethnic morality in personal web pages:

I made them an offer they can't refuse.  
Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.  
[*The Godfather*]

Never rat on your friends and always keep your mouth shut.  
For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a gangster.  
[*Goodfellas*]

Nostalgia for a family culture that is the primordial center of Italian-American identity was expressed in memorable lines from *The Godfather*:

A man who doesn't spend time with his family is not a real man.  
Never take sides against the family.

An authentic relationship to the Mafia was based on personal Mafia connections: "You wouldn't talk so tough if you knew who my family is." Alluding to powerful connections is a ritual performance that was the subject of an inside joke: "If you know who I know you'd fugged-about who you know"; the ritual performance includes the practice of not dropping names. While real connections could not be discounted because the Mafia historically enforced a street code in Italian-American neighborhoods, this blurred with mass media narratives; thus, a home page shrine manipulated images from *The Godfather* portraying John Gotti as "a man of respect." Youth culture and Mafia intertwined when Goomba Johnny was incarcerated for evading federal tax on income derived from a Manhattan supper club owned by John Gotti and Gambino family associates. ItalChat graffiti expressed the mandate to "Free John Gotti and Goomba Johnny." The imprisonment of an organic media celebrity generated a subcultural crisis in ItalChat: "the station sux without him." Goomba subsequently rapped about his new street credibility on WKTU in the recording "Feds Threw a Party," which reiterated the complaint of discrimination by the FBI against Italian Americans (Tricarico 2007).<sup>9</sup>

Ethnic discourse in ItalChat featured a "constructed primordialism" (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, 16-19): "Being Italian is not a nationality. It's a gift." This "gift" had divine origins, conferring the status of a chosen people with an ethnic soul:

"The best thing that God could have given me is being Italian."  
"Being Italian is a gift. And I'm blessed with it."

Ethnicity was represented as an ascribed essence: "The initiation to be Italian is to be born one." Ethnicity was visceral: "Italian is My Blood. Its

My Heart." A visceral and absolute ethnicity was grandiose: "I love being Italian. I wake up smiling because I got pride. It's everything I want." Images of "blood" and "race" that portrayed ethnicity as much more than a lifestyle "option" were epitomized in an anthem of unknown origin that appeared in several profiles:

Italian Pride is in My Mind.  
 Italian Blood is My Kind.  
 My Italian Pride I will not hide.  
 My Italian race I will never disgrace.  
 Italian Love is all around.  
 My fellow Italians never let me down.  
 Show your pride.

I did not witness a single challenge of an absolute and privileged Italian essence from inside the ethnic boundary.

Given the powerful claims made in the name of ethnicity, it is not surprising that individuals struggled to present impeccably Italian credentials. On one occasion, the perfunctory ritual of self-presentation turned into a competition for ethnic authenticity:

"100% Italian"  
 "100% here as well"  
 "100% Italian (born in Italy)"  
 "110% Italian"  
 "I am the Italianest"

This effervescent ItalChat moment substituted emotional vitality as the basis of solidarity in contrast to shared style. An ethnic absolute enchanted what was otherwise a consumption-oriented youth subculture: "It's not a big deal. Being Italian is a big deal. It's all about being Italian." Being Italian even transcended the hierarchy of "cool": "Not only am I perfect, I'm Italian." While style is superficial and can be poached, essentialized ethnicity is an "inalienable" source of "cool" (Milner 2004, 207). The value of ethnic capital led to a creative search for the ethnic essence. "Italian" possessed the purity that was diluted in the hybrid identity "Italian American." A quintessential ethnicity was available in the historic insults of "wop" and "guinea." According to Isaacs and Pye (1976, 75-7), appropriating labels of "inferior status and outsidersness" conveys "boldness and strength." Insider discourse reversed ethnic stigma with a "banteringly, even affectionately, and sometimes, in a complicated semi-jocular or say-it-with-a-smile transference" (78): "What up my woparones!" Power was claimed in the name of outsider stigma: "That's

Mr. Guinea to U." An oppositional Italianness was couched in youth culture idioms:

Where my guineas at?

The Ginzo is here!!

I am the ginniest ginny in this room!

Historical epithets were linked to youth culture cool in hybrid screen names like "Sexy Guinea" and "GuinzoGQ." The frequent misspelling of "guinea" may have followed the convention of phonetic spelling in chat rooms (other spellings were *gini*, *ghini*, *giny*, *ginzoe*). It also points to identification with hip-hop, including the agency to make symbolic alterations suggesting that meaning has been formidably altered, as in the inversion signified by "nigga" and "niggaz." Historic epithets regenerated the sense of ethnic authenticity originally attached to Guido, which has since been diluted by style (Tricarico 2007).

### Repertoires of Struggle

"Symbolic repertoires have little impact in identity construction unless those repertoires can be put to use" (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, 241). In ItalChat, privileged ethnic capital was mined for "status honor" (Milner 2004, 207–8). Invidious distinction was amplified by youth culture hyperbole:

Italians Are the Best

Italians Do It Best

ItaliansCantBeStopped

Italians Rule and the Rest Drool

Italians Rock the Rest Jocks

If its not made in Italy it sucks

Everyone is equal but Italians are better.

You are what you are but being Italian is better.

Ethnic honor was mobilized in a struggle for power. This was projected on a global stage:

Italians

Rule

This

Fawking

World.

[scrolled]

The struggle assumed epic dimensions:

To be Italian is to be loved by some, hated by many, respected by all,  
harmd by none.

A true Ginny has many enemyz.

It was nevertheless a local affair pinpointed to familiar cultural arenas: “<wE aLrEaDy DoMiNate NyCz CLuBZ, BaRz, CaFeZ aNd OrGaNiZed CRiMe>.” In the symbolic economy of gangsta hip-hop, others were doomed to inferiority, insignificance, and ethnic envy and, thus, deserving of being “dissed” (disrespected). Dominance referred to style performances and ethnicity was manipulated to stake a meaningful claim to cool styles; authentic ethnicity legitimated an authentic relationship to Italian designer brands like Gucci valued as mainstream fashion. However, style repertoires were embedded in street culture: “Don’t mess with the Italians because we kick your ass.” Gangsta style and Mafia morality were melded in this personal web page ode to “Da True Life of A Guido”:

Don’t ever Chill Wit Anyone But Fellow Guidz.

Respect Thoz Who Should Be Respected and F\*CK Everyone Else.

Family Life in Any GuidoZ Mind is Very Important So If Anyone Comz

Close 2 Da Family Make Sure Its Taken Care of.

Never Talk About Da Family Wit Outside Sources.

Those Who R A Disgrace 2 Italians Should Be Shot Not Once But Twice . . .

A moral code rooted in a lower class street culture and a provincial ethnicity can explain why collective self-affirmation was bound up with an “exclusionary politics of identity” (Bloul 1999, 7):

What kind of Italians we got in the room?

To be Italian you must go through The Initiation . . .

Be Born One

No Fakes Allowed

A web page featured a graphic of an obscene hand signal intended for “Fake Italians” with an inscription, borrowed from hip-hop, “It’s an Italian thing.” While ethnic groups typically guard against the filching of ethnic capital, representing ethnicity as subcultural capital that is subject to commodification makes it vulnerable to “wannabes.” Essential ethnic boundaries locate ethnicity outside style, creating tensions with its own youth culture agenda, for example, by weighing phenotype over consumption style. The increasing demand for personal photos underscored the importance of “Italian looks,” although this obfuscated the relevance of ancestry. Nevertheless, the belief in absolute ancestry was emphatic: “If

you're not 100% Italian you ain't Italian." Partial or hybrid identities were pronounced illegitimate. "PUERTOSICILIAN" was ignored. A female "Mexiwop" from California attracted the interest of only one person, a male who took the opportunity to come out of the ethnic closet: "I'm not sure what I would be . . . my father is Italian and my mother is Spanish." However, the subcultural ideology employed a "one-drop" rule: "There are two kinds of people in the world, those that are Italian and those that just wannabe Italian."

A privileged ethnicity was a claim to scarce youth culture resources such as space and "cool" style and, above all, members of the opposite sex:

I love being an Italian boy. I can wake up smiling everyday cause I know I got pride and I got anything I want in the world! IM me Italian girls.

An "ethnosexual boundary" (Nagel 2003) strictly limited sexual relationships to insiders:

If you ain't Italian I'm sorry.  
Don't waste my time if your not Italian.

The nomenclature of *Guido* and *Guidette*, *Bella* and *Fella* located ethnic claims in a youth subculture:

Don't IM me if youre not a GUIDO.  
I am 20 years old and I live in [a Queens neighborhood]. I am 100% Guido.  
I love Italian girls only (only ones I date).

Ethnicity was a source of sexual distinction when males appropriated the identity cliché "Italian stallion" popularized by the *Rocky* films: "Once you go Italian, you neva get off the Stallion."

### Border Work

Making meaning in ItalChat was predicated on drawing a boundary in relation to the intersection of ethnicity and style. This was especially intended for local youth subcultures with similar styles competing for scarce resources—a relationship that reflects ethnic, racial, and class positioning. ItalChat registered tensions with Latinos that focus on a shared commitment to electronic dance music. While Italian-American and Latino DJs were represented on WKTU FM, "The Beat of New York," it was possible in ItalChat to have Latino music without Latinos:

A: Why are all the Spics In here?  
B: Cuz they wanna be italian



A: Enrique is on KTU

B: I love this song!!!!

Ethnic closure made it easier to naturalize the cultural property of others: "I love freestyle and I love to be Italian."

Ethnicity was also invoked to set limits on appropriation of styles identified with significant others. While the groundswell of gangsta that energized ItalChat was opposed on the level of style, for example, as a preference for freestyle or house music, style differences were loaded with ethnic meaning:

V: Whats the Deal My Italian Niggas?

R: Italian Niggas . . . That's a Nice Mix

R: ← WHITE BOY

When "ANTHONY DA GINNY" exclaimed "YO MY NIGGAS IM BACK," it was met with a racist reprimand:

I feel real sorry for you Italians that like to speak moulians.

For some reason in ItalChat, aight and niggas has entered into the Italian language.

While vernacular English expressions including chat jargon apparently did not compromise ethnic authenticity, hip-hop warranted a hard line:

IF YOU SPEAK OR ACT GHETTO DON'T IM ME.

Stop talking like a nigger . . . maybe people would like you more

I hate wannabe niggers.

I ain't sending my picture to anyone named WOP Cause "WOP" means  
WANNABE BLACK PERSON

Framing gangsta in the context of racial division brought awareness of a central contradiction:

B: If U Don't Like Blacks Y Do U Talk like them, Listen to There Music and Dress Like Them?

J: U Have A Good Point E

B: I always ponder this.

This rumination ended abruptly, since no one in the room was able to conjure a definition of blacks as not "other." I never witnessed a defense of this apparent contradiction—having it both ways—and ItalChat youth were not willing to concede that they were "acting black" if they were affecting hip-hop styles. While the contradiction had been articulated, the problem of being Italian in relation to blackness remained unresolved (see below).

Subcultural assumptions had to be defended against challenges launched from the outside. In one instance, someone presenting as “a little white boy” and “an American” living in “New Jersey just across from Staten Island” made disparaging ethnic comments about “Italians”: “Why all you Guinnys come to my country America anyway.” This was followed by a diatribe in which “greasy guineas” were portrayed as “not white.” The stream of invective was interrupted by an “Italian” who dismissed “little white boy” as “a redneck.” Another “Italian” chimed in that the “little white boy” would “probably soon be on ‘The Jerry Springer Show.’” Other detractors narrowly targeted youth culture claims: “Puerto Rican Girls Blow Italian Girls Away.” One sniper ridiculed Guido symbolism:

Any Mafia members in here?  
 Any Guidettes here?  
 Don't touch the hair.  
 Anybody drive an IROC.

The most compelling subcultural challenges originated in the local urban culture. The concerted invasion of ItalChat by three Albanian youths linked ethnicity, consumption style, and street culture. The relationship between Italian Americans and more recent Albanian immigrants has been characterized by accommodation and intercultural exchange. The principal Albanian settlement in the city has been in the North Bronx, notably the Belmont section of the Bronx dominated by Italians informally identified as a “Little Italy.” While there was no mention of a specific offline encounter, local tensions may have been ignited by an online boundary. Just prior to the invasion, “Albanian Princess” entered one of the rooms. She apparently felt comfortable being in ItalChat and may even have been extended a personal invitation but was asked to vacate the premises because “this was an Italian place.” In any case, a surprise attack was mounted during a routine weekday evening chat. Three persons who identified themselves as Albanians stole into the room one at a time, a plan that presupposed “intelligence” about access protocols. They did not spring into action until the third person had entered. The intruders had screen names that signaled identities as male Albanians; online *noms de plume* became *noms de guerre* for a concerted “flaming” that released a scroll of invective against Italians. Except for the Albanian term “*Hadje*,” translated as “*Come on*,” the attack was carried out in American youth culture jargon. Their stated target was “Italians,” not specific individuals, and their assault was made as “Albanians.” Its main thrust was staccato assertions of “Albanian Power” combined with ethnic insults: “Italians suck.” Incessant scrolling of phrases such as “ALBANIAN CHAT” and “ALL ITALIANS GET OUT

OF THE ROOM” had a disorientating visual effect. A sense of usurpation was enhanced by the use of unconventional fonts and type in the colors of the Albanian flag. This intensive scrolling effectively overwhelmed an Italian response for a period of time, prompting the invaders to declare that ItalChat had been liberated. One of the invaders renamed the room “Italbanian Chat” until a second was emboldened to celebrate a complete takeover with the name “Albanian Chat.” The symbolic liberation of ItalChat was studded with patriotic pledges of support for the nationalistic struggle with the Serbians. At this juncture, the phrase “KLA ALL THE WAY” (Kosovo Liberation Army) was scrolled in bold red (the color of the Albanian flag) blocking other text. The concerted Albanian attack usurped ItalChat routines for over one hour.

Italians initially kept to routines like flirting but were staggered by the sudden explosion of dissonant chat that plunged ItalChat into crisis. They gradually mounted a counterattack that defended their (cyber)turf and fundamental subcultural ideology. The Italian majority returned fire by raining ethnic insults on Albanians. Disparagement singled out Kosovars, suggesting a familiarity with the recent Eastern European conflict; salt was rubbed in this ethnic wound with expressions of support for the Serbian military. However, the conflict quickly assumed a local dimension when Albanians were accused of “filching” the “good name” of Italians:

Albanians are wannabe Italians

Albanians are fake Italians

They even got Italian flags on their cars and start to believe that they are

The Albanians turned this charge around, flaunting their own ethnic cultural capital: “Italians are wannabe Albanians.” Italians kept returning to the wannabe theme, apparently sensing that they hit a nerve: “You just want to be Italian and your not.” An intriguing exchange of ethnic insults drew on historical patterns of racial subordination in the United States and the racial anxiety of immigrant groups from Mediterranean Europe. As the Albanian barrage escalated, Italians were disparagingly referred to as “blacks,” and Sicilians were singled out as “Africans,” possibly reflecting a familiarity with regional prejudices in contemporary Italy where Northern Italians disparage Sicilians as “Africani.” When an Italian responded in kind, the charge flew back that “Albos don’t have niggas . . . but Sicily does.” Labeling each other “black” was significant since both groups have had hostile relationships with African-American youth and may be interpreted as a declaration of hostility between erstwhile allies. Ironically, invidious darkening of Italians was complicated by Albanian claims to gangsta authenticity:

I'm a real Albo nigga  
Ya Niggas Can Jock My Style But It Takes A Real Albo Nigga To Rock The  
Bitches Wild  
ALBOS BE RUNNIN ITALCHAT  
Albos sweat Italians

Italians did not challenge the Albanian claim to gangsta authenticity.

The upheaval ended with a hasty Albo retreat. I did not witness another altercation except for scattershot sniping by a lone Albanian the week following. A veteran of the invasion who billed himself as “an Albanian wrecker” maintained that it was the direct result of fighting between rival Bronx crews. There was a final, telling volley that reduced the conflict to matters of consumption style. In this tack, the clothes worn by Albanians were “uncool” alongside the designer brands “that we wear.” An Italian “female” chimed in, “I hate their cologne” (implying close physical proximity) and a “male” mocked their cars: “If UR Albo Its Nothin to be proud of . . . U buy ur cars at the Federal Auto auction.”

The Albanian affair was replete with self-aggrandizing claims to ethnic and style distinction that hinted at ethnosexual tensions. Subcultural challenges in ItalChat were often initiated by males pursuing “ethnosexual adventures” (Nagel 2003). The relative anonymity of cyberspace effectively removed the physical danger associated with sexual prospecting on urban turf. Monopolizing sexual access was integral to the masculinist control of turf found in lower class communities in New York City (Schneider 1999). It was at the root of a street confrontation in which a black teenager was killed in Bensonhurst in 1989 (Tricarico 2001).

Because their numbers have dwindled, Italian Americans have been less able to control their urban turf, a development that was being played out on *cyber* turf. The volatile interplay of sexuality and ethnicity was reenacted on numerous occasions on ItalChat turf. An amorous “Irish boy” from one of the outer boroughs “looking for an Italian woman to love me” became disgruntled when he attracted no interest and derided “Italian girls” as physically unattractive (e.g., “ugly body hair”). Several Italian males returned the insults, which escalated into trading claims about the fighting prowess of “Irish guys” and “Italian guys.” It is notable that “Irish boy” was tolerated until he challenged masculine power; racialized masculinity would have been stopped upon presentation. Indeed, preemptive and exclusionary warnings were issued to nonwhites (“no spics”). Comments denigrating African Americans were gratuitously inserted in stylized presentations.

Racial enmity fueled another episode that combined masculinist concerns of turf and sexuality. “Papi” jolted the usual routine of stylized display and hooking up with the introduction: “FINE BLACK MALE LOOKING FOR A FINE WHITE WOMAN.” In a linked web page “Papi’s” persona was elaborated as a “Black Latino” from “Brownsville,” embellished in gangsta imagery as a “Ghetto” in “Brooklyn.” When ordered to leave the room, “Papi” aired a “beef” (a hip-hop term) stemming from an altercation the previous evening: “Find out what happened Last Night in Glendale Queens.” This headline was scrolled until it filled the screen and was followed by the inside story that the night before “Italian boys” had “backed down” from a street fight when Papi and his group showed up in their Glendale neighborhood on the Brooklyn border.

Papi: All the Italians ran from my boys earlier in the day and that night  
 A: Yo Boyz Lets Go To Brownsville and Show Them Who Italians Really R  
 Papi: No White Boy Has Ever Come Here Looking For Trouble And Never  
 Will  
 B: No one was running we were all there waiting for you  
 Papi: And at Cleveland [a local high school] all the Italians ran and left the  
 Italian kid to get beat up  
 Papi: 70 Italian Guys Ran Away from Black and PR Guys  
 A: Hey Nigger  
 Papi: Find Out Before Your Times out Guineas

The posturing about masculine toughness veered back to the sexual when Papi turned his attention to the “sisters” of “Italian boys,” unleashing a cascade of racial invective:

Go Back to Africa  
 Morocano, Ziangaro [Italian for “gypsy”]  
 Get Out Moolie [corruption of “*malignano*” for “eggplant”]  
 Italians Only

When Papi retreated, his account was corroborated by two individuals in the room who were privy to the local grapevine. With the masculine honor of Italians discredited, ItalChat youth attempted to restore the damage done to the subcultural ideology by switching to a status code based on style distinction: “They show up in vans . . . we rollin in the Benzos.” They staked a further claim to style distinction by invoking a lower class racial stereotype: “Papa in the Housing Project.” The claim to style superiority allowed them to arrive at symbolic closure: “Italians kick Moolies Ass.” The boundary was repaired and the space was reclaimed in the name of Italian ethnicity. When someone asked “Is anyone a true Italian

in here?," implying that policing an ethnic boundary in cyberspace was a daunting affair, a "Dominican" female came forward. When one of the males who fought off Papi demanded her expulsion, an "Italian" female made a plea for racial tolerance, which won the day. Perhaps ItalChat had wearied of border work, although it probably mattered that the interloper was a female.

Like the Albo invasion, the Papi incident was another cyber version of an urban turf battle with offline reverberations. Although no one asked how a street culture adversary discovered their online redoubt, Papi must have shaken any complacency that cyber turf would be easier to defend than urban turf.

### Insider Challenge

A more profound boundary crisis was instigated by a "21 year old Italian female" named S., who lived in Bensonhurst and claimed fluency in the Italian language, which she occasionally exhibited. She ate pasta on Sunday in a traditional ethnic home. She had insider knowledge of the ethnic neighborhood. She dropped the names of subcultural youths and venues: "Did you see \_\_\_\_\_ last night at the *Sound Factory*?" Her impeccable subcultural credentials were corroborated by several others and she seamlessly fit into ItalChat routines. It was jarring, then, when S. announced a sexual interest in "Black men, 21-25" to the exclusion of "white boys." Her sexual politics were scrolled over and over again in staccato bursts of bold lettering: "Don't Ask for a pixx if UR a White Boy. Black Guys Only." This included a terse reference to her personal web page for further elaboration where a cryptic message awaited: "White Boys Read Profile Stop Asking Why." She became more defiant when reproached: "I've been with black guys for 4 years." She subsequently identified "Dominican" and "Puerto Rican" men within a field of sexual interest, which was now spanning further into the African diaspora.

An Italian-American female crossing the "sexual color line" (Nagel 2003, 117) flagrantly challenged a cornerstone of the subcultural ideology linking a monopoly on dating and sexual "property" with a system of masculine honor. Presenting as a "Blonde and Blue-eyed Italian" mocked a strategy of unambiguous whiteness as well as claims to a pure Italian ethnicity. Impugning the virility of Italian males in relation to nonwhite males and usurping their proprietary claim to Italian females attacked the masculine codes that underlie street culture. She denigrated the privileged sexuality of Italian males evidenced in the frequently used persona of the "Italian stallion." S. lumped "Italian" men together in a racial taxonomy

with “other whites,” although she later portrayed whites as “less virile” than Italians, delineating a hierarchy of sexual performance in which Italians occupied a middleman or “in-between” racial status (Orsi 1985). While this measured sexual compliment may have thrown ItalChat males off guard, no one in the room staked a claim to black ancestry in what constituted a formative subcultural moment. Mocking male virility was reinforced by denying the claim to physical toughness that is the linchpin of defended Italian-American neighborhood order and was thus an attempt at total emasculation. Physical control over turf implies the ability to exclude rival males from the competition for females by physical force; a perceived threat to local Italian females from young black males sparked the 1989 Bensonhurst “racial killing.” S. astutely linked sexual power and physical power: “I like Black/Dominican/Puerto Rican men Rest of you white Boys are scared of them So that’s a turn on.” The responses of ItalChat youths were consistent with the moral order of Italian-American neighborhood culture:

S.: “Italian guys aren’t as tough as Black guys”

Room: “Black guyz R scared of Italians”

“aint No REAL Italian scared of a fawkin Moolie”

“U Nigga Lover”

“Im not afraid of Black guys S.

I have a Black guy in my family tree . . .

In fact he’s still hanging there”

S.: “Yo I live in Bensonhurst and all these Italian wites Be mad scared of a brother”

Room: “Come to Howard Beach w/your brothers and we will see what happens”

“They will be running for the highway like the last bunch”

“U were probably talking about the Jews”

“All The Gangs That The Spics and Blacks Got . . . The Italians Got 1 . . . The MAFIA.”

The reference to Howard Beach was notable since this small middle-class enclave of Italian Americans was the site of an infamous episode of racial violence in 1986. It inspired Spike Lee’s films *Do the Right Thing* and *Jungle Fever*, the latter film involving an adulterous affair between a working-class Italian American from Bensonhurst and an African-American architect in the firm in which she worked as a secretary. The image of “Howard Beach” is also notable in light of another street altercation in that community in 2005 involving Italian-American and

African-American youths. Finally, it is noteworthy that “the Mafia” was invoked as the ultimate weapon in the Italian-American street code. When S. taunted that “the Mafia was all made up in movies,” she was invited to “Come to Howard Beach and we’ll show you there is no Mafia.” In fact, Mafia social and cultural capitals have been implicated in episodes of street violence in the city’s defended Italian-American neighborhoods.

An eruption was imminent whenever S. was in ItalChat. Even when she was conforming to expectations, her body of work, including her home page profile, was enough to provoke racial invective aimed at African Americans. When she/her persona was not present, she was personally attacked for the repudiation of core group values: “She gives Italians a bad name.” Perhaps most despicable was the embrace of the consummate “other,” suggesting the betrayal of the racial project to achieve “whiteness”; thus, S. was a “sellout,” a “wigger,” and “a moolie lover”—a vernacular term that underscores the ethnosexual boundary. At one point, it was explained that it would be in her self-interest to go elsewhere, since if she was really interested in nonwhite males there were none to be found in ItalChat. Although repeatedly disparaged and told to leave, she asserted a right to remain as an “Italian.”

S. sought to undermine the claims of Italian superiority as an absolute, specifically in relation to nonwhites, and especially in relation to masculinist values of sexual performance and physical toughness. She remained as a provocateur, once advising someone she met in ItalChat to “wear FUBU” for a rendezvous at a Manhattan club (FUBU is a hip-hop-inspired clothing company and the anagram stands for “For Us By Us”). She sabotaged a discussion underscoring the historical affinity of local Italians for black styles with a reminder of the enmity between the two groups, which boiled over when a black teenager was killed in a street fight with local Italian-American youths in Bensonhurst in 1989, and Al Sharpton led a highly publicized protest march through local streets:

S: An Italian stabbed Al Sharpton

C: I hate Al Sharpen

When the thread of cultural crossing was resumed several days later, S. insisted that adopting “lifestyles” did not “make you another color.” In an episode that revealed the complicated agendas of the protagonists, S. received the support of an “Italian female” curiously named Bianca who defended the right of “Black and Latino men to meet Italian girls” in ItalChat. This was folded into an ideology that posited “being white” as the ultimate threat to “being Italian”:



If you're Italian and you consider yourself white you have no heritage. You probably eat Prego [a commercial tomato sauce] and say F\*CK Im Italian."

However, S. quickly turned against this position by asserting that "Italians are white" and that borrowing a "lifestyle" did not impart "another color." This placated the room until S. complained that "there are too many Italians in this country" with their "guinea" ways.

S. was an anomaly that precipitated close scrutiny of her home page profile: "I never saw a blonde haired Italian." Several hypotheses were floated as to her "true identity." One scenario framed S. as "a guy" who was Italian and from Bensonhurst who fomented controversy to cloak a homosexual identity. Another cast S. as "a Black Italian" embittered by racial stigma. There was support for a scenario in which S. was a black male who was "race baiting"; this included a hypothesis that S. was really "Papi," which S. playfully deflected: "No I Be White." The acceptance of an authentic ethnic identity led to a call for insider justice: "We need 2 beat some pride into her." A warning was issued that crossing the ethnosexual boundary was "not going to happen."

After more than a month of turmoil, the "subject of Blacks" was pronounced "Boring!!!" S. abruptly and unexplainably dropped an adversarial persona and resumed the role of sociable insider.

### Conclusion: A New Italian-American Identity

Popular culture has become an important site for the construction of youth identities in contemporary societies. ItalChat depended on the ongoing construction of ethnicity for the symbolic boundaries supporting new cyberrituals in uncharted pop culture territory. In contrast to an urban style spectacle that privileges visual vernaculars, identity in *ItalChat* was communicated via "rhetorical strategies" (Thornton 1995). Opportunities for identity experimentation promoted cultural "crossing" and *bricolage* (Lipsitz 1994, 119). At the same time, a local urban culture constrained virtual processes of becoming.

ItalChat became a relatively "safe space" to "work within and across traditional fault lines" of ethnic identity (Fine, Weis, and Powell 1997, 253). Ethnicity was appropriated from traditional sources in the family and new ethnic forms such as the urban ethnic neighborhood. Appropriation of popular culture in the name of a de-contextualized and re-worked ethnicity demonstrates the ability of youths to create their own readings in the absence of effective adult surveillance. Discursive resources occasioned

the elaboration of ethnicity for a subcultural ideology that reconciles Italian ethnicity with “the new symbolic economy of fashion, entertainment, and media” (Zukin 2004, 173) and “the promise of consumer desire” (Lipsitz 1994, 5–7). Although more open to new cultural meanings, ethnicity is invoked by youth to “constrain what they could become” (McCrae 2003, 57). This reflects the contradiction of ethnic youth subcultures “at one and the same time calling attention to ethnic differences and demonstrating how they might be transcended” (Lipsitz 1994, 135). Ethnic boundaries make it possible to poach and assimilate symbols without surrendering difference. Thus, Italian-American “bricoleurs” meld Italian and English, (black) gangsta and (Mafia) gangster jargon, “wife-beater shirts” and baggy pants, and rap and freestyle music genres. ItalChat suggests that youth turn to ethnicity to delimit a “safe space’ to navigate the “postmodern adventure” (Best and Kellner 2003, 10). As with the appropriation of popular culture such as electronic dance music, invoking ethnicity for Internet chat expresses difference from others who inhabit the scene. Clear ethnic boundaries are an attempt to temper, if not avoid, the “fluidity” of symbols and membership characteristic of “postmodern culture” (Mafessoli 1996).

The construction of collective identity in ItalChat was bound up with power and social hierarchy including the struggle for status. A discursive setting enhanced the opportunity to exploit ethnicity for subcultural capital. Both youth subcultures and ethnic groups are “status groups” that construct identities based on “authentic” and “inalienable” value (Milner 2004, 77). ItalChat afforded a space where ethnicity was cultivated to “extract a premium price” (Arvidsson 2005, 247) in youth style markets. Market value had implications in the competition for scarce youth culture resources such as space and dating partners. ItalChat suggests that status claims are intensely negotiated with local others in a “dialectical interplay of similarity and difference” (Jenkins 2008, 12–14). Local divisions and rivalries refract the appropriation of style, including global flows such as club culture and hip-hop. Cybersparring with Albanians was an extension of tensions in the city’s immigrant queue and reflects turf competition among youths with similar nationality cultures. Blackness amplified turf threats and racial insecurities. The binary moral status of black youths is contradicted by a pronounced affinity for black youth styles. While gangsta is the single most important element in the current Guido remix, symbolic work creates meaningful difference so that hip-hop is not only consumed without black youths but mobilizes an Italian identity to oppose blackness.<sup>10</sup> Although not directly evidenced in ItalChat, a turn to ethnicity has been a response to the symbolic boundaries that constrain the participation of lower class “bridge-and-tunnel” youths from the outer boroughs

in hip Manhattan clubs. Like Pachuco and hip-hop, Guido is a collective challenge to “a history of disenfranchisement from consumer society” (Zukin 2004, 157) in the name of ethnicity. A prestigious consumption style is fundamental to “the struggle for recognition and respect” of ethnic minorities in America (Lipsitz 1994, 121).

An online site was characterized by the “fluidity, occasional gatherings, and dispersal” associated with “urban neo-tribes” (Mafessoli 1996, 76). Interactive opportunities were available to youths throughout the metropolitan diaspora. To this extent, it can be compared to the dance club as a cultural space that promoted the gathering of youth from different neighborhoods. Similarly, ethnicity supplied solidarity for a new configuration of Italian-American youth subculture that transcended local and other insider differences. While Guido is blurred by the erosion of inner city turf boundaries and creeping hip-hop, an Italian-American youth category has become discernible in new suburban destinations where ethnic labels are imposed by others. The Internet furnishes a safe space to align youth culture rituals with new circumstances outside the shrinking ethnic neighborhood.<sup>11</sup>

## Notes

1. Youth culture studies coalesced with the ethnographic research of the Birmingham School of cultural studies in the 1960s. Cultural studies privileges the role of human “agency” in the interactive processes of “meaning-making” within “structures inherited from the past and lived in the present” (Storey 1999, 159). Identity, as well as culture and social forms, are “not something fixed and coherent, but something constructed and always in the process of becoming” and often “incomplete” and “contradictory” (135). Individuals and groups are able to “create their own readings” in a process of “cultural consumption” (Schirato and Yell 2000).
2. Italian-American male peer groups hold a conspicuous place in ethnographies of urban slums (Whyte 1993; Suttles 1968). A recent study by Pinderhughes (1997) of racist violence among young Italian-American males in New York City ignored local ethnic culture and in particular the lively youth culture currents identified with Guido.
3. All collected data is either from chat records or personal web pages provided by the ISP. Original spelling and punctuation have been retained.
4. A “brasciole” is rolled, stuffed meat filet that Italian mothers and grandmothers cook in pasta sauce or “gravy.” It is a phallic symbol in the vernacular culture.
5. Ethnic identity as a problematic credential was reflected in the consternation of “L’Italiano”: “Io sono Italiano. Perché nessuno parlano Italiano qui?” (“I am Italian. Why is no one speaking Italian here?”). “L’Italiano” implicitly denied authentic ethnicity and dismissed ItalChat youths as “idioti, cafoni, stronzi” (“idiots, boors, turds”).
6. “Scrolling” refers to text that interrupts chat dialogue by filling the screen vertically. The intent is to usurp dialogue and take command of the screen.
7. Inclusion of the Volkswagen *Cabrio* suggests creative license in the work of assembling an authentic ethnic style.

8. Hyper-masculine Guido is out of sync with a local club culture that is shaped by a gay subculture and privileges feminine expression (Fikentscher 2000).
9. Appropriation of the Mafia in the name of ethnic authenticity is a response to gangsta hip-hop, which is seen as having “ripped off Italians” in the words of an offline Guido. This provides another way of naturalizing gangsta, which is more appealing as a source of youth culture cool.
10. Nagel (2003, 255) points out that “there is no more potent force than sexuality to stir the passions and fan the flames of racial tension . . . sex-baiting is a mechanism of race-baiting when it taps into and amplifies racial fears and stereotypes, and when sexual dangerousness is employed as a strategy to create racial panic.” Tensions were fueled by racial ambiguity. The frequently linked *Club NYC* website contained a thread going back to 1998 debating whether southern Italians, especially Sicilians, were “black” or “African”:

All Italians from Sicily are part Black.  
Since the island was invaded and there women were raped by Africans that’s  
why they are so dark. Get it??

Racial ambiguity was also the subject of a lengthy and heated thread on the ISP Message Board for “Italian Americans” just a few clicks away from ItalChat. It was actually embraced in ItalChat on one occasion when a male declared that the size of the male sexual organ was a function of ethnicity and credited “Sicilians” with having “the longest penises” because “Sicilian is like half black.” This assertion was not challenged and actually flushed out a male who was “1/2 Sicilian/1/2 Black Right Here From Coney Island, Brooklyn.” A correction was offered that made this more nuanced: “Sicilians aren’t half Black there half African.”

11. One adaptation outside the ethnic neighborhood is *New Jersey Guido*, founded in 2002 by a self-identified Guido who created “the number one nightlife website in all of New Jersey and New York.” In contrast to ItalChat, ethnicity is downplayed as subcultural capital for “youth, beauty, and flash” — a style of “hedonistic consumption” centered on the New Jersey “shore.” See [www.njguido.com](http://www.njguido.com) accessed July 12, 2008. MTV’s *Jersey Shore* has promoted the identification of Guido with the Jersey shore. An ethnic boundary is strengthened by outsider disparagement and entire websites are dedicated to disparaging Guido. See “Guidos Suck” at [www.who-sucks.com](http://www.who-sucks.com) (accessed July 12, 2008). One characterizes “the vast surge in the Long Island Guido population” as a “plague” on a local “way of life” and only thinly veils an ethnic animus toward newly arriving Italian Americans from the city. See [www.getoffourisland.com](http://www.getoffourisland.com) (accessed February 2, 2008).

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## “I Just Want to Sing Your Name”: Woody Guthrie’s Struggles with *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*

JOSEPH P. COSCO

*Oh Sacco, Vanzetti*

*Hey Sacco, Vanzetti*

*Hey Nicola Sacco, Bart Vanzetti*

*I just want to sing your name.*

These simple lyrics may have flowed from Woody Guthrie’s pen, but the larger task of writing a cycle of songs about Sacco and Vanzetti proved to be a mighty struggle for America’s premier balladeer. Woody Guthrie had a legendary knack for knocking off songs in seemingly effortless fashion. He wrote “This Land Is Your Land” one night in a seedy hotel near Times Square. Another night’s work with a borrowed typewriter and a jug of wine produced the seventeen verses of “Tom Joad.” And by now Guthrie had written his classic *Dust Bowl Ballads* and *Columbia River Collection*. However, the Sacco and Vanzetti case, what he called “my most important project,” proved to be a very stiff challenge. All he wanted to do was to sing the names of two Italian anarchists unjustly executed for armed robbery and murder two decades earlier. Why was Guthrie having such a hard time of it? So much so that he threw up his arms in despair and complained in a letter to record producers Moses Asch and Marian Distler (November 4, 1946), “I refuse to write these songs while I’m drunk, and it looks like I’ll be drunk for a long time.”<sup>1</sup>

Woody Guthrie eventually sobered up and wrote the songs that sing the names of Sacco and Vanzetti. The results were mixed at best, and the eleven songs of *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* remain among Guthrie’s least known major works. The album has had its champions, but like much of the extensive literature inspired by this infamous *cause célèbre*, *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* generally has been dismissed by the critics and forgotten by the public. Wayne Hampton calls these ballads “great monuments to two of the American Left’s most notorious martyrs” but later dismisses the work as “merely a few weak, unenthusiastic, and unconvincing songs with which to remember the martyrs” (1986, 124). Biographer Joe Klein argues that despite Guthrie’s ability to identify with Sacco and Vanzetti, “the songs wouldn’t come . . . at least, no really memorable songs came” (1980, 314). In great measure, critics and biographers have discounted the

collection as inferior work and relegated this episode to little more than a footnote in Guthrie's life and work.

Examined more closely, the story of Guthrie's struggles with his Sacco and Vanzetti project can offer further insight into his beliefs and his song-writing and provide a contextual frame for re-evaluating what he called "the most important dozen songs I've ever worked on" (November 4, 1946). Allowing for some hyperbole, Guthrie's characterization of the project as more important than his *Dust Bowl* and *Columbia River* songs underscores the cultural significance of the Sacco and Vanzetti case and the enduring passion that it excited. The quote also speaks to the fact that Guthrie's struggles with the story stemmed not only from personal difficulties during this period but also from the challenge of dealing with the protean nature of the Sacco and Vanzetti case in the hostile atmosphere of post-World War II America. Furthermore, the songs of *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*, whatever their aesthetic qualities, remain important and relevant today as we struggle to deal with our post-9/11 times. Written and recorded during the chilly beginnings of the Cold War and the second Red Scare, and dealing with an episode from the first Red Scare, *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* touches on a number of issues that challenge us today, particularly the political fears and hatreds that threaten to suppress civil liberties, scapegoat immigrants, and corrupt our judicial system in the name of collective national security.

The Italian anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti had been dead nearly twenty years, when, in 1945, Moses Asch offered Woody Guthrie several hundred dollars to "provide a document in song on the famed Sacco-Vanzetti Case" (Asch 1960, 1). Sacco the shoe worker and Vanzetti the fish peddler were convicted of a deadly armed robbery in South Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1920. Seven years later, after Governor Alvin Fuller rejected a clemency plea, the two men were executed. By then Leftists of all stripes had made the case an international *cause célèbre* on the order of the Dreyfus affair. Guilt or innocence aside, the Left was convinced that these poor Italian immigrants had been martyred by a judicial system corrupted by xenophobic hate and fear of radical foreigners. Nearly twenty years later, the case still pained many Leftists, including Moses Asch, who was encouraging Guthrie to write historical ballads about America's radical past (Klein 1980, 313). Asch's own views (1960, 1) were most influenced by Upton Sinclair's two-volume historical novel about the case, *Boston*; Ben Shahn's series of paintings, *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*; and his brother Nathan Asch's novel, *Pay Day*,



the story of a disaffected young clerk set on the day of the Sacco and Vanzetti executions.

Woody Guthrie knew the gist of the story, sympathized with the cause, and, always needing money, he jumped on the assignment. It was perhaps surprising that Guthrie, like so many others, hadn't already written about Sacco and Vanzetti. In a sense, his song "I Just Want to Sing Your Name" expressed the collective voice and vision of dozens of creative artists who had sung Sacco and Vanzetti's mourning since their deaths on August 23, 1927. Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Dos Passos, and other poets contributed to two verse anthologies, *The Sacco-Vanzetti Anthology of Verse* (1927) and *American Arraigned* (1928). Dos Passos and Upton Sinclair took up the subject in prose fiction, while Maxwell Anderson and James Thurber brought Sacco and Vanzetti to the stage. Now it was Woody Guthrie's turn.

Guthrie embarked on the project with enthusiasm and passion. Having looked at some materials provided by Asch, he concluded, "There is plenty here for a good album, on 4½ minute plastics, at that. Hurts me to try to pack it all into one ballad, but guess we can do it. I just hate to see all the other angles left unsung. There is a ballad about Sacco, one about Vanzetti, one about the scene of the holdup and killing, one about the arrest and foney trial, one about all of the screwy witnesses and, one about a general shot of the whole thing, the whole story" (January, 2, 1946). Writing in his notebook in March 1946, Guthrie tries to imagine Sacco and Vanzetti arriving in America from Italy, walking around the big Eastern cities, and realizing that the streets weren't paved with gold: "You saw faces against walls, an eye gone, an ear missing, no teeth, open boils, sores of the syph and you heard that there was no known cure. There was no cure known. And the words whirled and spun around in your head, no cure, no cure known. No cure for the people. No cure for the streets" (2, 8).

Woody Guthrie clearly found a sympathetic subject in Sacco and Vanzetti. The two workers were believed to be followers of Luigi Galleani, an anarchist leader who espoused violence as vital to overthrowing the capitalist ruling classes. However, neither man had been tied to any of the bombings that rocked the United States in the postwar years leading up to the Palmer raids of 1919-21. Guthrie was at the very least a fellow traveler among the Communists, but essentially didn't ascribe to any "isms," with the exception of unionism, both in its labor and social forms. Despite their differences, the three men were all outsiders, and as such sided with the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, the very groups that the Communists championed. The American songwriter and the two Italian workers were kindred souls, utopians with an unshakeable belief in the brotherhood of man, what Guthrie often called "the one big union."

Having imagined Sacco and Vanzetti arriving in the New World, only to find privations, inequities, corruption, and disillusionment, Guthrie makes striking connections between himself, his fellow Dust Bowl refugees, and the two Italian immigrants. "You are Italian and I am from Oklahoma, but I have left out from Oklahoma to do some bigger jobs, just like you left your native house and home back in Italy," Guthrie writes in his notebook. "I saw the same vision that you did and all of us dust bowl families saw your same vision. It is the one big union we all saw. It shines just as bright over your Italy as over the prairies and the flatlands of my dust bowl" (March 1946, 2-3). Guthrie's genius was to use the concept of refugee to form a symbolic alliance between Dust Bowl migrants from America's southern Plains and immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, people such as Sacco and Vanzetti (La Chapelle 2007, 66). In that way, *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* recasts the two anarchists as simple workingmen, union men, men no different from American farmers forced from their land, two men who were executed not so much for their radical politics as for their efforts on behalf of oppressed labor. In letters to Asch and Distler, Guthrie referred to the Sacco and Vanzetti case as the "murder frame up" and called his project the "frame-up" songs (January 2, 1946; November 4, 1946).

For Guthrie, Sacco and Vanzetti stood shoulder to shoulder with American "outlaws" Jesse James, John Hardy, and Pretty Boy Floyd, all worth celebrating in song for fighting unjust laws and demanding that the promise of America be fulfilled. Guthrie's American outlaw-heroes required him to doctor some of the facts and add a veneer of social consciousness. That was not necessary with Sacco and Vanzetti, who were driven by a deep and passionate sense of class consciousness, as is evident in their statements and letters. Guthrie also would have seen parallels between Sacco and Vanzetti and the greatest "outlaw" of all, Jesus Christ. The same forces that "framed up a Carpenter that same way, back over in Jerusalem," as Guthrie put it, were behind the "frame-up" of a shoemaker and fish peddler in Massachusetts two centuries later (quoted in Cray 2004, 153). So, the literary Left's canonization of Sacco and Vanzetti into Christ-like figures would have resonated with Guthrie.

Woody Guthrie had already shown he could write to order with his *Columbia River Collection*. Commissioned by the Bonneville Power Administration just a few years earlier, in 1941, that project had the clear, positive purpose of capturing the "thoughts and ideals" behind the Bonneville and Grand Coulee dams. Stephen Kahn, head of the administration's information division, wanted Guthrie to get a vivid sense of the project and assigned a

chauffeur to give the songwriter a week-long tour of the Columbia River valley. Here was material Guthrie could quickly and concretely embrace: the glorious land he loved so much, a sense of optimism and progress, government as a force for good (unlike the system that condemned Sacco and Vanzetti), and the feel of history in the making. Consequently, in three weeks Guthrie composed twenty-six songs, seventeen of which were collected on the *Columbia River Collection*, one of his best known albums with some of his best loved songs: "Pastures of Plenty," "Roll on Columbia," "The Grand Coulee Dam," "Hard Travelin'," and "The Biggest Thing That Man Has Ever Done."

The situation was quite different with the Sacco and Vanzetti project. In his charge to Guthrie, Asch said he wanted "documentation, what actually happened, not the bullshit in the papers" (Cray 2004, 299). Asch sent Guthrie three pamphlets to which the songwriter refers in a letter (January 2, 1946). They are: Vanzetti's letter seeking clemency from Governor Alvin Fuller ["(which will make a good ballad) (covers whole story and will be sung in his own words)"]; a publication of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, most likely John Dos Passos' *Facing the Chair: Story of the Americanization of Two Foreignborn Workmen* (1927); and *Labor's Martyrs* (1937) by Vito Marcantonio, a Labor Party politician/activist. Still, it is unclear what Asch hoped to accomplish with the Sacco and Vanzetti project, other than simply adding to the story's voluminous cultural record (and, it might be assumed, to sell some records).

Woody Guthrie called himself "a Prophet singer" and saw song as a weapon in the class struggle, "a channel through which the people can vent their anger, frustration, and discontent." He also stressed the folk song's "ability to evoke community and solidarity, to bring back the past and to capture nostalgia, and to cure the soul and generate hope" (Hampton 1986, 97-9). Keeping alive the story of Sacco and Vanzetti might release anger, frustration, and discontent. It might evoke solidarity. But how do you turn one of the Left's most depressing chapters into a source of hope and a cure for the soul? What could be restorative about two Italian immigrants turned into corpses by a corrupt and racist justice system?

Guthrie himself needed a cure for the soul and a source of hope, given the state of his personal life and the tenor of the times. The itinerant songwriter was now settled in his Coney Island home, where he doted on his daughter Cathy and wrote wonderful children's songs, but he was having marital difficulties and was cut off from the support network he had enjoyed during his earlier projects. In early 1947, right around the time Guthrie was recording the album, four-year-old Cathy was killed in an electrical fire. And there were signs that Guthrie was beginning to feel

the effects of the Huntington's chorea that would eventually destroy him. Consequently, *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* "has a lonely feel to it," according to daughter Nora Guthrie (2008), director of the Woody Guthrie Archives. "He was like this spirit hovering around this story." She believes that the patterns of her father's songwriting now were being dictated by his incipient Huntington's, resulting in an album that is somewhat erratic, in and out of focus, charged with the occasional shot of lightning, but ultimately an unfulfilled, unfinished work.

Guthrie also couldn't have been too happy with postwar America or felt too secure about his position there. As a merchant mariner during the war, he saw the conflict as a crusade against Fascism and racial injustice, but postwar America turned out nothing like the egalitarian society he envisioned. Jim Crow was alive and well, and now spawning vicious race riots. The rich continued to exploit the poor, and labor, fighting to preserve high-wage wartime jobs in the face of a soaring cost of living, erupted into a series of strikes. Similar to the time of Sacco and Vanzetti and the first Red Scare, the powerful sought to stifle dissent and branded as subversives the reformers and activists that sought to dissent. World War II had slipped almost seamlessly into the Cold War and the second Red Scare. "During this era, the United States demonized current and former members of the Communist Party and their 'fellow travelers,' and a host of political opportunists fed—and fed upon—the image of the Communist as insidious, malignant, and dangerous to American values," legal scholar Geoffrey R. Stone writes. "It was a period marked by the bare-knuckled exploitation of anticommunism. Fearful of domestic subversion and nuclear annihilation, Americans turned against one another in what would prove to be one of the most repressive periods in American history" (2004, 312). The atmosphere was one of suspicion and mistrust, and Guthrie certainly was not above suspicion. He had already been named as a Communist in a House Un-American Activities Committee hearing in 1941. Testimony had him seducing the troops at Fort Dix in New Jersey, when he was actually in California (Klein 1980, 339).

By 1946, powerful organizations were calling for crackdowns on subversive Communist elements not only in the federal government but also in other public spheres, including the arts. Over the next couple of years, hundreds of writers, directors, and actors were blacklisted, including Guthrie's close friends and comrades, actor Will Geer and singer/songwriter Pete Seeger. However, Guthrie was not about to disavow his Communist sympathies, writing in a letter to his Aunt Laura and cousin Amalee: "The big rich landlords, gambling lords, rulers and owners are cussing the Communists loud and long these days. The Communists always have been

the hardest fighters for the trade unions, good wages, short hours, nursery schools, cleaner workshops and the equal rights of every person of color. Communists have the only answer for the whole mess. . . . So you can call me a Communist from here on. I've been working with them since 1936 in this same way" (quoted in Klein 1980, 340). And Guthrie was doing just that with the Sacco and Vanzetti project, taking up a cause that had been a darling of the American Communist Party in the 1920s. Although Sacco and Vanzetti were not Communists, the two Italian anarchists represented much that was reviled and repressed in post-World War II America. At the same time, the energetic "old Left" of the 1920s and Popular Front period was dwindling, and labor itself was shifting to the right (Lingeman 2007, 210). "Even in the area of culture, where political radicals had been the innovators during the Popular Front days of the 1930s, the Left seemed to be slipping. . . . if not wholly irrelevant" (Klein 1980, 319). We can only speculate whether Guthrie's Sacco and Vanzetti project would have been more successful during the thirties, when the cultural Left was in the forefront, than during the retreat of the postwar years. The fact remains that this album was produced in a hostile atmosphere, which might in part explain Moses Asch's failure to release it until 1960.

Guthrie himself blew hot and cold about the project throughout 1946. In a March notebook entry, he makes a vow to Sacco and Vanzetti: ". . . I have read the pamphlets about you and my mind is not a blank. I will prove this to you by filling this book with your story, the case, and your frame up. . . . I am going to write your history all over again, because the history of you two men is the pure and perfect reflection of the battle of the whole movement of labor" (1, 2). Later, in a tender moment, Woody penned a lullaby in his notebook, presumably to Nicola Sacco's wife Rosa:

Go to sleep  
 Go to sleep  
 Sleepy sleepy  
 Little baby  
 Rosa Rosa  
 Rosey Rose  
 I just want to  
 Sing your name. (15)

However, Guthrie's thoughts were already wandering to other projects: working on an "album of labor martyrs" (with one or several songs about Sacco and Vanzetti); revisiting the Dust Bowl years to improve upon his *Dust Bowl Ballads*; or even undertaking a "racial album" (January 2, 1946).

By the end of the year, Guthrie's writer's block was such that Asch sent him to the Boston area to get a first-hand look at the sites associated with the case (Place 1999, 65). Guthrie had been to Boston two years earlier, during the presidential election. Members of the old Left, with backing from the Communist Party of America, had organized a "Roosevelt Bandwagon," with Will Geer as master of ceremonies and Guthrie among the cast. The Republican press made much of the fact that this was a barely concealed Communist effort. The tour opened in earnest in Boston, where during the first-night performance the audience pelted the stage with stink bombs (Klein 1980, 281, 283).

Little is known about Guthrie's 1946 field trip except what can be gleaned from letters and notebooks, which show him hard at work. A notebook entry indicates that he left Boston by train on October 31, carrying three typed songs, all dated October 30: "I Just Want to Sing Your Name," "Suasso's Lane," and "We Welcome to Heaven." The notebook also has two compositions related to Sacco and Vanzetti but not included on the album. An untitled composition recounts the executions of the two Italians, predicts that a "million million workers/will work for brighter days," and assures the two martyrs that the workers "will speak your name and pray." The second ballad, titled "The Fishermen," begins with Plymouth's fishermen grieving over the deaths of Sacco and Vanzetti and ends with the fishermen's eyes burning with "brighter fires" than sparked by a "jail's electric wires." Guthrie tells the fishermen: "The best way you can fight this battle/Is teach your comrade how to smile/This is the spark to win this world/And not the spark of a copper wire" (October 31, 1946a, 10-11; October 31, 1946b, 12-14).

Yet, four days after leaving Boston, Guthrie wanted to postpone the project. "To delay the most important dozen songs I have ever worked on is more of a pain to me than it could ever be to you," he wrote in a rambling letter to Asch and Distler (November 4, 1946). "But, I feel like the trip up to Boston and its outskirts was just a little bit hurried and hasty. I did not go to all of the spots and places so plainly mentioned in the pamphlets and books because travel is so slow, so hard, from one point to the other – and when we get a dependable car of our own to get from one scene to the other, then I will say farewell to busses, trolleys, trains and street cars that get you nowhere, and will drive my own car from spot to spot as it ought to be." Conceding that the project had "had plenty of time to be developed," he still complained: "I just feel rushed, and I don't want this album about Sacco & Vanzetti to feel rushed, to smell rushed, to taste rushed, nor to sound like something rushed." Arguing that he couldn't write the songs until he had "set my foot on every spot related to the Sacco & Vanzetti

story and case," Guthrie added: "I wont let this be one of those hit or miss affairs. I just cant. I wouldnt for no kind of money." He closed by saying, "I'm drunk as hell today Been that way for several days Hope you are the same." Below his signature, over a rough sketch of a man drinking, Guthrie scrawled, "I refuse to write these songs while I'm drunk and it looks like I'll be drunk for a long time."

Perhaps this was Guthrie's way of procrastinating, but an entry in his notebook following the Boston trip indicates that he honestly felt there was more research to do. Included in a list of reminders related to Sacco and Vanzetti, he wrote: "Find out about Sacco's wife and children. Where they live, work, and so forth. (Did they go back to Italy?)" (18).

Two months later Guthrie was in a sunnier mood and drawing a rather different picture of the Boston trip. In a January 20, 1947, letter to the Communist newspaper, *The Worker*, he spoke of having "visited most of the spots around Boston, Brockton, South Braintree, and Plymouth, connected with the homes, and works, of these two men, and also the scenes of the crime up and down Pearl Street in South Braintree in front of the Morrill Shoe mills there." Sending along a copy of "Ballad for Sacco and Vanzetti" (what became "You Souls of Boston"), Guthrie told the editors he had "several songs started, a couple or three long poems, and several drawings," and suggested that the magazine use several of his illustrations to complement the lyrics.

Finally, around the time of this letter, Asch had his way and Guthrie made the Sacco and Vanzetti recordings. Some of the original lyric sheets show that Guthrie was still writing just days before the recording session. "Listening to them suggests that some of the songs were so fresh that Woody was reading them from a lyric sheet as he sang," archivist Jeff Place wrote in the liner notes for the 1996 reissue (5). Despite the rushed recording job, it would be thirteen years before Asch's Folkways Records collected eleven of the songs and released *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* in 1960.

Guthrie biographers Joe Klein and Ed Cray argue that *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* suffers from a ponderous self-righteousness that had infected Guthrie's songwriting. Cray writes: "The more intense the Cold War, the more Guthrie's lyrics became polemics. Poetry gave way to political speeches in verse. . . . The spare voice and wry comment were gone, replaced by a tone of preachy rectitude. Guthrie was no longer writing about people, *his* people, but about great issues of the day" (Klein 1980, 314; Cray 2004, 299-300). However, one man's polemics are another man's passion, and Guthrie could be said to have made Sacco and Vanzetti *his* people, while

also turning them into spokesmen for the oppressed workers of the world. Part of the problem is that Guthrie felt so strongly about the material that he tried to do and say too much with the song cycle. He wanted to do for Sacco and Vanzetti what Walt Whitman tried to do with the United States, to put it all in verse, but the songwriter didn't have the luxury of Whitman's long lines and long poetic form. Writing to Asch and Distler (January 2, 1946), Guthrie lamented that he had more to say than was possible with the three or four minutes available on the 78-rpm master disks.

Given these limitations, *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* is successful in providing an economical but detailed history of a protracted case with countless subplots. Guthrie's eleven songs cover an array of details, elements, and themes: the historical context of World War I peace negotiations, international economics, American prosperity, and labor activism; profiles of Sacco and Vanzetti and sketches of Judge Webster Thayer, prosecutors, and witnesses; various accounts of the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti on the Main Street trolley; a minute examination of the case and trial; and the story of the execution and its aftermath. In songs that deal with the trial, it is almost as if Guthrie is attempting to retry the case, recapitulating all the defense arguments, exculpatory evidence, and legal injustices that demanded acquittal of Sacco and Vanzetti. Guthrie packs it all in: the prosecution's machinations and weak circumstantial case, the conflicting ballistics testimony, the potential jury tampering, the flip-flopping state witnesses, the sound alibi witnesses, and the confession to the crime by a member of the Morelli gang. The result is an uneven album that is repetitive, doesn't always effectively meld lyric and music, and offers only a few songs that might have broad appeal. But if *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* is an unfulfilled musical project, the album's interest and strength derive from it being a radical poetic document that mixes polemic and passion in sometimes very artful ways. Devoting an entire album to a national disgrace, and doing so during the beginnings of the second Red Scare, when men such as Sacco and Vanzetti were anathema, made this project "even more bold and remarkable" (Comeau 1997, 33).

For the 1996 reissue of *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*, Smithsonian/Folkways altered the order of the songs to better present them to listeners unfamiliar with the case (Seeger, 4). This rearrangement underscores the coherence of this early concept album. The songs start with the broad background, proceed through the trial and execution, and end with Sacco and Vanzetti's ascension into heaven. Pete Seeger's musical setting of Sacco's letter to his son serves as a coda. (All quoted lyrics are from the liner notes of this 1996 reissue.)



The first song, "The Flood and the Storm," serves as a sort of overture that sets the postwar scene, asserts Sacco and Vanzetti's critical roles in labor's revolutionary struggle, and underscores the importance of the story and its two protagonists in American political and social history.

The world shook harder on the night they died  
Than 'twas shaken by that Great World's War;  
More millions did march for Sacco and Vanzetti  
Than did march for the great War Lords.

Guthrie clearly places the story within the larger context of the Red Scare and fears of a worldwide workers' revolution, concluding with the rather biblical lines:

Hindenburg, Wilson, Harding, Hoover, Coolidge  
Never heard this many voices sing.  
The zig-zag lightnings, the rumbles of the thunder,  
The singing of the clouds blowing by,  
The flood and the storm for Sacco and Vanzetti  
Caused the rich man to pull his hair and cry.

Despite their critical role in this drama, Sacco and Vanzetti are simply two good men who "preached to the workers."

The second song, "Two Good Men," continues that theme with its memorable chorus:

Two good men a long time gone  
Two good men a long time gone  
(Two good men a long time gone, oh, gone)  
Sacco, Vanzetti, a long time gone,  
Left me here to sing this song.

The portraits of Sacco and Vanzetti are the conventional ones: Sacco, the expert shoe cutter and family man; Vanzetti, the fish peddler and studious dreamer. These two good men come to America, organize workers, get branded "anarchist bastards" by Judge Thayer, and are electrocuted. The song ends with a call to arms urging everyone to work like Sacco and Vanzetti and fight on the union's side for workers' rights. One way to do that is found in the song's concluding line: "Jump in with me, and sing this song."

That last line of "Two Good Men" provides a nice segue to "I Just Want to Sing Your Name." This simple song has the sound and feel of one of Guthrie's children's songs and concludes with the affirmative lines that carry an echo of Molly Bloom's soliloquy in James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

Oh oh oh, ho ho ho  
Yes yes yes yes yes yes  
Yes yes yes yes yes yes  
Well, I just want to sing you name.

Guthrie deftly sings the names of Sacco and Vanzetti and calls for a radical response to their execution in the fourteen stanzas of "Red Wine." He begins:

Oh, pour me a drink of Italian red wine,  
Let me taste it and call back to mind  
Once more in my thoughts, once more to my soul  
This story as great, if not greater, than all.

The first few stanzas narrate the arrest and detail the charges, both formal and implied: that the men carried guns, were radicals, had dodged the draft during World War I, and acted with a "consciousness of guilt" when arrested. To the charge of draft evasion, Sacco and Vanzetti respond, "The rich man's war we could not fight,/So we crossed the border to keep out of sight." Fortified with drink, Guthrie covers the trial and executions, before concluding with one of his strongest calls for the use of violence, which at the time could have been construed as seditious. "I thought those crowds would pull down the town,/I was hoping they'd do it and change things around." It is telling that this most radical of the Sacco and Vanzetti songs was one of Guthrie's favorite compositions, according to his son, Arlo Guthrie, whose rendition of "Red Wine" concludes Peter Miller's 2007 documentary film *Sacco and Vanzetti* (Briley 2009, 118).

The next song, "Suasso's Lane," gives voice to Bartolomeo Vanzetti and four of the alibi witnesses who claimed to have seen him peddling fish in a north Plymouth alley the day of the robbery and killing. The song concludes with Vanzetti making an appeal that could have come directly from Guthrie himself:

I tell you working people  
Fight hard for higher wages,  
Fight to kill black market prices;  
This is why you take my life.  
I tell you working people  
Fight hard for cleaner houses,  
Fight hard for wife and children;  
That's why you took my life.

Sacco and Vanzetti "both have died,/ And drifted out with the Boston tide" in "You Souls of Boston," but Guthrie still is not finished with the

case. This fourteen-stanza ballad retells the story with additional alibi testimony, exculpatory ballistics evidence, and the confession to the crime of Celestino Madeiros, the imprisoned Morelli gang member. But for the corrupt Judge Thayer, "Sacco and Vanzetti are union men,/ And that verdict, guilty, must come in." The penultimate stanza describes Boston as "a dark old town," with people crying and marching, on the night when "the switch went down." In the final stanza, Sacco and Vanzetti are no longer drifting out with the tide but instead are providing inspiration for the continuing struggle: "Where the people's army marches now to fight,/ Sacco and Vanzetti will give us light."

Guthrie shines the light of satire in "Old Judge Thayer." Using animals to represent and critique humans, he creates a courtroom animal farm that recapitulates the themes of the previous songs, with various and sundry critters discussing the merits of the case. When a big-eyed Owl claims that Sacco's cap was found at the crime scene, the big black Crow responds, "They tried that cap on Sacco here,/ And it fell down around both his ears." When Sacco and Vanzetti are executed, the animals gather again and conclude:

Oh see what fear and greed can do,  
See how it killed these sons so true?  
Us varmints has got to get together too,  
Before Judge Thayer kills me and you.

Only in "Vanzetti's Rock" do we get a composition that seems to have benefited directly from Guthrie's trip to the Boston area. Seeing slick tourists visiting Plymouth Rock, blind to Vanzetti's story, Guthrie dreams of union workers flocking to the site, now renamed Vanzetti's Rock. He promises Vanzetti:

Those talks for the workers, Vanzetti,  
I'll chisel them down on the rock;  
I'll tell every worker to fight like you fought,  
Like the Pilgrims that docked on this rock.

Guthrie talks of casting Vanzetti's fish cart "in metals so fine," which, although well meaning, most likely would not strike a chord with the austere Vanzetti. However, there is more resonance in the parallels between the Italian immigrants and the Pilgrims. Beyond alluding to their shared search for freedom, Guthrie here continues the work of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, which in its pamphlet, "Are They Doomed?" had depicted the two men as quintessential Americans, "modern pilgrims from Southern Europe" who came to find good work and fair wages (Trasciatti 2005, 36).

Fulfilling the promise made in “Vanzetti’s Rock,” Guthrie chisels the fish peddler’s words in stone and scatters them on his waters in “Vanzetti’s Letter,” a long, dense song based on Vanzetti’s request for clemency. Vanzetti proclaims: “We do not ask you for a pardon, for a pardon would admit of our guilt;/Since we are both innocent workers, we have no guilt to admit.” Vanzetti details the injustices of the case and asks:

Oh, how could our jury see clearly, when the lawyers and judges, and cops  
Called us low-type Italians, said we looked just like regular Wops;  
Draft dodgers, gun packers, anarchists, these vulgar-sounding names  
Blew dust in the eyes of the jurors, the crowd in the courtroom, the same.

Speaking of the workers’ struggle for freedom, Vanzetti concludes, “Till workers get rid of their robbers, well it’s worse, sir, to live than to die.”

With Governor Alvin Fuller having denied clemency, “Root Hog and Die” conveys the urgency to reach Boston before sundown to stand vigil as Sacco and Vanzetti walk that corridor to death. Getting there is a matter of life and death, as the song title indicates. The original Southern phrase, “root hog or die,” refers to farmers that cut feed costs by turning out their hogs to forage for themselves in the woods. Guthrie’s song implies that Sacco and Vanzetti had to die because they wouldn’t put their fellow workers out to root hog and die. Two lines neatly sum up the tragic case: “Sacco and Vanzetti told the workers, ‘Organize.’/So Judge Webster Thayer says they must die.”

Guthrie’s final contribution to *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* is “We Welcome to Heaven,” a wry, sad song about the “funny old world” that could condemn Sacco and Vanzetti to death. This is a no-win world, where everyone – both the workers and the rich – are caught between a rock and a hard place, condemned for who they are and what they do, but condemned, also, if they are and do the opposite.

If you wear rags on earth, you’re a hobo,  
If you wear satin, they call you a thief,  
If you save money, they call you a miser,  
If you spend money, you are on relief.

It is not surprising then that this funny old world and funny old country would electrocute Sacco and Vanzetti.

The liner notes to the 1996 reissue of *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* aptly include a postscript to the song lyrics. This is Woody Guthrie’s long letter to Judge Webster Thayer, believed to have been written in 1947. The fact that Thayer had been dead some fourteen years clearly did little to soften Guthrie’s animus, for here his emotional involvement in the case

is expressed in all its Guthrie glory. "I would like to paint you a picture with strokes of electricity, to make you see, Judge Thayer, the wrong thing that you done," he begins, adding later: "You did not believe in the mental ability of the ordinary working man and woman to stand together and to meet together, to speak their problems over in a free land together."

Guthrie is at his best when he gets personal. "I had rather be dead than to be a man of your cut and caliber," he tells Thayer, later launching into a riff whose wit and wordplay might have been set to music and included in *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*.

If I was to let my words fly at you like I really feel I ought to, I would chase you up one universe and down the next, up one glacial age and down the next, up one history book and down the other, over several icebergs and out through several jungles. I would rail you and scale you, jail you and bail you, I would mail you and nail you and assail you and frail you. I would run you ragged and crosseyed, cockeyed and whopperjawed. I would not let one drop of your blood rest easy nor one cell of your brain miss my trimming. (20-23)

Clearly, the evidence is that Woody Guthrie was emotionally invested in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti. So, too, his daughter Nora Guthrie, who named her childhood dog, Sacco. "I love this project the more I talk about it," she said (2008). "It's not a great album but there's something loving in it. It's Woody's love song to Sacco and Vanzetti." Nora Guthrie said that under better circumstances the album could have been a more focused and unified operetta, starting with the invocation of the names of the two martyrs, proceeding through the events of the case, and ending with the epilogue of Sacco's letter to his son.

However, it can be argued that to some extent, the album accomplishes that and more. In covering the case of Sacco and Vanzetti in such exhaustive fashion, Guthrie tapped into a number of red-button issues that continue to dominate our public discourse. Guthrie no doubt would be shocked and dismayed by the current state of organized labor, but he would also see much that had not improved in contemporary American society. Just as in the time of Sacco and Vanzetti, we continue to debate the status of the immigrant in America, welcoming him to come work, then questioning his right to be here, and even building a fence on our southern border to keep him out. Where once men like Sacco and Vanzetti were branded anarchist bastards and "low-type Italians," today we argue about the efficacy and ethics of racial profiling in the wars on crime and terrorism. In the wake of September 11, just as in the wake of World War I and World War II, we have seen national security sometimes trumping

civil liberties and dissent condemned as being disloyal. So, the case of Sacco and Vanzetti and Woody Guthrie's depiction of it continue to speak to us. Given the nature of Guthrie's "most important project," the tenor of the times during which it was undertaken, and the personal battles the songwriter was fighting, *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti* is yet another testament to Woody Guthrie's genius. Its flaws aside, the album is a sprawling, often poignant and powerful, "document in song" about a chapter of American history, with parallels to our own period, which is a sobering reminder that America sometimes has not lived up to its professed ideals.

### Acknowledgments

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### Notes

1. This essay retains all spelling and punctuation as found in the original documents.

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## Artist on Loan: Tommaso Juglaris and the Italian Immigrant Experience in America's Late Gilded Age

GEOFFREY G. DRUTCHAS

In the imagination of its own citizens, America has always been a land of unbridled opportunity for immigrants. No one popularized this notion more than Emma Lazarus in her famous 1883 sonnet, "The New Colossus," in honor of Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty, or *Liberty Enlightening the World*. In rhymed couplets, Lazarus gave voice to the "giant female form," which, still awaiting final assembly, was to be installed and officially dedicated three years later in the New York City harbor:

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she . . .  
"Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to be free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"  
(Shor 2006, 188-189; Trachtenberg 1986, 79)

In spite of Lazarus's vision, however, historical reality for newcomers to America has always been considerably less congenial. Although our nation owes much of its dynamic growth to successive waves of immigration, the welcome extended to newcomers was ambivalent and asymmetrical. As the nineteenth century progressed, for instance, certain immigrants, particularly those from the British Isles, Germany, and Scandinavia, were clearly preferred. Those originating from such other places as Ireland and eastern or southern Europe, were more skeptically, if not rudely, received. Viewing different ethnic communities in distinctly racialized terms, American politicians and social commentators publicly expressed doubts about the native intelligence of these less favored immigrants and their ability to assimilate within a democratic, English-speaking, and largely Protestant American culture. Although Italy's rich cultural heritage was admired, contemporary Italians, particularly those from its more southern regions, were regarded with special wariness (Manson 1890, 817-20; Higham 1955, 90-1; Handlin 1957, 84-5; Jacobson 1998, 44, 68-70; Guglielmo 2003, 27; Roediger 2005, 14, 17, 19, 46-9). Reflecting this widespread bias, the mainstream and mostly pro-immigration periodical *Harper's Weekly* felt obliged to concede to its readers that "the Italians who have recently come in such vast numbers to



our shores do not constitute a desirable element of the population, either socially or politically” (Walker 1896, 825–6, 828). Even the most skilled and educated Italian immigrants were not immune to prejudice. If individually appreciated for their talents, they were still stereotypically perceived as representatives of an “effete” and decadent foreign culture (*Putnam’s Monthly* 1857, 8). Questions were raised as to whether Italian artisans and artists were morally fit or aesthetically equipped to work on public art projects intended to extol chaste democratic virtues. Last but not least, sheer economics fed prejudice against Italian immigrants of all classes. Nativists constantly raised the specter of self-aggrandizing foreigners without any loyalty or commitment to the United States displacing American-born workers (Wolanin 1998, 91–6; Fryd 1992, 36, 46, 90, 110–11; Strong [1885] 1963, 59–88; Harris 1904, 532–3). Although Italian immigrants could and did prevail against such prejudice, it dampened their success and sometimes made them more ambivalent about assimilation. A large number of Italian immigrants—as many as one-third—returned home (Dinnerstein, Nichols, and Reimers 1996, 130).

The immigrant experience of Tommaso Juglaris offers a case in point as to the dichotomy of an American welcome. His career trajectory after landing in the United States underscores the particular difficulties that could be faced by an educated and culturally sophisticated Italian artist on this side of the Atlantic. Although Juglaris initially gained a measure of recognition and celebrity as an artist after arriving on American shores in 1880, his larger ambitions, especially in the realm of decorative art, continued to be stymied. A major mural commission in Michigan, which should have established his reputation once and for all, was never publicly credited to him due to political controversy over immigration. Subsequently, despite his experience as a muralist, Juglaris missed out on an opportunity to work on one of the most notable decorative projects in his adopted city of Boston. Still later, the rising tide of American nationalism at the start of the twentieth century seems to have thwarted a fuller recognition of Juglaris’s masterwork—an immense mural cycle installed in a public library in Franklin, Massachusetts. In the face of professional and personal disappointments, compounded by nationalistic tensions and prejudice, Juglaris found it best to relinquish his American career as artist and teacher in order to return to Italy. In the end, Juglaris’s success in the United States was neither equal to his talent nor the high hopes with which he first ventured across the Atlantic.

Tommaso Juglaris was born in Turin on October 6, 1844, to a family that, despite the Swiss or French provenance of their surname, had staunch Italian roots (Reviglio della Veneria 2003, 340). From an early age, growing

up in the town of Moncalieri on the outskirts of Turin, Juglaris demonstrated a talent for art. Yet financial reversals suffered by his well-to-do parents left him dependent upon scholarship aid in order to attend art school. Enrolled as a night student at Turin's Accademia Albertina, Juglaris took day jobs as a sign painter to earn his keep until he was able to apprentice himself to some of the leading decorative artists in the Italian Piedmont (Juglaris 1863, 1865).<sup>1</sup>

Juglaris found the transition from apprentice to autonomous artist difficult and distressing. Without family backing or ready financial means, he was often exploited by better-known artists who hired him as an assistant or subcontractor. After several years of struggle in which he saw others repeatedly take credit for murals that he had personally designed and executed at various churches and the Royal Theater in Turin, Juglaris chose to depart northern Italy for Paris, France, with a goal of furthering his education and launching an independent career (Juglaris 1870–1871).

At that time, Paris was the great center for art and art education. Yet it was also a city in turmoil due to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the rise of the radical Paris Commune. In June 1871, when Juglaris arrived on the scene, the Paris Commune had just been crushed by conservative forces. The Tuileries Palace, an emblem of France's royalist heritage set on fire by combatants, was still a smoldering ruin (Clayton 2002, 1–5). Thanks, however, to the help of several Italian artists living in Paris, Juglaris was almost immediately able to find work in the midst of the city's troubled and depressed conditions. Initially, Juglaris hired out as a scene painter for Paris theaters. But thereafter, he took up ceramics design and had the opportunity to work with the renowned ceramicist Theodore Deck (Haggar 1968, 123–4). When another economic downturn completely shut down the ceramics factory where he was employed, Juglaris simply shifted to the burgeoning field of lithographic publishing. He was soon hired to help prepare Charles-August Racinet's magisterial *Le Costume Historique*, which remains in print today (Juglaris 1871; Racinet [1876–88] 2003).

As Juglaris pursued jobs in "industrial art," his hopes remained set on a career in the decorative and fine arts. When he first arrived in Paris at age twenty-five, he was already too old to enroll at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. But he found that several famous artists, including Jean-Leon Gerome and Alexandre Cabanel, were willing to take him on as an external student through night classes (Juglaris 1875). Juglaris diligently applied himself to his continuing art education. He benefited from the solicited advice and counsel of such additional distinguished artists as Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot and Thomas Couture. Couture was sufficiently impressed by Juglaris to hire him for mural work at his residence in Villiers-le-Bel, Normandy.

Couture provided both guidance and critique for the project. Thus, Juglaris was qualified to count himself as one of Couture's students. At the time of Couture's death in 1879, Juglaris drew a deathbed sketch of the French master that was later published in the United States in conjunction with a biographical article by one of his devoted American students. Being a part of Couture's circle exposed Juglaris to the artist's many American disciples (Juglaris 1875; Angell 1881, 193–246).

Juglaris's Paris studies bore fruit. Paintings he submitted to the annual Paris Salon were not only accepted but honored. He gained the privilege of submitting paintings for exhibition without advance juried review. Particularly notable among his large Salon paintings were *Offering to the God Lares*, *The Confidence*, *Promenade in Venice*, *Sixteenth Century*, and *The Invasion*, which he exhibited in 1874, 1875, 1879, and 1880, respectively. During the same period, he also won decorative commissions for mural work at some major Paris buildings, including the Palais Garnier, the Palais Gioia, and the Theatre du Chatelet (Hamilton to Radeke 1886; "Opening of the New Public Hall" 1878; Reviglio della Veneria 2004, 61).

Juglaris began to enjoy his cosmopolitan life in Paris. His apartment on the Boulevard Saint-Michel became a gathering place for Italian expatriates and visitors in Paris. In addition, Juglaris found himself socially mingling with such major literary and musical figures as Adolphe Daudet, Victor Hugo, Guy de Maupassant, and Camille Saint-Saens. His only regret was that in his preoccupation with making a livelihood through industrial art he did not have more time for the decorative and fine arts (Juglaris 1873–1874).

Juglaris's successful work with a Paris lithography house managed by a family relation of Camille Corot led to an unexpected offer of a lucrative post with another lithography house in the United States, which he turned down. But broached by an agent of the Louis Prang Company of Boston a second and third time, Juglaris changed his mind. Company founder Louis Prang is today known as the "Father of the American Christmas Card" and had a thriving international business with markets on both sides of the Atlantic (Buday 1954, 74–5; McClinton 1973, 21–2, 73–90; Mancini 2005, 74–8; Korzenik 1985, 161–71). Moreover, the Prang Company was offering Juglaris a half-time executive director or executive artist position in Boston at a more than ample salary. Juglaris saw the American post as a ticket to a better career balance between the industrial arts and the fine and decorative arts, which he much preferred (Juglaris 1880).

Saying good-bye to friends in Paris and Turin, Juglaris set sail for America, landing in New York City in August 1880. In a journal, which he later expanded into an autobiography, Juglaris recorded his first, not

entirely favorable, impressions of America. As a new arrival, he found New York City overwhelming—not only in its sheer busyness but also in its dirt, grime, and filth. As Juglaris remarks:

I found nothing that particularly impressed me entering New York harbor and the city's aspect was disagreeable to me. The filth of that port is impossible to describe; the adjacent streets are to the point of being puddles of mud and grime—a smelly, revolting sewer . . . The City of New York [also] has a horrible aspect, regular in its layout, very easy to find one's way about, but dirty and indecent. I am not speaking of its architecture. There it is difficult to say what can be salvaged apart from some small exceptions, which really are exceptions. The rest is horrible. There are neighborhoods which can be confused with one another if there is not a number on the door. The houses are all perfectly identical and of the same color brick. Ten steps up, a front door, a window on the right and another on the left and so on for the entire length of the street . . . The monuments in the square are ugly without art and without taste. Only two in New York I found worthy to be admired—that of Washington on a horse and the other of Lafayette. These really are beautiful and honor the artist who made them. (Juglaris 1880)

For all that was deplorable about New York City, Juglaris discovered that American beer was rather good. So were American trains. Soon en route to Boston, Juglaris was amazed at the speed and comfort with which he traveled. In his autobiography, he had words of high praise for American efficiency:

We in Italy have a long way to go before arriving at the simplicity and readiness with which things are done in America. They are a young nation but more than two centuries ahead of us, especially with the railroad. The stations do not have luxurious rooms or offices. There is no confusion of clerks that serve no purpose at all as in our country. There everything is done on the train. You hand over your baggage to the person who is in charge . . . by merely showing him your ticket. He takes your trunk with only one porter who helps him [and then tags it with a number], giving you a corresponding number. You have nothing else to do. Upon arrival [they] without ado hand over your things. You have nothing to pay: the transportation of your luggage when you travel is free. (Juglaris 1880)

Juglaris never lost his appreciation for American technological know-how.

The Boston that awaited Juglaris was an impressive city, rich in heritage. Given its many famous writers and intellectuals prior to the American Civil War, it had long prided itself on being the “Athens of America.” By the

1870s and 1880s, however, Boston had already lost considerable ground to New York City, which was rapidly emerging as the nation's cultural capital. Nevertheless, in the realm of visual arts a number of Bostonians were still determined to see their city shine (Korzenik 1985, 147–8, 152). On the basis of the Massachusetts Drawing Act of 1871, mandating public art education in order to train draughtsman and an “art labor force,” British art educator Walter Smith had been earlier recruited from Leeds, England, to serve not only as the director of art education for the Massachusetts Commonwealth but also as the head of a Boston Committee of Drawing. From his arrival in 1871 until his abrupt dismissal in 1882, he proved to be an assertive spokesman on behalf of a more expansive role for art in Boston life (Korzenik 1985, 147–8, 153–160, 200–1, 220, 224–5). In these same years, rich Bostonians also founded the city's Museum of Fine Arts (1870) and reorganized the Boston Art Club (1871). Reflecting the sophistication of public taste, at least in Boston Brahmin quarters, a “Botticelli craze” soon swept the city: Young women took to adorning themselves in the style of Renaissance Madonnas and Venuses (Miller 1992, 11). Meanwhile, anticipating Bostonians' later attraction to French Impressionism during the 1890s, such Barbizon painters as Millet and Corot were being avidly acquired by local private collectors (Fairbrother 1986, 33, 48, 54; Stebbins 1986, 1–2; Vance 1986, 9–10; Hirschler 2005, 17–22, 26–32). Amid all this aesthetic enthusiasm, the city's well-positioned printing industry, dominated by Louis Prang, helped foster a burgeoning trade in commercial and industrial art, which appealed to the tastes and pocketbooks of a much broader middle class (Mancini 2005, 46, 55–57, 70–88).

Once in Boston, Juglaris promptly settled down to his work with the Prang Company, designing a series of greeting cards. But Juglaris quickly had a rude awakening. Louis Prang proved to be a tyrannical employer. Right from the start, Prang refused to pay Juglaris fairly according to the contract signed and sealed in Europe. Moreover, Prang challenged Juglaris's right to exhibit his Paris Salon paintings at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts when he was invited to do so (“Living American Artists” 1880). To Juglaris's surprise, Prang insisted that he “owned” Juglaris and was entitled to veto any of his extracurricular activities outside of regular working hours. Adding still further to Juglaris's woes, there were categorical aesthetic disagreements with Prang. Juglaris was informed that his style was too European to suit American commercial tastes. Juglaris was insulted by Prang's suggestion that he needed an apprenticeship to master the American style. Within six months, Juglaris felt he had no choice except to quit the Prang Company for good. Prang vowed that Juglaris would never work in Boston again, actively sabotaging Juglaris's

effort to find alternative employment. With only a rudimentary knowledge of the English language and almost no understanding of his rights under American contract law, Juglaris was hard-put to defend his own position (Juglaris 1880).

To avoid destitution, Juglaris moved to Philadelphia to seek work. There he was introduced to John Sartain, a noted pictorial engraver and one of the city's cultural leaders, who took him under his wing (Martinez 2000, 1-24). Thanks to Sartain, Juglaris was able to sell one of his Salon paintings, *Promenade in Venice, Sixteenth Century*, to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (Juglaris 1880). But Juglaris was ultimately persuaded to return to Boston by a stained glass producer, Donald McDonald, who made clear that he was not beholden to Louis Prang and could promise a steady stream of stained glass design commissions. McDonald also assured Juglaris that he would not hinder his career in the fine and decorative arts. McDonald proved to be true to his word (Juglaris 1880, 1881, 1883; Reviglio della Veneria 2004, 103-4). What followed was a long-term collaboration between Juglaris and McDonald, which, besides being mutually lucrative, won them praise for original stained glass designs at such places as the Tufts College Chapel, Harvard University's Memorial Hall, and People's Church – at that time the largest worshipping congregation in New England (*Exhibition* 1885; Hamilton 1886; "School of Design, It Is an Institution of Great Usefulness" 1890; Angelletto 1925, 1-2; Kasparian 2004, 20-1).

Supported by the proceeds of his stained glass designs, Juglaris thrived and quickly became prominent in the Boston art milieu. Beginning in 1881, he was a regular exhibiting member of the Boston Art Club, which had a newly constructed building at the corner of Dartmouth and Newberry Streets in Back Bay (Falk 1991, 30, 234, 450, 476). Juglaris additionally made himself useful by designing the front covers for the Art Club's annual exhibition catalogs of 1881, 1882, and 1884 (Jarzombek 2000, 12-15). Similarly, he contributed illustrations to various magazines, including the *American Art Review*, edited by Sylvester R. Koehler, who befriended him. Koehler, then a prominent Boston arts leader, had personal cause to sympathize with Juglaris in the face of Prang's lingering animus. He too was a former Prang employee who had acrimoniously parted with the lithographer and greeting card publisher (*American Art Review* 1881, 108, 1, 15; Mancini 2005, 41, 70-5).

Over the next decade Juglaris held three major exhibitions of his own work in Boston, which received large crowds and wide press attention. Setting precedent for Boston and reflecting the influence of Couture, as well as his own pedagogical bent, Juglaris was the first artist to freely

exhibit preparatory sketches along with his completed works. Newspapers described the first May 1881 exhibition with fellow artist and friend John Ward Dunsmore as one of the “most notable art events of the season” (“Art Gossip” 1881). Likewise, they praised Juglaris’s solo exhibition of 1885 for its “novel and unusual” contribution to Boston’s cultural life (“Fine Arts” 1885, 2; “Art Notes” 1885, 6). One Boston critic enthusiastically noted that “the work done in Boston during the years 1882–85 by Tommaso Juglaris is certainly one of the finest and [most] interesting displays of art work that has been seen in Boston” (“Boston Art Club” 1885). Another critic seconded that opinion by noting that “the exhibition shows Mr. Juglaris is an artist of singular versatility and fecundity” (“Fine Arts” 1885, 2). Also in 1885, Juglaris joined with such other notable American artists as Edward Moran, William Merritt Chase, F. S. Church, and Childe Hassam in an exhibition of recent American art at the Rhode Island School of Design. One of Juglaris’s exhibited works, an oil painting, *Studies for a Frieze*, was singled out for praise by the *Providence Journal*, which pronounced it “admirably done” (“School of Design” 1885). Farther afield, Juglaris also exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago (Falk and Bien 1990, 492).

Further fulfilling some of the high hopes that had brought him to America, Juglaris won several commissions for decorative work, mostly in palatial residences. From a field of sixteen artists all vying for the opportunity, for instance, he was invited to paint friezes for Boston’s most opulent Back Bay mansion—a gem of the Gilded Age owned by Governor Oliver Ames (Lewis, Turner, and McQuillen 1987, 58). As commission recipient, Juglaris was awarded a \$2,000 prize. Upon public exhibition, the Ames house sketches excited further positive comment. Reviewers described Juglaris’s work as “bright, vivacious, and spirited,” and remarked that the “artist has no superior in this country as a decorative designer where the human figure is concerned” (Juglaris 1883; *Juglaris Album* 1880–81).<sup>2</sup>

Other commissions for friezes and murals followed. A high point in Juglaris’s work as a decorative artist came with an invitation to execute a series of monumental muses for the rotunda of the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan, a trend-setting statehouse that architecturally mimicked the National Capitol in Washington, D.C., where the painted and sculpted works of such earlier Italian artists as Enrico Causici, Antonio Capellano, Luigi Perisco, Francis Vincenti, Francesco Irdella, Giovanni Madrei, and Constantino Brumidi, were on display (Hitchcock and Seale 1976, 174–94; Fryd 1992, 17–18, 35–6, 44–6, 90, 110–11, 181–2; Potter-Hennessey 2004, 23–58; Wolanin 1998, 91–6; O’Connor 2004, 204–19). Painting on canvas in his Boston studio, Juglaris completed his assignment on schedule. The muses, allegorically representing philosophy,

education, agriculture, commerce, law, and industry, were delivered to Michigan in September 1886, just a month before the Statue of Liberty was dedicated in New York Harbor. They were duly installed in eight of sixteen framed niches, shallowly recessed and curved, which rim the lowest reaches of a rotunda dome that sweeps upwards to a starry oculus 160 feet above the Michigan Capitol's ground floor. Interspersed between Juglaris's murals in the remaining framed niches are brown and gold decorative panels with elaborate Victorian motifs (Drutchas and Chartkoff 1999a, 8-17).<sup>3</sup>

Presiding over the rotunda from their supernal heights, Juglaris's muses are essentially vertical works set against a strong horizontal plane: Each allegorical figure sits along a low-rise wall or ledge that divides the lower and upper halves of the canvas. Six of the muses are posed with outstretched arms and a rightward turn of the head and upper torso, intimating movement for otherwise static figures. The usefulness of this positioning is underscored by the two remaining muses who, unblinking, gaze almost straight ahead without so readily enticing the engagement of the viewer.

Juglaris dressed all of his muses in loose-fitting, high-waisted white robes, each subtly reflecting either the day- or night-time light of the iconographical scene. The upper bodice of the Muse of Commerce, for instance, almost fades out against the light flesh tones of her exposed neck and left shoulder, suggesting the bright sun of early midmorning. In contrast, the gown for the Muse of Law, who sits vigilantly at night, is a subdued off-white. Meanwhile, the richly colored cloaks of olive, gold, red, green, peach, or blue that drape the muses from lap to feet appear almost carelessly arranged but are not casually executed at all: The folds and creases of flowing fabric, simultaneously suggesting a play of light and shadow, add dimension and depth to allegorical portraits that would otherwise be visually much flatter.

Despite the fact that each muse holds instruments in hand, fitting her for a particular discipline, her focus remains completely interior—a sense especially ratified where she averts her gaze. The painted backgrounds in all eight Juglaris murals further reinforce the contemplative, if not brooding, nature of the muses. Five of them are depicted with a cloud-filled or star-lit sky, implying mindsets that are ethereally disposed. The other three muses have for a backdrop either unfurled sails or the dark silhouette of a throne, betokening concerns that also rise above the mundane.

Consonant with these relatively spare backgrounds, Juglaris avoids cluttering the fore- or middle ground of his murals with whatever accoutrements he thinks necessary to further identify his muses. Rendered simply



without any fussiness, iconographic symbols—for example, a sword and scales for the Muse of Law or a caduceus and globe for the Muse of Commerce—are used to balance each composition, keeping it symmetrical. In most of the murals, especially where a diadem, cap, or headdress appears, the iconographic elements subtly encircle the massed figure. In employing symbols, Juglaris follows the iconographic conventions standardized by Cesar Ripa and others as early as the Baroque era (Ripa 1971, 24, 54, 196–9; Kluckert 1998, 428; Battistini 2005, 39–41, 354–9). The freshness and individuality of the muses were undoubtedly enhanced by Juglaris’s use of live models. In look, pose, and gesture, none of these allegorical figures have the theatrical allure of Paul Baudry’s more renowned muses at the Palais Garnier in Paris, completed in 1879, nor the almost coquettish prettiness of many of the female figures executed by various native American artists for mural commissions at the Chicago World Columbian Exposition and the Library of Congress in the 1890s (Mead 1991, 241–2; Van Hook 1996, 118–19, 130). Instead, without being buxom, Juglaris’s Michigan Capitol muses possess a full-figured stolidity compatible with women who are to represent weighty and solemn endeavors in civilized human affairs. Overall, the appeal of the Juglaris murals seems well-suited to Michigan residents determined to set aside their recent rustic past and become part of a more sophisticated, cosmopolitan culture.

For unknown reasons, Juglaris’s murals did not fit the full length of their own recessed niches. In each case, a separate piece of canvas had to be affixed, edge-to-edge, below Juglaris’s painted work to fill the space. Painted a dark chocolate brown, the additional canvas creates a platform effect, adding uniformity to all eight muses without noticeably distracting from them. In situ, the success and accomplishment of Juglaris’s muses are multifold. Their meditational content and stylistic simplicity helps calm the dizzying giddiness of the Michigan Capitol’s Victorian era decorative scheme. Also, thanks to Juglaris’s skill with large murals to be viewed at a distance, his allegorical figures can be equally well “read” and appreciated from the rotunda’s five different observation levels.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, the timing of Juglaris’s Michigan commission was inauspicious. That previous April and May the United States erupted in a series of cascading labor strikes that paralyzed the country for several weeks. Historians refer to this time as the “Great Upheaval.” The labor strife culminated in August 1886 with the infamous Haymarket Riot in Chicago, where an anarchist allegedly threw dynamite into a phalanx of police about to close down a night-time labor rally. Seven Chicago policemen were killed; another sixty wounded. An unknown number of workers died as well (Fink 1983, 6, 25–6; Green 2006, 145–91; Avrich 1984, 208, 234).

Fear ignited an intense cultural chauvinism throughout the United States. As historian Paul Avrich notes:

The charge that immigrants carried the seeds of social unrest had become common during the 1870s but the Haymarket affair raised xenophobia to a new level of intensity, provoking the worst outburst of nativist sentiment in the entire post-Civil War period . . . Journals and newspapers, bristling with contempt for foreign-sounding names and unfamiliar speech and habits, indulged in the crudest forms of immigrant-baiting and abuse . . . the *Chicago Herald* complained of the European-born workman that “he cannot understand English,” that “he calls himself by names which are very wearing on the American tongue,” and that he has a disposition to raise the devil on the slightest provocation. . . . Anarchists, other papers joined in, were the “scum and offal” of the Old World, “human and inhuman rubbish,” the “lowest stratum found in humanity’s formation,” the “offscourings of Europe,” who had “sought these shores to abuse the hospitality and defy the authority of the country.” . . . In the popular mind, accordingly, anarchism became identified with foreigners and subversion. (Avrich 1984, 218–19)

Although most of the Haymarket anarchists charged with terrorism were German immigrants, the “Red Scare” generated by the bloody incident raised suspicions concerning all immigrants who already stood accused of stealing jobs from native Americans. Labor leaders, women’s rights advocates, and Protestant clergymen condemned European immigration, particularly from eastern and southern Europe, as a “menacing eruption” that was subversive to American democracy and its established institutions (Avrich 1984, 215; Powderly 1888, 165–6; Brown 1968, 258; Bemis 1888, 250–64; Smith 1888, 3:46–7, Higham 1955, 52; Boorstin 1976, 15–17).

Juglaris never became an overt anti-immigration target in Michigan. But silence seems to have been the order of the day on the part of everyone privy to the fact of his statehouse commission. While Juglaris was obliquely acknowledged by Michigan newspapers as the “best artist of his kind,” there was no printed mention of his name, nor any publicity given to the final installation of his work (*Lansing State Republican* 1886, 1887). Since the rotunda commission was granted to Juglaris under a third-party contract, it was also possible for the State of Michigan to avoid citing him in any official records. Meanwhile, in March 1887 a rider was added to an appropriations bill for further Michigan Capitol decoration mandating that all workers be American citizens or fully declared in their intention to become an American citizen (“Legislature” 1887; “State Legislature” 1887; Michigan Public Act 135 1887). Similar legislation

for federal projects was proposed in the U.S. House of Representatives by a Michigan congressman from Bay City (U.S. Statutes at Large 1887; U.S. Congress 1887). These legislative initiatives were a direct slap at immigrant artists like Juglaris. They were also the beginning of a new wave of American nationalism that would professionally marginalize Juglaris as an Italian muralist working in the United States (Higham 1955, 46). It took more than a hundred years and a serendipitous turn of events for Juglaris to be finally acknowledged as Michigan's Capitol artist (Drutchas and Chartkoff 1999b, 83:14).

Undaunted by the setback in Michigan, Juglaris continued to pursue his career in Boston. Like many talented artists of the day, Juglaris found that he could add to his income by teaching. With his Parisian background and past tutelage under Cabanel, Corot, Couture, and Gerome, Juglaris had great credentials. He soon emerged as one of the "most successful art teachers in Boston" and "most distinguished art instructors in the country" (Juglaris 1883, 1886; Angeletto 1925, 2; "Fine Arts" 1890; "At the School of Design" 1889). He successively headed the Cowles School of Art and the Fine Arts Department of the New England Conservatory. He was also tapped to become a professor for the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in Providence (Cowles Art School 1883, 1885; *New England Conservatory of Music Calendar* 1890–91; Bronson 1923, 24; Slocum 1945). But the greatest accolade for Juglaris came early on from his fellow Boston artists. They selected him to serve as the first teacher-in-residence at the Boston Art Club (*Juglaris Album* 1885).

Among Juglaris's Boston Art Club students were Sears Gallagher, Henry Hammond Gallison, and the future American Impressionist Childe Hassam. Juglaris was appreciated for the conscientiousness of his teaching and his pragmatic approach. Recounting his own days as a student artist, Sears Gallagher credited Juglaris with providing him with "the severest training in drawing" (Chambers 2007, 162). Likewise, forty years after the fact, Childe Hassam, in an interview by DeWitt McClellan Lockman, future president of the National Academy of Design, fondly remembered Juglaris not only as "an Italian painter who came over" but as a "pleasant blonde Italian" – a possible allusion to Juglaris's northern Italian heritage. Hassam further recalled "always drawing from life under Juglaris" at the Boston Art Club, where he "worked steadily" as a member of the artist's indoor life class. However, in keeping with Juglaris's own enthusiasm for *plein air* painting, Hassam also "worked out of doors everywhere" he could (Herdrich 2004, 49–50, 367; Hirschler 2005, 31–2, 135). Juglaris's stylistic and technical influence is discernible in the slight bend of Hassam's maternal figure in *Boston Common at Twilight*

(1885–86), a posture common in the Italian artist's figural drawing, most notably seen in *Offering to the God Lares* (1874) and *The Afflictions of the Rich* (1875). Likewise, with her turned head and contemplative manner, a young woman seated on a wall ledge in another Hassam oil painting, *In the Garden* (1888–89), bears compositional affinity to Juglaris's similarly posed muses of industry and fine arts and architecture (1886) in the Michigan Capitol rotunda (Herdrich 2004, 28, 30; Massara et al. 2004, 108–9; Drutchas and Chartkoff 1999a, 11, 15). As art historian Stephanie L. Herdrich more generally remarks:

Juglaris's impact on Hassam was significant. After his return to Boston, Hassam painted more often in oil, producing larger, more impressive and ambitious works, a development probably inspired by his exposure to great European art, but no doubt it also reflected an increased confidence in his use of the medium that Juglaris's teaching would have instilled. Juglaris's influence must have reinforced that of Hunt and the Barbizon aesthetic, which had already left its mark on Hassam. (Herdrich 2004, 38)<sup>5</sup>

At a juncture when American art education was still a nascent enterprise, Juglaris brought Old World knowledge to a New World setting and helped further raise the bar for quality instruction. With his own rich, diverse background, Juglaris taught skills that were destined to be useful for careers in the fine arts, decorative arts, and applied arts—or any practical combination of all three (Bronson 1923, 24–7; “At the School of Design” 1889; “School of Design” 1887). Further reflecting his commitment to education, Juglaris, along with fellow RISD faculty member Warren Locke, translated for American publication Giacomo da Vignola's famous sixteenth-century treatise, *Rules of the Five Orders of Architecture*, making classical architectural forms more familiar to students, anticipating a trend toward greater integration of architecture and art (Barozzi of Vignola 1889; Wassell 2000, 2–3, 6).

Unlike a handful of other immigrant artists in Boston who were simply inclined to find a niche for themselves and to fit in where they could, Juglaris had a gregarious, extroverted personality that disposed him to stand out. As a cosmopolitan Italian in Puritan New England, Juglaris certainly had his share of challenges. Twice he was almost arrested in Boston for violating the Sabbath and Blue Law proscriptions. In one instance he was caught painting *en plein air* in a Brookline meadow. According to Juglaris's own autobiography, his detention by the Boston police was the talk of the town. Further Sabbath-day difficulties ensued when neighbors called police after overhearing Juglaris wield a hammer in the privacy of his own studio,

unpacking cases containing his Salon paintings. Juglaris quickly learned that in Boston he was not the master of his own castle on the Sabbath (Juglaris 1880).

Other controversies were even more roiling. In his autobiography, Juglaris lays claim to being “one of the first” artists to publicly display nude drawings in Boston—in this case at the Boston Art Club (Juglaris 1882; “Art” 1881, 4). His notoriety was confirmed in 1886 when, only two years after the founding of the New England Society for the Suppression of Vice, he executed a full-body nude for Locke-Ober’s Restaurant near the Boston Commons—then, as now—one of the city’s leading eateries. The nude, entitled *Mlle. Yvonne*, survives today as a Boston landmark, belying the city’s formerly prudish reputation (Lyons 1947, 223–4; Bradford and Bradford 1978, 53–5; Fairbrother 1986, 61–3). Juglaris underscored the seriousness of his own commitment to the nude in art by designing the amphitheater to be used at the Boston Art Club for life drawing, including nudes (Juglaris 1882).<sup>6</sup>

As an artist who combined great scrupulousness with a highly mercurial temperament, Juglaris did not suffer the foolishness or perceived mendacity of others gladly. Several times over he exposed Boston artists who he felt were simply copying the works of artists overseas. One of the artists that Juglaris criticized on this basis was the American painter Francis D. Millet, whom he had known well as a part of Couture’s circle at Villiers-Le-Bel. The result was considerable enmity between the two men (Juglaris 1880, 1888). This may have become a problem for Juglaris as Millet’s own star continued to rise in Boston and elsewhere. Locally, Millet was not only instrumental in the development of the Boston Museum School but also the founding of the St. Botolph’s Club, which “siphoned off from the [Boston] Art Club some of its prominent members and many of its best pictures for its own annual exhibitions” (Pierce 1930, 23, 25–7). In time, Millet acquired national prominence as the “director of decoration” for the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which spawned the so-called “American Renaissance” in art and an American mural movement emphasizing the talents of native-born artists (Van Hook 2003, 18; Appelbaum 1980, 4–5; Huntington 1983, 25; Wilson 1979, 1–19; Murray 1992, 106–7). Juglaris made other enemies as well. A contretemps between Juglaris and Abbot F. Graves, a fellow Boston artist who also taught at the Cowles School, prompted the latter’s wife to angrily denounce Juglaris as “the basest of men” to art school proprietor Francis M. Cowles (Graves 1887).

In the midst of such polarization—reminiscent of the friction and mounting hostility earlier experienced by British expatriate Walter Smith

who as a Boston art educator could turn on or off his Englishness to suit his own purposes – Juglaris’s more indelible foreignness, so charming at first, may have increasingly grated upon Bostonians to the advantage of his foes (Korzenik 1985, 201–2, 238–40). As the 1880s continued, there was some definite pushback for Juglaris. A portrait of a Boston matron that he had submitted for exhibition at the Boston Art Club was refused even though the city’s art critics agreed that it was more masterful than most of the other works on display. Covering the incident extensively, Boston newspapers considered it a “humiliation” for Juglaris (*Juglaris Album* 1888; “Art Notes” 1888; “Art” 1888; “Art and Artists” 1888; “Fine Arts Notes” 1888). The artist may have temporarily withdrawn from the Boston Art Club: He did not participate in any of the Art Club exhibitions for the next year and a half (Chadbourne, Gabosh, and Vogel 1991, 234, 450, 476).

Despite the slight to his talent in Boston, Juglaris was subsequently solicited to paint a portrait of First Lady Frances Folsom Cleveland in 1890. Arrangements were made by a close friend of Mrs. Cleveland, Helena deKay Gilder, a New York artist who, besides being a founder of both the Art Students’ League and the Society of American Artists, was the wife of Richard Watson Gilder, successively editor of two culturally and politically influential magazines, *Scribner’s* and *Century* (Gilder 1916, 79–82, 142–4; Shor 2006, 57–65; Juglaris 1890). In temporary political retirement, the Clevelands were generous in their hospitality to Juglaris as they summered at Gray Gables, their home on the Atlantic seacoast at Marion, Massachusetts. As the portrait of the “lovely Mrs. President” got underway, the Clevelands twice welcomed him to lunch. President Cleveland, who was pro-immigration, assured Juglaris that he had a distinguished future ahead of him in America. However, the actual situation for Juglaris proved progressively less sanguine (Jeffers 2000, 230–4; Juglaris 1890).

In 1887 Charles Follen McKim and Stanford White, two architects closely identified with an “American Renaissance” in art and architecture, undertook design of a new Boston Public Library. Conceived in the style of an Italian Renaissance palace and prominently sited on Copley Square, the landmark building was intended to include extensive murals. Although the internationally acclaimed French muralist Pierre Puvis de Chavannes was invited to execute one mural scene for the Boston Public Library, there was a public controversy over the prospect of commissions extended to foreign artists on the library project (Moore 1929, 81; Cartwright 1994, 118). Moreover, the well-known and influential sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens also encouraged McKim and White to solicit the talents of American artists (Cartwright 1994, 112; Moore 1929, 81; Kingsbury 1976,

153). Consequently, McKim and White tapped as artists two American expatriates—John Singer Sargent, an intimate of the Boston art collector and aesthete Isabella Stewart Gardner, who apparently exerted her influence on his behalf, and Edwin Abbey, whom Saint-Gaudens and the library architects already knew well (Promey 1999, 12; Lynes 1970, 432, 436; Moore 1929, 72–3). Several years later, an English-born artist, John Eliot, was also honored with a mural commission. But his own local connections and support similarly trumped any opposition: He was the son-in-law of Boston notable Julia Ward Howe, the author of the lyrics to “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” No less helpful, Howe’s friends were willing to pick up the entire cost of Eliot’s services as a gift to the library (Cartwright 1994, 110, 121–2).<sup>7</sup>

When the Boston Public Library later opened in 1895, those murals already finished were lauded for advancing culture in Boston and America at large. An appreciation penned by Ernest F. Fenollosa of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts declared:

[The library murals are] the first great centre of a future civic series. Here the principle is first openly, and on a large scale, acknowledged by the public authorities. By their act, and by this first blaze of achievement, we set Boston as the earliest seats of public pilgrimage, the veritable Assisi of American art. (Fenollosa 1896, 9)

Underscoring that Boston was not to be Assisi in another sense, however, the murals subsequently executed for the public library by John Singer Sargent took as their theme “The Triumph of Religion.” Reflecting a liberal Protestant sensibility, the murals celebrated the evolutionary victory of a highly privatized and individualized religion over the communal law and more authoritarian doctrine historically enshrined by Judaism and Roman Catholicism (Promey 1999, 233–4, 308–9).

In his memoirs, Juglaris never complains about being snubbed or overlooked by architects McKim and White. Nevertheless, his absence from the library project must have been personally galling. Although his career had many facets, Juglaris always regarded himself foremost as a muralist, a calling especially esteemed in Europe because of its conspicuous public role (Gottlieb 1996, 44). Apart from Puvis de Chavannes, none of the artists recruited for the Boston Library could match Juglaris’s skill and experience as a muralist working on outsized projects to be viewed from a distance. In fact, neither Sargent nor Abbey had previously painted a mural. Only John Eliot had the ceiling of a Chicago mansion to his credit (Cartwright 1994, 121–2, 126). Meantime, the immense Boston library project was rising from the ground just a short distance from Juglaris’s studio. He could hardly

navigate the local streets without being constantly reminded that he had missed out on the city's most important mural project.

Whatever his frustrations, Juglaris had the consolation of redecorating the Saints Peter and Paul Church in South Boston. At the request of the parish, he painted two massive murals for each side of the altar – murals described by Boston newspapers as the “largest in the city.” He also oversaw the elaborate ornamental frescoing of the rest of the sanctuary (“S.S. Peter and Paul’s Church” 1891). But the church building, which served an Irish Catholic congregation, was already an old and familiar sight. It had none of the distinction or centrality of the new city library. Consequently, there was no public stir over Juglaris’s decorative accomplishment.

Nevertheless, there was one corner of Boston where Juglaris’s standing could never be diminished – namely, the city’s rapidly expanding Italian community where he endeared himself through service. Until 1880 annual immigration from Italy to the United States had not exceeded 5,000 persons. By 1886, however, Italian immigration to American shores had swelled to 30,000 annually. Within a decade more, Italians made up 16.3 percent of total American immigration, becoming the “single largest supplier of immigrants.” Boston became a popular destination for Italian immigrants who, first landing in New York City, soon followed the same direction northward that Juglaris had taken (Manson 1890, 817–20; Cosco 2003, 1–2, 179).

Most of Boston’s Italian immigrants were from Italy’s southern region. An economically impoverished area socially organized along highly traditional familial lines, southern Italy was already the object of considerable scorn among northern Italian intellectuals who elaborated racial theories to explain the disparity in progress between their nation’s north and south. This negative perception of southern Italians crossed the Atlantic, shaping attitudes in the Boston area that included among its residents “many of the most prominent social Darwinists, Anglo-Saxonists, and [racial] eugenicists in the entire United States” with ties to Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Zimmermann 2002, 458–9). As Joseph P. Cosco further observes:

From the very beginning of the large influx of southern Italians into Boston in the 1880s, Brahmins differentiated between Italians, North and South, noting that the “Germanic blood” and “artistic achievements” of the northern Italians distinguished them from the ignorant peasants of southern Italy. (Cosco 2003, 11)

However, the distinction made between northern and southern Italians in polite society was like a bad genie that could not be contained. To one extent



or another, all Italians were tainted or at least subject to suspicion. At the time of Juglaris's own 1883 Boston marriage to an English-born American citizen named Katie Brooks, for instance, his prospective in-laws openly disparaged him by condemning all Italians as "thieves and murderers" (Juglaris 1882, 1885).

Not long after arriving in Boston, Juglaris, who identified strongly with a united Italy under the royal Savoy dynasty from Turin, compassionately stepped forward to assist the city's indigent Italian immigrants, including a future mayor of Rome, Adolfo Apolloni. Juglaris's hands-on efforts on behalf of Boston's most impoverished Italians proved so exemplary that the Italian foreign ministry offered him a vice consular position. Not particularly diplomatic by nature nor inclined to embroil himself in community politics, Juglaris refused the post. Subsequently, however, he was knighted by King Umberto I with the Order of Mauritius for his distinguished role as both an art educator and a social benefactor to Boston's Italian community (Juglaris 1886; *Boston Evening Transcript* 1886; Angeletto 1925, 2).

Although Juglaris often exhibited as an "American" artist and sometimes registered as "Thomas" rather than Tommaso for exhibition events throughout his Boston stay, his personal identification with Italy persisted, perhaps reinforced by his own frustrations with American life (*Juglaris Album* 1880; "School of Design" 1885). During summers he frequently vacationed in Italy, where he maintained friendships. In the midst of harsh Boston winters, which he felt were "killing" him, Juglaris also longed for Italy's sunnier climate (Juglaris 1884, 1890). But beyond professional disappointments and lingering health concerns, two other factors also propelled him to look home to Italy and ultimately terminate his stay in the United States. First, there was the tragic death of both his wife and infant daughter, which indelibly attenuated his emotional ties to America. Katie Juglaris died in June 1884 as a result of postpartum complications, followed by daughter Marianne just two months later (Massachusetts Commonwealth Death Records 1884, 135, 196). Second, another wave of jingoistic nationalism, precipitated by a regional domestic incident, suddenly made America an increasingly less hospitable place for an Italian artist such as Juglaris.

In late 1890, nineteen Italians were indicted in New Orleans, Louisiana, for conspiring to murder the city's police chief. Fourteen of them were ultimately bound over for trial. But on March 13, 1891, amid claims of jury tampering and the intimidation of witnesses, the court acquitted six of the defendants and declared mistrials for another three. None, however, were released. Instead, they were returned to prison to await fresh charges along with those compatriots not yet tried. The following day a vigilante mob of

six to eight thousand citizens attacked the jail, seized eleven of the fourteen Italian prisoners from their cells, and summarily beat and shot them. Two of the dead were U.S. citizens and another six had formally registered their intention to become citizens, which under then-current law entitled them to vote. The last three were still Italian subjects. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has called the New Orleans incident the largest lynching in U.S. history. An outraged Italian government protested, demanding prosecution of the mob leaders, plus reparations for the victims' families. When Louisiana failed to conscientiously prosecute those involved or accede to reparations, Italy recalled its ambassador from Washington. In the weeks that followed, American newspapers fanned the conflict by suggesting that Italy and the United States were on the brink of war (Cosco 2003, 1-2; Gambino 1998, 4; Karlin 1942, 242-3; Rimanelli and Postman, 1992). As historian J. Alexander Karlin (1942) notes:

. . . the New Orleans imbroglio was suddenly transformed into a front-page sensation, and the press circulated alarming rumors . . . Although an overwhelming number of newspapers assured their reader that they did not anticipate hostilities, their reaction to the [ambassadorial] recall reflected the rising tide of fin de siècle militant American nationalism. Paradoxically there was also a fairly widespread belief in the warlike intentions of Italy. This opinion was given poetic expression by the *Portland Oregonian*: "In the spring the Dago fancy Fiercely [sic] turns to thoughts of war." (Karlin 242-3)

Amid inflammatory newspaper rhetoric, anti-Italian prejudice spread across the United States. As the *Review of Reviews* for June 1891 reported:

The New Orleans incident has continued to hold the public attention as the central theme of the year; and it bids fair to have proven itself the most significant and fruitful event, as an object lesson, that has for a long time affected the real life of the American people. Out of it is emerging a revival of Americanism. The blinded eyes of millions of American citizens are suddenly opening to a perception of the folly and danger of a further encouragement of undesirable immigration. If America owes anything to the world, it owes first of all the duty of preserving at their highest and best the fundamental institutions of American society and government. Yet we have been not only allowing, but even actively stimulating, by free gifts of our public lands and by various other means, the influx of hundreds of thousands of people of alien races and strange languages, and have been giving the privileges of full citizenship to these people, regardless of all questions as to their fitness . . . It is a shameful scandal

that any of the New Orleans mafiates had been admitted to American citizenship; but it is even more scandalous and shameful that there should have been so great uncertainty as to which were citizens and which were not. In olden times it was no light thing to be allowed to call one's-self a Roman citizen. The American people are awakening to the necessity of putting a value on American citizenship. We have just witnessed the spectacle of numerous Italian-born residents who, in spite of their oath of allegiance to the United States, have made treasonable appeals to the government of Italy to take measures against their adopted country. They remain Italians in spirit, language, and sympathy. Some definite and comparatively stringent check should be placed upon immigration, and the naturalization laws and methods especially should undergo complete reconstruction. ("Progress of the World" 1891, 443)

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, who had recently written an article for *The North American Review* distinguishing between northern and southern Italians and "depicting the northerners as a finer population," used the occasion of the New Orleans incident to demand stern new immigration restrictions (Lodge 1891a, 30, Lodge 1891b, 612; Cosco 2003, 13; Higham 1955, 90-1). Although the geographical distance between New Orleans and Boston was ample and Juglaris was a northern Italian, the political climate in the United States undoubtedly made it awkward for the artist, especially given his own leading role as an advocate for Boston's Italian community.

Significantly, as the public furor persisted, Juglaris opted to spend his entire summer abroad, mostly in Italy. He did reappear in Boston in September 1891. But it was for the sole purpose of closing his studio. Without any explanation to his Boston friends he had made up his mind to return to Italy permanently. As word about Juglaris's departure spread, Boston newspapers preferred the least searching motives to explain it. Ignoring recent Italian-American tensions, they attributed his exit from Boston to a summer romance and pending marriage with a wealthy Italian countess. As it turned out, the prospect of a remarriage for Juglaris was more than mere rumor. He was soon to wed the widow of an old friend who had been the personal physician to the Italian liberator Giuseppe Garibaldi. Nevertheless, the rest of the newspaper reportage was fanciful and inaccurate. Thus, in a swirl of speculative gossip the curtain came down on Juglaris's decade-long American career without any loud lament on anyone's part (Carpenter 1891; "Boston Artist's Luck" 1891).<sup>8</sup>

Two years later, Juglaris was among the artists represented in the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition celebrating Christopher Columbus's

discovery of America. Yet, underscoring that he was an immigrant artist no more, Juglaris shipped his painting from distant Milan where he was temporarily resettled with his new wife. Entitled *The Sermon on the Mount*, the painting was exhibited at the Italian National Pavilion (*Juglaris Album* 1893; Massara et al. 2004, 30).

If Juglaris had any subsequent regrets about pulling up stakes to return to Italy, leaving America behind, he had a chance to reconsider. In 1901, he received an invitation from an admiring former American student, Henry Hammond Gallison, to undertake a huge mural cycle in the vicinity of Boston. Gallison was able to land the plum assignment for Juglaris based on his personal influence with two generous donors intent on creating a fitting memorial for their late father, the wealthy industrialist Joseph Ray, and their mother, Emily Ray. The memorial selected by the Ray daughters was a new building for the oldest public library in America, located in their hometown of Franklin, Massachusetts. The architectural plans, carefully vetted by Gallison, called for the recreation of an ancient Greek temple with a main reading room lit by clerestory windows, offering large interior wall expanses suited for murals. In addition, the library's grand entrance hall had space along its upper walls to accommodate painted friezes. But, as it turned out, the circumstances that greeted Juglaris's second, briefer engagement in America as he pursued the Ray Memorial commission seemed to vindicate his previous decision to make Italy, rather than the United States, his permanent home.

In many respects the turn-of-the-century cultural context that greeted Juglaris as he returned to the United States to undertake the Ray Memorial commission was even more complicated and nationalistic than what he had left behind in 1891. During Juglaris's decade away from the United States, a full-fledged American mural movement had emerged, spurred by the continuing decoration of the Boston Public Library, plus fresh and extensive mural commissions at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the new Library of Congress building in Washington, D.C. Brought together by Francis Millet to work on the decoration of pavilions for the Columbian Exposition, a cadre of American artists came away from this shared experience convinced that murals offered a particularly timely art form. At a moment when foreign immigration to American shores, particularly from eastern and southern Europe, was once again on the rise, and both rapid industrialization and urbanization were transforming the national landscape, the artists felt that more visible art could play a pacifying role among a potentially unruly and volatile citizenry. Specifically, they were impressed by the didactic and inspirational possibilities of murals, which could be harnessed to promote a unifying

patriotism and civic loyalty, erasing “the fissures of modern society . . . in a vision of harmony and [heroic] grandeur” (Blashfield 1913a, 97, 181). Although they envied the influence once wielded by Italian artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael and admired the appreciation of art that still prevailed among all Italian classes, the newly minted American muralists were intent on creating public art that would also be distinctively American (Miller 1992, 12; Low 1910, 295). As artist Edwin H. Blashfield insisted: “We must be modern and we must be American” (Blashfield 1913a, 181, 198–9). Even artists such as Kenyon Cox and Will H. Low who, more akin to Juglaris than Blashfield, favored a “classic spirit” and allegorical motifs that reflected European tradition, believed that murals in American buildings should clearly espouse or reinforce national values and democratic ideals (Cox 1911, 1–35; Van Hook 2003, 23; Morgan 1978, 56–8).

Eager to advance their personal careers through large public commissions, native American artists pointedly emphasized their own superior professionalism over and against the practice of earlier, foreign-born muralists in the United States in the manner of Constantino Brumidi and Tommaso Juglaris, whom they dismissed as mere artisans and jobbers (Van Brunt [1879] 1969, 633–44; Huntington 1983, 25; Wilson 1989, 2–3; “Field of Art” 1896, 257–8). In some cases, their harsh criticism extended beyond American shores to the work of muralists in Europe from the post-Renaissance period to the present. Blashfield was particularly scathing about Italian muralism, which he condemned as false and overwrought both in style and subject matter:

Even the Italians, for all their homogeneity, have left us in their churches and palaces many examples of what to avoid . . . some of the juxtapositions are shocking even to-day . . . We in America, young and inexperienced as we are, have committed no such glaring faults as found in many Italian buildings . . . [T]he depths of false taste in which the later Italians descended have not been sounded by our comparatively unsophisticated painters. (Blashfield 1913a, 128)

For Blashfield, the chaste virtues of American muralism were most completely exemplified by the illustrations of local and national history that he and fellow American artists Robert Reid, Edward Simmons, and Francis D. Millet executed for the walls of the State Houses in Iowa, Massachusetts, and Minnesota (Blashfield 1913b, 364; Brush 1906, 689–97; Bell 1906, 715–25; Sargent 1905a, 699–712).

In the face of such “overtly nationalistic practice,” Juglaris set to work on his commissioned mural cycle, as well as five entrance hall friezes,

for the Franklin Library (Cartwright 1994, 216–17). Over the next two summers he made use of Henry Hammond Gallison's studio in the artist's colony gathered at Annisquam, Massachusetts, on Cape Ann. Reversing the pattern of the 1880s when he had wintered in Massachusetts and usually summered in Europe, Juglaris returned to Turin every fall where he continued to work on his monumental canvases (Juglaris 1902).

Given Franklin's proximity to Boston, Juglaris definitely felt competitive with those artists who had received library commissions at the public library in Copley Square as his own masterwork got underway. As Juglaris noted in his autobiography: At "the Boston library there were decorations by Puvis de Chavannes, by Sargent, by Chase [sic] and others, but" the Franklin patrons "did not like them, so I must do better, especially more pleasing decorations" (Juglaris 1902).<sup>9</sup> After casting about for appropriate themes, Juglaris chose to paint the *Hours* for the library's entrance, known as Memorial Hall, and a *Grecian Festival* depicting citizens paying homage to a civic deity for the reading room.

All told, Juglaris's *Hours* includes five adjoining friezes, each framed in ornamental molding, extending around three sides of the library's 20 x 60 foot Memorial Hall. The two longest friezes, the *Hours of Labor* and the *Hours of Sleep*, adorn the Memorial Hall's north and south side walls. Flanked by panels representing *Morning* and *Evening*, the *Hours of Pleasure*—also known as the *Flying Hours*—appears on high directly opposite the library's main colonnaded entrance, greeting those who have come for personal pleasure, leisure, and edification ("Ray Memorial in Franklin" 1902, 21).<sup>10</sup>

Reporting on Juglaris's commission at Franklin, apparently after reviewing the artist's preliminary sketches, the *New York Times* described the allegorical *Hours of Pleasure* and its companion panels, *Morning* and *Evening*, as a "large mural painting," adding:

Eight partly draped figures of the Hours are swinging hand in hand through the air against a background of gold. Another panel shows Morning attended by Prudence with her mirror, the Morning Star with a star on her forehead, and Fortune with her wheel. Dawn flies before the chariot of Morning, dripping dew from a jar. On the other side will be "Evening" in the chariot of the moon with black horses, followed by two figures, bearing an olive branch, the other, a draped female figure of Vendetta, clutching a dagger. On the right of this panel are peasants returning from labor. ("Art Notes" 1904, 2)

After the full installation of *The Hours*, art critic Irene Sargent, writing for Gustav Stickley's well-known *Craftsman* magazine, lauded the "beautiful lines," compositional balance, and "mosaic or bouquet of color" of the Franklin

friezes, which offered themselves as “a study in chiaroscuro” (Sargent 1905b, 19–21). Typical was Sargent’s appreciation for Juglaris’s *Morning*:

Here, the dark sinister figure of the “cruel goddess” Fortune plays an important role; since it adds weight to the compact mass at the right which is necessary to balance the freer, more diffuse group on the opposite side. Then, owing to the separation of the groups naturally affected by the chariot, two fine, irregular sweeping lines are produced, curving downward, and leaving much open space; while the upper portion of the background is made sufficiently interesting by the outstretched arms and wings, and the attributes of the figures. (Sargent 1905b, 21–22)

Adding to the exuberance of the five frieze panels was Juglaris’s choice of vivid jewel-tone colors for the flowing capes and gowns of his many allegorical figures — red, green, rose, yellow, violet, turquoise, and sapphire-blue — all in relief against lustrous gold backgrounds.

Much more subdued but grander in scope and size is Juglaris’s work in the library’s reading room. As conceived by Juglaris, *Grecian Festival* is a mural cycle, a series of sequential scenes. In executing his 240-foot-long, twelve-foot-high mural around the four walls of the reading room, Juglaris immediately faced two major challenges. First, his mural design had to take into consideration a massive fireplace and three colonnaded reading room entrances. Second, Juglaris had to paint his mural in such fashion as to make the most of a strongly horizontal wall space. Juglaris chose to treat the architectural features of the reading room as if they were intrinsic foreground elements of the mural itself, inviting the viewer to look past them. Simultaneously, he developed a highly linear composition that made use of background landscape, as well as the groupings and intimated movements of his human figures, to add depth, perspective, and balance, creating various focal points to engage the interest of viewers and draw them into the sweep of the mural narrative.

Juglaris utilized the shorter, more crimped expanses of the library’s east- and west-side reading room walls for four preliminary scenes involving preparations for the *Grecian Festival*. On opposite sides of an east wall entrance and a west wall fireplace, balancing one another, two or three women variously tend a sacred fire, carry sacred offerings, and bear festal wine, while a high priest enters the temple portico. Meanwhile, the much longer south wall, flanked with Doric-style entrances near both ends, depicts the predawn departure of a procession from the city gates and its ascending and descending passage through a temple grove. Somber priests, heads barely visible atop an entrance pediment; full-bodied musicians bent slightly back as they blow into bagpipes and

horns; and dancers already alight to the music—all these figures are part of the sacred throng en route to the temple ceremony. Directly across the reading room on the north wall, the festival participants arrive at the temple greeted at the far end of the mural by the enthroned high priest and his male and female assistants who have already readied a lamb for sacrifice before the smoking sacred fire. As a master of ceremonies signals the start of the sacred rites, and offerings are brought forth to honor the city's patron deity, the musicians once again play and the dancers, responding together, form a swirling Dionysian circle.

*Grecian Festival* gave Juglaris wide opportunity to display his talent for figural drawing. More than sixty figures appear on the reading room walls. Although the mural cycle includes a distant acropolis, classical columns, mountains, and foliage, these elements are only vaguely rendered. Beyond serving as masses to balance the overall composition, they provide a muted backdrop for Juglaris's bare-limbed or seminude figures, often subtly draped in delicate tints or cheerful hues of white, cream, old rose, pink, violet, and golden yellow that add to the gracefulness of their forms. Breaking with strictly classical tradition, Juglaris devotes great care to the individuality of each figure. In their detail, several of them—most notably the head musician, the chief dancer, and a bacchante, identifiable on the basis of his fawn skins and thyrsi staff topped with pine combs—stand out from the crowd. Nevertheless, in keeping with the collectivity of a communal procession, Juglaris organizes most of his figures as ensemble groups.

Without becoming rote or formulaic, Juglaris's mural is as much parabolic as symmetrical, creatively using the long, horizontal space at hand. As the procession moves along the south and north walls from its start at the city gates to its culmination before the enthroned high priest, it shifts into the foreground, approaching the viewer with larger figures, then partly recedes. Occupying middle-to-high ground at the mural's end, the high priest, surrounded by his personal entourage, greets the procession at a distance appropriate for majesty and authority. At the same time, various incidents and overlapping relationships amid the throng headed to the temple ceremony create symmetrical points and counterpoints. On the south wall the upraised arms of a man directing the musicians are matched by the uplifted hands of a woman following the dancers, beating time. Likewise, in the temple precincts, represented on the north wall, a hand raised high by a priestess near the foot of the high priest's throne is met by the upraised staff of the just-arrived master of ceremonies, as well as the deferential salutation of his assistant. Throughout the mural, figures pause to look back upon their companions



or to join hands with them, defining smaller groups within the procession that attract the viewer's eye.

In assessing the reading room mural, Irene Sargent commended the "free, assured manner" and "original, independent spirit" in which Juglaris executed them according to principles equally indebted to antiquity, the Renaissance, and the modern era. Also remarkable to Sargent was the "tapestry-like softness" of Juglaris's finished work, achieved through a specially woven canvas and a labor-intensive encaustic painting process, which "although well-known in Europe, was here used by Mr. Juglaris for the first time in America" (Sargent 1905b, 20-1, 37).<sup>11</sup> Sargent had even higher praise for Juglaris's use of colors, which, adhering to "old principles," avoided the "complexity so evident in the work of our American mural decorators." Consequently, she added, the "colors sing as they go, and through them, the procession seems to acquire the real motion it simulates" (Sargent 1905b, 34, 37). In Sargent's view, Juglaris's reading room mural equaled, if not surpassed, the work of any then-contemporary American muralist. On this note she remarked that the "American school of mural decoration, following French traditions, has produced nothing susceptible of comparison to them" (Sargent 1905b, 19). At the same time, Juglaris's mural also evoked the best of the Italian tradition:

[T]he painting of Mr. Juglaris shows a comprehension of the antique spirit unusual in a man of our times . . . [He] is a trained enthusiast possessed of a distinction and of qualities rarely found among Italians, whose traditions and surroundings have fostered imitation and smothered originality. Showing no traits of a copyist, Mr. Juglaris belongs to a comparatively small number of his compatriots who have really assimilated the principle of classic art, and have used them to their own delight, in the spirit of Michelangelo, when, in his blind old age, he was led daily to the colossal torso of the Hercules, that he might follow with his hands the lines of its superb muscular development. (Sargent 1905b, 33-4)

Here Juglaris was able to defy or transcend the negative stereotypes with which late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century American art professionals often viewed more recent Italian art and artists.

In light of Boston's longstanding claim to be the "Athens of America," as well as the Greek architectural style of the *Ray Memorial*, the classicism of Juglaris's work seemed destined to have meaningful local resonance ("Two Artist Friends" 1905, 37; Henry Hammond Gallison 1910, 1; Juglaris 1902; *Ray Memorial* 1904, 27). But his subject matter was also in tune with the spirit of the Progressive Era and the City Beautiful Movement, which encouraged the idea that aesthetically attractive towns and cities, along

with well-coordinated civic ceremonies and rituals, could be instrumental in fostering good citizenship (Wilson 1989, 75–95; Davol 1914; Baltz 1980, 211–28). Meanwhile, at another level, Juglaris’s mural cycle, while hardly avant-garde, had a conceptual affinity with fin de siècle idyllic painting and public pageantry that favored Arcadian-style scenes. In the 1890s and early 1900s such bucolic panoramas served as a tacit critique of the more dehumanizing aspects of modern society. They were also regarded as intrinsically therapeutic and spiritually restorative for a world-weary viewing public (Werth 2002, 2–18; Shaw 2002, 99–142). Puvis de Chavannes’s earlier mural at the Boston Public Library was executed in a similar idyllic mode (Cox 1896, 558–69).

At first, public response to Juglaris’s work appeared promising. As word of Juglaris’s work in progress filtered out, it attracted excited comment. In an article, entitled “Artist’s Strange Work Stirs Boston,” a New England newspaper reported that “the painting is expected to create a sensation when it is placed on exhibition in [Boston] and New York” (“Artist’s Strange Work” 1902). An actual exhibit of Juglaris’s massive preliminary designs for the Franklin reading room held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston’s Back Bay earned the artist mostly laudatory notices (“Big Mural Painting” 1902). At that time Juglaris was cited as “probably the best living figure painter today” (“Ray Memorial in Franklin” 1902, 21). His Franklin commission was described as “one of the most ambitious decorations undertaken” in America and among the “most remarkable things this country has ever known” (“Juglaris Decoration” 1902; “Ray Memorial in Franklin” 1902, 21). But there was simultaneous editorial acknowledgment by the *Boston Sunday Herald* that “much has been said of late about making our decorative art American in subject, and, therefore, more a native expression” (“Juglaris Decoration” 1902, 30). This was a harbinger of the more subdued reception for Juglaris’s friezes and mural upon their subsequent completion. Apart from Irene Sargent’s positive *Craftsman* review, the October 4, 1904, unveiling of the murals appears to have garnered little additional Boston press coverage.

Meanwhile, other more mundane issues cropped up. The frontal nudity of numerous *Grecian Festival* figures, also conspicuous in Juglaris’s Memorial Hall friezes, caused a scandal in Franklin—perhaps an echo of the rancorous 1896 controversy over a nude Bacchante sculpture by Frederick MacMonnies originally intended for the courtyard of the Boston Public Library. Legend tells that Juglaris was forced to discreetly dress some of his figures in the Franklin Library’s reading room (Franklin Library Preservation Committee 2004; Fairbrother 1986, 61–63). Second,

Gallison, for unknown reasons, balked at paying Juglaris in full for his frieze work, leading to a permanent breach between the former student and his teacher (Juglaris 1904). Finally, despite the impressive quality and size of the Juglaris mural cycle, its geographically isolated location in a library at the outer orbit of Boston caused the artist's work to quickly slip into obscurity. One newspaper had early predicted that Juglaris's murals would make the Franklin Public Library a "Mecca for art lovers" ("Ray Memorial in Franklin" 1902, 21). Former U.S. President and future Chief Justice William Howard Taft, who visited the library after delivering the commencement address for a college across the street, was among the professed admirers of the decorated building (*Franklin Town Report* 1916, 26; Peters and Santoro 1990, 18). But the Ray Memorial Library never did become a bona-fide tourist destination.

No more helpful to Juglaris were continuing modernist trends in art, signaled by the famous 1913 Armory Show in New York City. As modernism became mainstream, paradoxically leading to both greater abstractionism and realism in American art, Juglaris's highly idealistic figural work appeared more stylistically anomalous and anachronistic than ever. Furthermore, general interest in mural art began to wane (Blashfield 1913a, 198-9; Morgan 1978, 56-8; Mancini 2005, 113). Thus, the Franklin friezes and mural, which really do constitute Juglaris's finest single commission on either side of the Atlantic, never brought the Italian artist sustained acclaim.<sup>12</sup>

After the two years devoted to the Franklin murals, Juglaris once again sailed back to Italy. Although he briefly returned to the United States several more times, Juglaris was mostly focused on collecting funds that Gallison still owed him. Gallison never paid up (Juglaris 1904). Nevertheless, Juglaris was able to retire to his own native ground in Italy on savings from his decade-long American stay and whatever had been paid on his recent Franklin commission. Prominent in the Turin art circles, Juglaris taught a select number of pupils. On the basis of his distinguished American teaching career he was affectionately known and respected among his Italian compatriots as "il professore." For the last years of his life, Juglaris returned to Moncalieri, his nearby boyhood town. There he took accommodations in the upstairs apartment of a palazzo on the short street connecting Moncalieri's main piazza to the site of the town's royal castle. When he died on January 16, 1925, Juglaris's wishes for a simple burial without any ceremony were honored. Only a white marble bas relief by the Italian sculptor Cesare Biscarra was erected to commemorate the presence of Juglaris's remains in the local Moncalieri cemetery (Giacotto 2004, 43-5; "Recuperato e restaurato" 2001, 6).

In the United States, Juglaris was almost entirely forgotten, except on the part of students such as Childe Hassam and Sears Gallagher who decades afterward still cherished his teaching (Herdrich 2004, 49-50; Chambers 2007, 162). It took another seventy-five years for interest in Juglaris as an artist to re-percolate. Restorations of his murals at both the Franklin Public Library and the Michigan State Capitol certainly helped. They led to fresh consideration of Juglaris as an Italian artist in America (Baughman 1986, 42-44; De Baggis 1990, 310). In 2004 Juglaris was officially acknowledged for the first time as Michigan's Capitol artist (Drutchas and Chartkoff 1999a, 8-17). An international exhibition of his work was simultaneously mounted for display at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing in late 2004 and at the Famija Moncalereisa Cultural Center and the Collegio Carlo Alberto in Moncalieri in early 2006 (Drutchas and Chartkoff 2004, 12-17; Giacotto and Reviglio della Veneria 2005, 117). In the midst of preparations for the exhibition, Juglaris's personal autobiography, handwritten in fine Italian script, was also discovered in northern Italy, adding richly to our understanding of his life and work. It served as the basis for an extensive bilingual catalog that accompanied the international exhibition in Lansing and Turin (Massara et al. 2004; Reviglio della Veneria 2006, 102-10).

Although Juglaris may never be as celebrated in the United States as any comparable native-born artist, he at long last seems destined to receive some of the credit properly due him on American shores. Despite any slights or discrimination that Juglaris encountered, the United States clearly benefited from his presence as an artist and teacher throughout the 1880s and, more briefly, after the turn of the century. In his dozen years as an Italian immigrant in America, Juglaris culturally helped bridge the Atlantic, bringing the best of European art traditions and experience to the New World amid all of its own ambitions and aspirations.

Ultimately, Juglaris chose his native Italy over the United States as his final home. But the soul of an artist lingers wherever his or her accomplishments continue to touch and inspire others. Juglaris's legacy not only survives in his impressive murals at the Michigan State Capitol and the Franklin Public Library, and with other individual paintings he left behind, but also, more subtly and indelibly, through his timely influence as a teacher upon American artists perhaps more famous and better remembered.

## Notes

1. Along with a personal scrapbook or album of press clippings detailing aspects of his career in the United States, Juglaris's handwritten memoirs were discovered in northern Italy in 2003 amid preparations for an international exhibition of his work in Lansing, Michigan, and Moncalieri, Italy. Rights to the Juglaris autobiography are now owned by the Michigan Historical Center Foundation (MHCF) in Lansing, Michigan. The original *Juglaris Album* is in the possession of the Famija Moncalereisa in Moncalieri, Italy, which has graciously provided a copy to the author. The Juglaris autobiography (cited in text as "Juglaris") has only been partially translated from Italian into English. Neither the *Juglaris Album* nor autobiography have formal pagination. Consequently, citations from each will be by date of entries.
2. Besides the commission at Governor Ames' Back Bay mansion, Juglaris also painted friezes for the H. M. Jernegan residence on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, the Calvin B. Prescott home in Newton, Massachusetts, across from the campus of Boston College, and the Barnes-Hiscock House (today Corinthian Club) in Syracuse, New York. The Ames and Barnes-Hiscock friezes remain intact. Mural commissions received by artists in the United States during 1880s and early 1890s were relatively small and usually domestic. (See Cartwright 1994, 39, and Van Hook 2003, 10–11, 16.)
3. Juglaris probably received the Michigan Capitol commission through stained glass manufacturer Donald McDonald, who collaborated in 1886 on Detroit's Woodward Avenue Baptist Church with the William Wright firm, also the decorating contractor for the Michigan State Capitol. Additionally, Michigan Capitol architect Elijah Myers and Detroit Mayor Hazen Pingree – subsequently Michigan's governor – were Woodward Avenue Baptist Church members. (See "A Beautiful Memorial" 1886, and "Dedication Services" 1887, 3; Juglaris 1886; "Emblem of Liberty" 1886, 1.) The [Lansing] *State Republican*, a local newspaper, indicated that the themes of the Michigan Capitol murals were to be "commerce, art, agriculture, mining, and various state industries." A preliminary drawing by Juglaris for four of the eight allegories commissioned for the rotunda specifically identifies them as *Arts*, *Astronomy*, *Law*, and *Justice*. However, no allegory for mining was ever affixed to the capitol dome and there is only a single industry mural. Moreover, the mural designated as *Justice* in Juglaris's preliminary sketch was ultimately converted into an allegory for philosophy by the deletion of the word "Lex" from the muse's throne and the addition of the symbol Pi to a tablet that she holds. (See Drutchas and Chartkoff 1999a, 12; Chartkoff and Drutchas 2004, 87.)
4. The [Lansing] *State Republican* notes on September 22, 1886, that "a painting of commerce was suspended before one of the panels this forenoon to try the effect." (See Drutchas and Chartkoff 1999a, 12.) No problem with the sizing of the canvas is mentioned. It is possible that Juglaris fully anticipated the need for the additional canvas pieces below his painted muses. Loom technology in the mid-1880s could have limited the size of usable canvases available to Juglaris.
5. Until recently, Bavarian-born artist Ignaz Gaugengigl was mistakenly credited in Juglaris's place as being Hassam's influential teacher. See Gammell (1986, 153): ". . . Gaugengigl is reported to have been Childe Hassam's teacher in the eighteenthies and must be credited for having prepared this brilliant pupil to become the skilled workman he showed himself to be throughout the first half of his career." However, as Herdrich (2004, 50) notes, there is no evidence that Hassam was ever Gaugengigl's pupil.
6. Although Hiram Powers's sculpture, *The Greek Slave*, was displayed in Boston in 1848 and Thomas Eakins's painting, *William Rush Carving His Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River*, was exhibited at the Boston Art Club in 1878, the nudity depicted in each art work was morally veiled and rendered less provocative thanks to didactic content. Carved in white marble, which, according to Victorian sensibilities, reduced its sensuality,

Powers's *Greek Slave* was imputed to be naked against her own will. Likewise, Eakins's painting, depicting among other things the back view of a nude model posing for Rush under dim studio light, maintained the illusion of simply recording a historical scene of a famous artist at work. Contemporaneously matching Juglaris's notoriety in Boston, Eakins was subsequently fired in 1886 from his directorship and teaching post at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts for "removing the loincloth of a male model while lecturing on anatomy in the presence of female students" and for permitting "nude modeling by female students." (See Termin 1992; Philadelphia Museum of Art 1995, 287; Braddock 2009, 97-98, 149.)

7. Although McKim and White did not sign a formal contract with either Puvis, Sargent, or Abbey until 1893, they reached verbal agreements with the artists at much earlier dates—in Abbey's and Sargent's cases, May and November 1890, respectively. During 1892-95, a host of other American artists were approached or considered for mural work, including James McNeill Whistler, John La Farge, George de Forest Brush, Elmer Garnsey, Winslow Homer, Francis D. Millet, Joseph Lindon Smith, Abbott Henderson Thayer, Dwight D. Tryon, and Elihu Vedder. (See Promey 1999, 154-64; Cartwright 1994, 38, 118; Van Hook 2003, 76-9; Cox 1896, 565-7; Shaw 2002, 3-4, 8; Kingsbury 1976, 153; Moore 1929, 73-4, 81, 86-8; Lynes 1970, 432, 436.)
8. With regard to Juglaris's sudden departure, one Boston newspaper wrote: "Just why Tomaso [sic] Juglaris gave up his position at the Rhode Island School of Design, closed his Boston studio and sailed away to Italy for good has not perhaps been satisfactorily known to his friends. E. J. Carpenter in the Boston Advertiser explains it romantically" (*Juglaris Album* 1891). In his original article E. J. Carpenter remarked: "In a literary column, it is always admissible to drop in a word or two, now and then, about artists. There is a very pretty story going about the streets and among the clubs, which I have never yet seen in print. It is about my friend, Tommaso Juglaris, the well-known painter. They say that years ago in sunny Italy he met and loved a dark-eyed girl, who returned his affection. Both were poor, however, and stern fate separated them. Juglaris came to America and won distinction—and fortune, too, they say,—as an artist. He married an American girl who did not long survive her bridal. Last summer Juglaris felt a yearning to see his friends and native Florence [sic] once more, and closing his studio, he sailed eastward. The inevitable, of course, happened. He met his first beloved, who was now a wealthy countess and a widow. Their old love was revived and now they are married and happy. Mr. Juglaris returned to Boston, packed up or disposed of his paintings, closed his studio permanently and sailed again for his loved Italy, where he now lives in a charming villa in the suburbs of Florence. This is the story which is in the air. I cannot think that it is not true, in every light and shade, for it is too delightfully romantic for the iconoclast to shatter a single rose leaf from the cornice of the charming structure" (Carpenter 1891).
9. Although Juglaris's assessment of the Boston Library murals, as well as the attitude of his Franklin patrons, could be construed as sniping, that may not be the case. The excessively muted colors of Puvis de Chavannes's figures and landscape, the lack of "decorative quality" in Edwin Abbey's brushwork, and the unduly complicated and esoteric detail of John Singer Sargent's mural cycle were conceded to be problematic by otherwise sympathetic admirers. However, contrary to Juglaris's assertion, William Merritt Chase was not among those commissioned for the Boston Public Library murals. (See Cortissoz 1895, 113; King 1902, 98-100, 112, 123, 136; Promey 1999, 204-5; Cartwright 1994, 117-18.)
10. Juglaris's choice of *The Hours* as the theme for the Memorial Hall friezes coincided with social agitation for a fair working day, allowing working men and women more balanced time for sleep, recreation, and self-educational pursuits through use of libraries. (See Ditzion 1947, 124-6; Garrison 1979, 49; DuMont 1977, 37-40, 49-50.) In 1922 artist John

- Singer Sargent employed the *Hours* theme for a stairway decoration executed at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. [See Promey 1999, 198 (illus.), 200.]
11. As Irene Sargent summarizes Juglaris's "peculiar" painting process in her *Craftsman* article: "In order to secure the desired results, the pulverized mineral pigment is mixed into a preparation of cobalt, spirits of turpentine and beeswax, which have been boiled together. The completed mixture has the consistency of jelly, and is diluted by the artist according to his needs. It must be separately prepared for each color; it must be rapidly used, and being once applied, cannot be modified without peril to the tapestry-like effect; since a thick coating will give a result not unlike ordinary oil-painting. But the process properly accomplished assures a canvas improves with age and constantly acquires depth and tone" (Sargent 1905b, 21).
  12. Although the highly controversial 1913 Armory Show reflected the latest European art currents in American works, "what remained muted at the time was the connection between foreign modernism and the influence of aliens." The modernism enshrined transcended nationality, making it more difficult for American nationalists to criticize or oppose. (See McCabe 1976, 27; Crunden 1982, 106-14.)

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## Book Reviews

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*White Ethnic New York: Jews, Catholics, and the Shaping of Postwar Politics.*

By Joshua M. Zeitz.

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

278 pages.

Joshua M. Zeitz's *White Ethnic New York: Jews, Catholics, and the Shaping of Postwar Politics* has received several favorable reviews since its publication in 2007. Most reviewers have praised Zeitz's attempt to demonstrate that Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal coalition fractured much earlier than many historians have stated. Zeitz does effectively show that whites responded in diverse and often troubling ways to racial change, and, in doing so, he demonstrates that the New Deal coalition was in tatters well before the 1960s. However enlightening this may be, Zeitz's work lacks the subtlety and depth that one expects from a work purporting to focus solely on New York City's white ethnic subcultures in the postwar period. In fact, *White Ethnic New York* leaves the reader wondering exactly where ethnicity fits into Zeitz's depiction of white New York.

As the subtitle to Zeitz's book suggests, his primary focus is not on the Jews, Italians, and Irish as ethnic actors, but as religious ones. Zeitz neatly lumps New York's white ethnics into two rigid groups: the liberal Jews and their conservative counterparts, the Roman Catholics. While Zeitz's treatment of Jewish politics and culture is comprehensive, his discussion of the ethnic identity of the Italian Americans and the Irish Americans is marred by his attempt to demonstrate that their Catholicism became a uniform and overarching bond. Zeitz hangs his claims of Catholic uniformity on parochial school enrollment figures, numbers that grew steadily in the postwar decades. According to Zeitz, the growth in Catholic school attendance demonstrated a rejection of the characteristics of individual Catholic subcultures and a uniform acceptance of, and dedication to, Catholic doctrine.

This evidence, while interesting, does little to explain the differences that existed between Catholics: For example, why did Italian Americans still lag behind the Irish Americans in both parochial school and college attendance and in moving into white collar jobs? Surely ethnic identity and ethnic subcultures continued to separate one group of Catholics from another. Zeitz's depiction of Roman Catholicism also ignores the fact that Italian Americans had deeply rooted anticlerical sentiments, which undoubtedly colored the way in which they responded to Roman Catholic officials on whose voices Zeitz heavily relies. Also, for many Italian Americans, national parishes and saints' days still played an important role in their lives, perhaps not on a religious level, but as cultural centers and celebrations of their ethnicity. If Zeitz is to be believed, then there is no continuity between New York's prewar white ethnic subcultures and the New Ethnic movement. Following Zeitz's reasoning, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Italian Americans and Irish Americans simply emerged, fully formed, from a miasma of truly catholic Catholicism.

Zeitz treats the Roman Catholics solely as religious actors, wed to and guided by their priests' sermons and religious publications and defined only by their church

attendance. New York's Jews, on the other hand, receive a much more evenhanded treatment as an ethnic group. Zeitz demonstrates that New York's Jewish community was a cultural, rather than religious, community. According to Zeitz, Jews rarely attended synagogue or sent their children to Hebrew school. Therefore, Zeitz is forced to examine Jewish liberalism not as a religious phenomenon but as a cultural one. These actors are not *Jews*; they are *Jewish Americans*, in much the same way that the Catholics that Zeitz defines as one solid bloc are Italian Americans or Irish Americans.

In his attempt to create an overarching view of Catholics as political conservatives, Zeitz underplays the roles of such key liberal figures such as leftist U.S. Representative Vito Marcantonio (East Harlem). Zeitz attributes Marcantonio's political success entirely to identity politics, stating that his election was based on his Italianness, rather than any true commitment by his supporters to liberal politics. In ignoring Marcantonio's political successes and Italian-American liberalism in general, Zeitz misses an important opportunity to complicate his thesis. Instead of examining the continual subcurrent of liberal players in the Italian-American and Irish-American communities, in Zeitz's view, Catholic liberal voices emerge only as a result of the changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council. This stance is problematic to say the least, since it depicts Vatican II as the agent of change within the Church, rather than the result of changes that had already occurred at the grass-roots level.

Also absent from Zeitz's analysis is an explanation of exactly how social class figured into defining the views of white ethnics. Did Jews become more liberal as they moved into the middle class? Did Italian Americans remain conservative because they remained in the working class? Again, Zeitz misses a chance to move beyond the rigid religious definitions that he has created. Class differences remain an unwritten undercurrent, one that is noticeably absent particularly from a discussion of New York's political scene, especially in the 1960s. Zeitz, for example, does not show that working-class Jewish Americans often voted for the same candidates as working-class Italian Americans, as they did in the 1969 New York City Democratic mayoral primary, nor does he attempt to explain any breakdown in political beliefs according to class lines.

While *White Ethnic New York: Jews, Catholics, and the Shaping of Postwar Politics* is lacking in many respects, it should not be dismissed entirely. Zeitz has provided a foundation for any scholar who truly wishes to delve into the complexity of New York's white ethnic political subcultures. Those scholars need only complicate and add subtle analysis to the groundwork Zeitz has established.

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*The First Family: Terror, Extortion, Revenge, Murder, and the Birth of the American Mafia.*

By Mike Dash.

New York: Random House, 2009.

375 pages.

*The Black Hand: Terror by Letter in Chicago.*

By Robert M. Lombardo.

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

239 pages.

*History of the Mafia.*

By Salvatore Lupo.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

328 pages.

In *The Black Hand: Terror by Letter in Chicago*, Robert M. Lombardo, sociologist, professor of criminal justice, and former deputy police chief for Cook County, Illinois, recounts in fine and fascinating detail the dynamics of extortion in Chicago's immigrant Italian community, covering especially the "hottest" years, 1907-12. Proceeding case by case, the author describes the practice of writing anonymous letters over the written or figurative signature of a "black hand" or other menacing symbols. Sent through the post, at times from distant places so as to avoid detection, and often in sequences of two or three, the letters tended to flow from "criminals" toward fellow Italians who were "making it," such as small-scale merchants, landlords, and professionals. The amounts requested, ranging for the most part from \$500 to \$5,000, were subject to negotiation through intermediaries—presumed "friends" whose names were suggested in the letters. Individual cases richly illustrate the ambiguity of this kind of crime, in which overlapping relationships of kinship, friendship, and patronage thoroughly blur the boundary between perpetrator and victim. They also suggest why the "White Hand Society," established by Italian immigrant professionals in Chicago and other cities in response to "Black Hand" extortion, had little staying power, dissolving and reconstituting itself several times in the years before World War I. Fortunately, the White Hand Society produced a treasure trove of analyses, correspondence, and opinion that Lombardo exploits to good effect, alongside archived police reports and newspaper stories.

The book also argues, forcefully, that "Black Hand crimes were not related to the emergence of the Sicilian Mafia but were the product of America's disorganized urban areas" (10). Supporting this claim, Lombardo analyzes "the social construction of deviance," showing how a racist, anti-immigrant press galvanized nativist public opinion and, oblivious to the poverty, isolation, and ineffective policing of immigrant communities, produced a myth of a Black Hand Society imported by Southern Italian criminal aliens, carriers of the notoriously secretive and conspiratorial Mafia and Camorra. Evidence presented against this myth includes the nonexistence of any such society in Italy, and the equally high crime rates of other ethnic groups that migrated to American cities in the early twentieth century and endured similar hardships.



From this reader's perspective, two realities question the analysis. First, as the author himself indicates, when compared with other Chicagoans, the preponderance by far of both victims and perpetrators of extortion by letter were Italian and, unmentioned in his necessarily cursory review of public disorder in Sicily at the time (which is based only on English language sources), extortionate letters were part and parcel of the tremendous wave of banditry (and kidnapping) that accompanied Sicily's transition from feudal to capitalist property relations and subjugation to the new Italian state in the late 1800s. Indeed, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in towns of the Sicilian interior, it was not uncommon for bandits to send anonymous letters of extortion to wealthy landowners, demanding money against the threat of physical harm. Known as *lettere di scrocco*, these were remarkably similar in form and content—and in their indirection and reliance on intermediaries—to the wave of threatening letters described by Lombardo. The similarity makes one imagine that a handful of migrants among the nearly 4 million who came from southern Italy to the United States in the same period carried with them this particular strategy of extortion, which was not typical of Irish, Jewish, and other urban American gangs.

It remains a question, however, whether the *lettere di scrocco* extortions in Sicily and the *mano nero* letters in Chicago properly belong to the phenomenon of Mafia. In both places, it seems, the extortion project is best understood as having a complex relation to the emergence of Mafia-style organized crime. How often were the confederate mediators named in the letters *mafiosi*? In both Sicily and America, the mediator often approached the target as a "friend" who could help reduce the burden of the exaction and protect the victim from the threat of future predations. Indeed, what appeared to be a simple extortion of money might well have led the victim to accept the more general protection of his or her new friend. Precisely in late-nineteenth, early-twentieth century Sicily, protection from the crisis of banditry was morphing into protection rackets, some protagonists of which belonged to an evolving translocal, and even trans-Atlantic fraternity known as the Mafia. One need not assimilate Black Hand extortion to Mafia in order to appreciate that bandit-type assaults on accumulated wealth and the entrepreneurial offer of protection from bandits were co-developing in both the United States and Sicily.

Lombardo's brief discussion of the origins of the Sicilian Mafia could certainly have benefited from a reading of Salvatore Lupo's *History of the Mafia*, which has only just now been translated—as well as his most recent *Quando la mafia trovò l'America* (*When the Mafia Discovered America*). Lupo, professor of contemporary history at the University of Palermo, is the preeminent scholar of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sicilian Mafia whose research is widely respected for its theoretical analysis thoroughly grounded in original archival sources as well as the growing literature in the field. Those who are already familiar with that literature will appreciate the major contribution his work makes to it. Readers who are not familiar with the main actors and events may have difficulty absorbing some of the detailed material—always more challenging in translation—but newcomers to the field will nonetheless treasure his brilliant introduction as well as the paragraphs found throughout the work that summarize the main conclusions.

Unfortunately, as Lombardo's analysis of the social construction of deviance suggests, the term *mafia* becomes an all-purpose descriptor for everything from solo

street criminals, or Black Hand letter writers, to the group of gung ho traders who corrupted the Enron Corporation. But “if everything is Mafia, then nothing is Mafia” (3), and Lupo would rather give the concept a solid historical anchorage in space and time, viewing the organization as a specific social institution, populated by identifiable (if not always identified) people, with ends, practices, and places that change in response to changing circumstances and opportunities. Understanding the concept is confounded by the fact that from its beginning, “in the primordial broth of post-Risorgimento Sicily” (early 1860s), the term has been put to widely different political uses, including the xenophobic denigration of all southern Italians by elites in northern Italy and the United States, as well as the mischaracterization of the Mafia as an honorable tradition by “Sicilianists.”

In his introduction, by way of describing the origins and trajectory of the Sicilian Mafia, Lupo effectively dismantles the proposition that the organization is residual, left over from a traditional and agrarian quasi-feudal social order. This model fails on several grounds: First, even from its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, the Mafia exerted its presence in the urban core of Palermo and in the surrounding orchard districts, as well as in the latifundist interior. In the city it dominated export as well as domestic commerce. Furthermore, the notion that the Mafia was and is an archaic vestige of the old order does not jibe with its remarkable continuity, its ability to accommodate to, and even to shape, modernizing transformations in both the rural and the urban sectors, as “age-old locations and age-old power bases find . . . new opportunities for profit” (9), including participation on both sides of the Atlantic in such contemporary modern traffics as contraband narcotics, counterfeit and stolen securities, and “laundering dirty money.” All of this despite the fact that *mafiosi*, in producing their own cultural codes, practices, and ideologies, have appropriated the image of an honorable feudal past, creating a charter myth of noble origin, along with rites of initiation, behavioral etiquettes, and rules of silence before civil authority.

Critical of those who would conflate the Mafia’s cultural production with Sicilian culture more generally, Lupo also helps us navigate the difficult conceptual terrain that lies between alternative organizational maps. One model—favored by many journalists, police spokesmen, and political leaders—imagines a highly centralized corporate form that unites far flung *mafiosi* and their local groups, or *cosche*, in a single worldwide conspiracy under the direction of an executive body—an octopus with one head and many tentacles. By this token, American and Italian Mafias are both agencies of a single criminal conspiracy. This model is problematic because it will not adequately explain the ample evidence of autonomous actions among Mafia groups in different localities and the existence of serious, often violent, factional conflict between and within these groups.

Another equally extreme model of organization was that favored by some social scientists during the 1970s (regretfully I must count myself among them) who argued that each local group was not only independent but was also similar to other Mafia *cosche* only because they responded to similar historical conditions. Each also blended almost seamlessly into its surrounding “atmosphere.” Proponents of this approach tended to deny what Sicilian judge Giovanni Falcone later referred to as the “unicity” of the Mafia. Based on the results of his exhaustive investigations, amplified by the elaborate and revealing testimony of Mafia *pentiti* who eventually cooperated with the police, by the mid-1980s Falcone and his colleagues were promulgating a third

model whose outlines are as follows. Mafia “families” and even single *mafiosi* are often quite autonomous in their entrepreneurial engagements. Yet in spite of this, and notwithstanding the constant tension among its constituent parts, the Mafia is a single organization uniting so-called men of honor in separate, even distant localities by their shared consciousness of membership, behavioral etiquettes, rules of association and rites of initiation, frequent intermarriage among their families, and patterns of collaboration under the admittedly intermittent leadership of some sort of governing “commission” or council.

This model, in which coherence rests more on social and cultural integration than on any executive function, is very close to what Lupo elaborates for the past. Imagine, he suggests, a fraternal organization similar to Freemasonry, with “chapters” in Italy and in many American locales, whose members share a strong sense of identity and commensality. Actually, the analogy is not simply hypothetical, as Lupo presents much of the recent historical evidence for a role of the secret fraternal Freemason order in the early formation of Mafia *cosche* and in the elaboration of their rituals. He further notes the continuity of relations between some Mafia *capi* and elements of contemporary Masonic lodges, the Italian Propaganda Due (P2) Lodge being the most notorious example. Admission to membership in such an exclusive organization as the Mafia or Freemasonry gives the individual and his family, regardless of their social class, some degree of respectability and privileged opportunity in a rapidly transforming political economy. Leaders of both profited from their ability to share strategic information and political or economic contacts.

A further contribution of Lupo’s work lies in his ability to search out and map transformations over time in the social space between the Mafia and other institutions in its environments, including key transactions with political and commercial entities, as well as other organized crime formations in Italy and abroad. Those transactions must be understood in terms of the Mafia’s dual functions as both “power syndicate” and “enterprise syndicate.” The power syndicate represents the local Mafia group, or *cosca*, in its capacity to command a variety of activities in a given territory. The enterprise syndicate stands for the capacity of singular *mafiosi* to organize specific activities across the territorial boundaries that separate one group from others, sometimes over great distances, as, for example, in the case of contraband smuggling of grain in postwar Sicily, traffic in contraband cigarettes from the United States into postwar Italy, and international traffic in narcotic drugs in many modes from the early twentieth century to the present. In either of its territorial or its enterprise functions, links between *mafiosi* and government are critical and, as Lupo documents, they have been so since the 1870s.

In the 1960s when I was engaged in field research in a small town in interior Sicily, a friend recited the following dialect saying to me:

*Cu venne a Sammuca e unnè rubatu,  
o Don Bito è fuori, o enne malatu.*

“If you come to Sambuca and you are not robbed,  
either Don Vito is away, or he is ill.”

The “Don Bito” referred to was Vito Cascio Ferro, a notorious *capomafioso* of nearby Burgio, Corleone, and Bisacquino, who married in *Sammuca*. But we learn from Lupo’s history that Don Vito was no rural huckleberry whose sphere of influence was limited

to the countryside along the border of Palermo and Agrigento provinces. His various affairs—including the assassination in Palermo of the New York police lieutenant Joseph Petrosino in 1909—took him not only to several Sicilian cities and Rome but also to New York. The case of Cascio Ferro is emblematic of another important contribution that Lupo anticipates in this book, but really develops in the next (*Quando la mafia trovò l'America*), which documents the extent to which important *mafiosi* of the early 1900s move between Italy and the United States, building “families” in both places that were interdependent and interwoven.

A case in point is found in Mike Dash’s *The First Family: Terror, Extortion, Revenge, Murder, and the Birth of the American Mafia*, a fascinating history of the Morello/Lupo Mafia “family” of New York, which originated with the migration of Giuseppe “Clutch Hand” Morello and his close relatives from Corleone to America in 1894. In addition to Morello, the cast of trans-Atlantic characters in this account are all well-known to American mafiologists: in particular Morello’s brother-in-law, Ignazio Lupo; the above-noted Don Vito Cascio Ferro; Giuseppe Fortuna, who participated in the clamorous murder of Sicilian banker Emanuele Notarbartolo in 1893; Nick Gentile, peripatetic *mafioso* who migrated from Siciliana, Sicily, lived and “worked” in several U.S. cities before retiring to Sicily, and wrote an autobiography *Vita di capomafia*, in 1963; Giuseppe Bonanno, who also published an autobiography; and the protagonists of New York’s Prohibition era “wars”: Joe Profaci, Giuseppe “Joe” Masseria, Salvatore Maranzano, the Maggadinos of Buffalo, Ciro Terranova, the artichoke king, and Charles Lucky Luciano.

A journalist and compelling historical writer, Dash describes and documents both criminal events and the often ineffectual or contradictory, and sometimes heroic, police investigations that these events provoked. His attention to William Flynn, Treasury official in charge of pursuing counterfeiting rings, is especially riveting, thanks to his having analyzed Flynn’s own writing and reflections. The documents in question reveal the Morello family to have elevated itself above simple theft and extortion, activities in which they also engaged, in order to set up presses, first in East Harlem, then on an abandoned farm in upstate New York, for printing counterfeit American and Canadian dollars. A specialized printer was hired from Italy; at certain moments of intense surveillance, plates were actually shipped to the homeland, the printed bills then being re-shipped to America in crates of produce controlled by Ignazio Lupo. Confirming Salvatore Lupo’s argument for organic connections between the Sicilian and American Mafias, Morello dispersed his fake money through a network of Corleonesi immigrants in several American cities (among them, Kansas City, Louisiana, and Seattle), concentrating on those who could place the bills into circulation in saloons, poolhalls, gambling dens, and other places of underground entertainment. As Dash notes, the rural town of Corleone, in the heart of latifundist Sicily, was already a center of counterfeiting activity before the twentieth century. No wonder many members of Morello’s family—considered by Dash to be the first American Mafia family—took great pains to maintain social relations (including animosities) on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dash, unlike Lombardo, follows his protagonists into the Prohibition era (Lombardo’s prohibition chapter focuses on Black Hand extortion during that period, but not on the bootlegging “wars” as such). Here we gain an appreciation, shared by Lupo, of what the Eighteenth Amendment did for organized crime in America.

“Working” relationships emerged between bootleggers of every ethnicity, just as conflicts within and between groups intensified, calling for ever more lethal weapons, ever larger arsenals and armored cars, ever more sophisticated strategies to launder money, bribe police, corrupt politicians, and take down competitors. In this context, the American Mafia outstripped its Sicilian counterpart in capital accumulation and attempts at central coordination and control in order to contain the violence—that is, until the Sicilian Mafia became the global mediator of heroin trafficking in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Taken together, these books suggest new ways of thinking about organized crime and Italian migrant communities in the United States. It is not just that the American version was a simple transplant from Sicily; as Lombardo emphasizes, each developed in a specific historical context and adapted in its own way to very different social contexts. Thus, for example, the Sicilian Mafia played an organic role in the development of mass political power on a national scale in Italy (an aspect that Lupo explores but is not discussed here), while the American Mafia was considerably more involved in labor racketeering and gained special power from supplying the population’s thirst for alcoholic beverages during the Prohibition years. Yet, as part of the same world system, with members who easily traveled back and forth, transporting resources and evading arrest, each organization provided support and manpower to the other at critical moments in its history.

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*The Value of Worthless Lives: Writing Italian American Immigrant Autobiographies.*

By Ilaria Serra.

New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

244 pages.

Ilaria Serra’s book sets out to contradict Giuseppe Prezzolini’s observation, as stated in his 1963 book *I trapiantati*, that “immigrants left tears and sweat, but no memories” (quoted as epigraph on page 1). To support the argument that Italian migrants to the United States and their descendants did, indeed, write and preserve a large number of memoirs, Serra “hunted down and discovered dozens of forgotten texts that had been buried in archives and in the drawers of private houses” (2). Hence, as the title of the book claims, Serra’s aim is to rescue and give value to the lives of Italian migrants whose stories of what she calls “quiet individualism” would otherwise be forgotten or interpreted as “worthless.”

The book is divided in two main parts, with the second part containing further divisions to account for the different aspects of the works discussed. In the first part, given that the life stories included in Serra’s book are defined as autobiographical works, Serra carefully situates these works within the field of autobiography and, in

particular, its relationship with immigration and migrant writing. The second part consists of a selection of autobiographical works belonging to fifty-eight authors and divided according to the following categorizations: The Working-Class Writer, Immigrant Artists, The Spiritual Immigrant, Immigrant Women, and Toward Success. The majority of the stories were written in Italian and citations are translated by Serra who deliberately endeavors to reproduce “a style that corresponds to the grammatical (in)correctness of the original” (5). Many of the authors cited in Serra’s book, in fact, had received very little or no formal education in either Italian or English, and as such Serra wished to retain the “character of each of their voices” even at the expense of clarity (5).

The inclusion of what could be defined as “illiterate” or “unliterary” authors (Serra’s words) is a strength of the book. However, the decision to account for an accurate, if somewhat descriptive and partial, discussion of the autobiographical genre detracts from the aim of the book. This is because Serra treats the works included in the second part as rescued historical accounts, taking them at face value. Nonetheless, if viewed as literary texts, as Serra herself seems to suggest when she ascribes some of them to specific literary genres such as the merchant autobiographies of the Middle Ages, these works also need to be analyzed with greater depth in order to tease out that which they also reveal about the ways in which life experiences are narrated. The focus on the genre of autobiography in the first part sets up the expectation that this may be the case, only to discover in the second part that very little attention is paid to the analysis of the texts themselves. The second part, in fact, consists of an anthology of excerpts, grouped in sections according to themes, approaches, or gender. The sections are preceded by introductions and conclusions. In the introductions, Serra discusses the style in which each autobiography was written, the methodologies used by the authors and by herself in writing about these works, and the intentions of the writers. The conclusions comprise brief summary statements that do not move beyond the proposition that many of the authors included were “quiet individuals” who struggled with the experience of migration, and lived lives shaped by difficult circumstances.

Taken as an attempt to recover and bring to light the accounts and memories of otherwise forgotten individuals, Serra’s book makes a very important contribution to the fields of Italian American Studies and migration studies in general. The meticulous and moving accounts reported in this book provide us with a much needed insight into the desire and determination of ordinary men and women to inscribe themselves into history. Serra’s book also contradicts the limiting assumption that “immigrant autobiographies are stories of Americanization” (5), and such attempts at questioning accepted views greatly benefit the field of migration studies.

—SUSANNA SCARPARO  
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*The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terrorism.*

By Beverly Gage.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

400 pages.

On September 16, 1920, a powerful bomb exploded at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets, killing thirty-eight people and leaving hundreds injured. Concealed in a horse-drawn cart, the bomb was detonated a few steps away from the New York Stock Exchange and across the street from J.P. Morgan and Company, the symbolic heart of U.S. financial capitalism. As Beverly Gage reminds us in *The Day Wall Street Exploded*, the blast was the “worst act of terrorism” in U.S. history before the Oklahoma bombing in 1995.

Gage deals with two distinct themes: The first is a detailed reconstruction of the ultimately unsuccessful investigation conducted by local and federal authorities together with private agencies on two continents. The search for those responsible for the bombing came on the heels of the Red Scare of 1919–1920, which led to the arrest of thousands of dissenters and the deportation of hundreds of radical immigrants. Gage argues that the Wall Street explosion was used by government officials, mainstream press, and congressional leaders to confirm the image of all dissenters as dangerous and wild-eyed “terrorists” who used “force and violence” to overthrow the U.S. government. In the second and most interesting part of the book, Gage uses the bombing as the point of departure for outlining an overview of social conflict, class-based radicalism, and official repression in the United States from the 1870s through World War I.

For Gage, the Wall Street bombing represents a prism for an examination of the history of the United States during this period centered on open “class warfare.” In this context, various government agencies and vigilante groups resorted to “legal” and extra-legal violence against workers along with labor and radical movements that emerged in response to the expansion of industrial corporations and to the rise of new financial institutions. Government repression reached its climax with the federal persecution of dissenters during World War I and the Red Scare that followed. In this brutal context, a number of radical movements dedicated to the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of an egalitarian order responded with violence and “terrorism,” which included bombings and assassination attempts, as the legitimate response of the disenfranchised, the marginalized, and the oppressed against the overwhelming violence employed by those in power.

In the effort to “rediscover the genuine drama of class conflict in the United States” (8), the author provides a very readable synthesis of a series of famous strikes and bloody confrontations along with an account of the country’s vibrant left-wing political world of the period leading up to the Wall Street bombing. Starting with the Molly Maguires—rooted in the Irish mining communities of eastern Pennsylvania—the book covers the activities of the German-born anarchist leader Johann Most, and the story of the Haymarket affair and its aftermath, along with biographical accounts of Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman (who became famous following his attempt to assassinate Henry Clay Frick), and Big Bill Haywood who supported “self-defense” and “direct action” against capitalism. Sections are also devoted to the role of federal

authorities in the defeat of the Homestead and Pullman strikes, along with employer policies that led to the death of 146 women in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire in 1911, the use of machine guns by Rockefeller guards against strikers and their families in Ludlow, Colorado, three years later, and finally to the federal government's campaign against opponents of World War I.

Students of Italian-American radicalism will be interested in the chapter devoted to Luigi Galleani, the anarchist leader who built a dedicated cohort of supporters among a small group of Italian anarchists in the United States. Following along the lines of Paul Avrich's seminal book, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (1991), Gage describes how in speeches and in the pages of his *Cronaca Sovversiva* Galleani unapologetically advocated the use of violence as a tool of retaliation against capitalism. Galleani's views influenced a small group of Italian anarchists to engage in scattered violent activities against the symbols of power, a campaign that escalated following his deportation and the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti in the spring of 1920. This insular ethnic radical environment ultimately produced the "galleanista" Mario Buda, the person identified by Avrich as the likely Wall Street bomber.

—FRASER OTTANELLI  
*University of South Florida*

*Gangster Priest: The Italian American Cinema of Martin Scorsese.*

By Robert Casillo.

Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 2007.

600 pages.

*Gangster Priest*, the first volume to comprehensively address those of Martin Scorsese's films that deal most directly with Italian-American identity, is a timely and essential contribution to Scorsese scholarship. In particular, Robert Casillo accomplishes in-depth readings of some of the director's most well-known feature films, such as *Casino*, *Goodfellas*, *Mean Streets*, *Raging Bull*, and *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* Also of great value is the author's analysis of a fifteen-minute short feature made during Scorsese's college years, the longer documentary *Italianamerican*, and the lesser known mob comedy *It's Not Just You, Murray*. Casillo sets out to rescue these films from a critical abyss that frequently looks toward signs of Italian America in Scorsese's oeuvre in terms of "local colour, as a pretext for personal nostalgia, or as the object of merely anthropological or ethnological interest" (xviii). As Casillo convincingly demonstrates in the preface to the volume, previous studies devoted to one of Hollywood's most prized directors, mostly written by Italian Americans, generally tend to attack or disregard the director for what is seen as a simple equation of Italian American equals gangster. Indeed, the volume's title problematizes this long-lasting, hotly debated stereotype and announces Casillo's main agenda: To look at the complicated intersections between ethnic identity and religious iconography in a mob context in order to better understand psychologies of violence ingrained therein.



The bulk of the volume consists of lengthy chapters dedicated to close readings of the five Scorsese feature films mentioned above, plus one chapter on *Italianamerican*. *Gangster Priest* also includes an early chapter that argues that the director, although considered a “Third Generation Italian American Artist,” closely identifies with his ethnic origins, which reach the apogee of their expression in the five features. Another chapter on the environs of his “First World” discusses those elements from his childhood that most greatly conditioned his opus: For one, Casillo positions Elizabeth Street and Little Italy as primal locations from which the director draws inspiration. These are not, however, the idyllic streetscapes and porch stoops that one might recall from the first two *Godfather* films. Instead, these are true “mean streets” that are “seriously flawed” (69) and replete with Mafia turf wars. Moreover, the author discusses Scorsese’s persistent asthma that propelled him off the streets and into the movie theater in search of distraction and amusement, but where he also found artistic inspiration.

The single greatest influence on Scorsese, however, was exerted by the persistent presence of the Catholic Church. Recall, of course, that Scorsese was an altar boy and, until he turned his full attention toward making movies, his life goal was to become a priest. The Church and the cinema: Scorsese’s main influences. In this section, Casillo intricately outlines those cultural tenets of Catholicism that would most fascinate and shape the director, above all the intersections between religion and violence, which he reads through the lens of French theorist Rene Girard. The author pays particular attention to the works of Girard, whose seminal text *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* asserts that desire is essentially mediated by a third party, or, as he claims, is triangular. Girard’s work on desire and ritual is apropos to Scorsese’s Italian-American films, particularly in terms of the limitations imposed on self-improvement and the subtle intermingling of aggression and contrition. As Casillo points out: “The Italian American world in which Scorsese grew up, and which he depicts in his films, is a highly sacralized and ritualized society within which individuals are hierarchically defined and differentiated” (108). Finally, this chapter lays out and defines some of the key tenets of Mafia code and culture necessary to read the subsequent chapters, such as the cult of masculine honor and recourse to violence and vendetta, the essential commitment to *omertà*, or silence before the law, and the primacy of respect in a climate dominated by rustic chivalry.

Overall, the volume is composed of fine analyses that stand on their own yet also complement one another and work as a cohesive whole. These readings evidence the wonderful and intricate openness of Scorsese’s cinema, which, as Casillo points out, is best left “imperfectly understood” (xvii). *Gangster Priest* is meticulously researched and includes a wealth of secondary sources. In fact, over 160 pages of notes accompany the roughly 420 preceding pages. On the one hand, such attention to previous scholarship lays the groundwork necessary to read these films in this new and welcome light. On the other, this approach contains two slight limitations. One, the reader at times might feel adrift in a sea of references to secondary sources, and as a result Casillo’s nuanced analyses are overwhelmed by the desire to turn to the back of the book and consult the notes. Second, the notes might have been accompanied with a “list of suggested readings,” which would more specifically guide the interested scholar.

The volume is enriched by twenty images from seven of the films discussed. These stills are well chosen and speak to the author’s main concerns. Images of Charlie

Civello seeking pseudocontrition in a church in opening scenes from *Mean Streets*, of Henry Hill and wife-to-be Karen after her initiation into ritualized Mafia violence, or of a tortured Jake La Motta in the empty, amorphous boxing ring that opens *Raging Bull* evoke a central trope running through Scorsese's body of work: Religion might for some be considered a prophylactic against gangsterism and mob thinking, but in the end, it is as flawed as those who practice it, or like to think that they do.

—DANA RENGA

*The Ohio State University*

*Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature.*

Translations and Introduction by Robin Pickering-Iazzi.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

180 pages.

While *La Cosa Nostra* has come to be known in the United States through the words and images of Mario Puzo, Francis Ford Coppola, and Martin Scorsese, the English-speaking audience has long wanted for an interpretative key to comprehend the Mafia's cultural and political presence in Sicily and the Italian peninsula. What sets Robin Pickering-Iazzi's fascinating collection of literature and testimonials apart from other texts about the Mafia is that the reader enters in *medias res* an ongoing conversation among Italian authors and witnesses about Mafia mythology and reality. Even a cursory review of the myriad texts contained within *Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature* testifies to the vast difference between the American and Italian perceptions of the secret society famously encoded by an ideology of honor, *omertà*, and individual autonomy.

Pickering-Iazzi's comprehensive introduction profiles each author or witness represented in the collection and chronicles important moments in Mafia history, noting that contemporary scholars generally locate the Mafia's beginning in the founding of the modern Italian nation in 1860 and the development of agrarian capitalism (5). The earliest recorded references to the Mafia as a criminal association appear simultaneously in state documents (Prefect Marchese Filippo Gualtiero's alert in 1865 to the Italian government about the dangerous conditions in Sicily brought about by Mafia activity) and in literary works (Gaspere Mosca's two-act comedy *I mafiusi di la Vicaria* first staged in 1862 in Palermo). Seemingly inspired by these first two written references to the Mafia, Pickering-Iazzi selected both works of fiction and nonfiction that span over a century of Italian history.

Two-thirds of the included texts are short stories from such renowned Italian authors as Giovanni Verga ("The Golden Key," 1884), Grazia Deledda ("The Hired Killer," 1928), and Anna Maria Ortese ("Montelepre," 1955), and excerpts from autobiographies such as Livia De Stefani's *The Mafia at My Back* (1991). Verga's suspenseful short story, while not explicitly about the Mafia, clearly paints the armed field guard Surfareddu as a hired protector of wealthy estates who strong-arms anyone who dares

to cross him. When Surfareddu murders a peasant who stole some olives from the parish priest's olive grove, the town judge "arrived with the lawmen and was bent on taking it out on the parish priest and tying him up like a scoundrel" (23). With a well-turned bribe, however, the parish priest and the judge return to their comfortable lives after only a day, the olive thief buried in the orchard, under the old tree where cabbages grow "as big as the heads of babes" (24). Verga's tale forces us to consider both the malleable definition of justice in pre- and post-Unification Italy and the "collusive relations of power between landowners, representatives of the Catholic Church, and agents of the law" (6).

Carolina Invernizio's "An Episode of Brigandage" (1885) employs a story within a story from the perspective of a Northern Italian woman author to consider Mafia mythology and the "images of the Mafia in the social and cultural imagination" (7). Because brigandage, a term the Italian state applied to peasant rebellions against oppressive landlords in Naples and Sicily, conjures images of "rebels defending the weak against a cruel, unjust society," the Mafia appropriated the more legendary aspects of the brigands for their own less noble purposes. Pickering-Iazzi suggests that the tale, published just one year after Verga's, enables readers to scrutinize the guiding principles and actions of, for instance, Surfareddu in "The Golden Key."

Three selections by noted women authors propel us forward in history to Italian Fascism and its anti-Mafia campaign under Benito Mussolini: Grazia Deledda's "The Hired Killer" (1928), Maria Occhipinti's "The Carob Tree" (1993), and a selection from Livia De Stefani's autobiography *The Mafia at My Back* (1991). Deledda's tale covers only five pages but paints a vivid picture of an outlaw who delivers his own form of justice by judging and murdering oppressors. When the hired killer is ultimately punished for "the only crime he had not committed," the reader ponders the relationship between justice and law in a civil society. Guiding her audience's critical analysis, Pickering-Iazzi references similar themes in two other selections in her collection: Luigi Natoli's serialized novel *The Blessed Paulists* (1909-1910) and Giuseppe Ernesto Nuccio's "Testagrossa Agrees" (1911). Pickering-Iazzi's introduction provides a noteworthy comparison between De Stefani's aristocratic, estate-owner's perspective on the *mafiosi* in *The Mafia at My Back* and Occhipinti's peasant point of view in "The Carob Tree." Both writers position the women and peasants who populate the two narratives as vulnerable in the "power relations shaping their lives and livelihoods" (10). "It must be kept in mind that I was a woman," writes De Stefani some forty years after her battle with the Mafia, "and therefore, in their mind's eye, a creature that was below the goat and the chicken" (123). De Stefani's powerful description of the *mafiosi* who hunted her and her estate Virzì like wild beasts will echo in one's mind weeks after the first reading: "I could see the fire burning in their eyes, like ravenous wolves, fixed on Virzì and just waiting to attack at the first sign of me giving in, and to devour it in one gulp, paying next to nothing" (122).

As the final narrative selection in Pickering-Iazzi's collection, the excerpt from *The Mafia at My Back* serves as a transitional piece that lays the groundwork for the second part of *Mafia and Outlaw Stories*, which contains testimonies of citizens who bear witness to the violence and horror that inevitably accompany the Mafia. All four accounts come from women (Maria Saladino, Felicia Impastato, Letizia Battaglia, and Rita Atria) and range from the 1950s to the 1990s. Though diverse in their specific

“antimafia intervention,” the tales all reveal strong women and their commitment to change (14). From Saladino’s poignant recounting of the day she found out that her father was a *mafioso* (“I was twenty-five [. . .] And my world caved in on me [. . .] I was a mafioso’s daughter”) to Impastato’s memory of her son’s murder (“It was raining the day they killed my son. [. . .] When I found out what had happened to Peppino, I felt my house cave in on me”), the harrowing accounts all start from a place of utter destruction (138, 143). Tellingly, only Saladino’s ends by striking a chord of hope (“I always dream. I’m a dreamer. I dream of really beautiful things. Children freed from hunger and violence, truer social justice, a society that’s not dominated by tyrants, free of the Mafia”) (142).

The translations in *Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature* are artfully rendered and the selections thoughtful, providing many opportunities for intertextual analysis particularly appropriate for courses in Italian History and Culture, Italian Literature, Criminology, and Justice and Legal Studies.

—GINA M. MIELE  
*Montclair State University*

## Film Reviews

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### *Hand of God.*

By Joe Cultrera, Laura Corwin, and Hugh Walsh.

Zingerplatz Pictures, 2006.

96 minutes. DVD format, color.

*Hand of God* is an agonizing documentary film about an adolescent boy, Paul Cultrera, sexually abused by a priest, Fr. Joseph Birmingham, in Salem, Massachusetts, in the mid-1960s. The film depicts a series of complicated relationships and events, detailing the boy's upbringing among extended family in St. Mary's Italian Parish, where generations of devout Italian Catholics from Sicily comprised the parish community, built the church, and dutifully attended services.

Paul Cultrera attended school in nearby St. Michael's Irish parish school where he was lured into counseling sessions by Birmingham. After Birmingham's death many years later, numerous additional reports of abuse by Birmingham emerged after Cultrera published an ad calling for anyone who had had encounters with Birmingham to come forward.

The substantial Italian parish church was closed at the time the film was being made. The bishop who supervised the closing of the parish, Francis Irwin, Auxiliary Bishop of the Boston Archdiocese, was ordained a priest in 1960 at St. Joseph's Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts, in the same class as Birmingham and Fr. John B. McCormack, later Director of Personnel for the Archdiocese of Boston, who also served in St. Michael's parish at the time Birmingham was on the parish staff.

In a widely published clerical sex scandal that rocked the Archdiocese of Boston, McCormack had served as special assistant to Cardinal Bernard Law. A series of cases similar to Birmingham's had been reported to McCormack who made recommendations to the Archbishop in such matters. The policy at the time, when Cardinal Law headed the Archdiocese, was to discipline offending priests and then reassign them, not disclosing their sexual abuse to the parish communities involved, thus exposing additional youths to their abuse. Amid the scandals that ensued, Cardinal Law was forced to resign while McCormack later was ordained bishop and assigned to Manchester, New Hampshire, where he remains today despite frequent calls for his resignation by groups such as Voice of the Faithful, formed to end church secrecy.

A pattern of similar abuses has been widely reported not only in Massachusetts but across North America and Europe, often covered up by Church authorities despite a stated policy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to follow a strict procedure in handling such cases. The picture is tragic and has led to disillusionment by many church-going Catholics. In the case of Paul Cultrera, the film reports that Church officials agreed to pay for psychiatric treatment and offered a settlement of \$60,000 in restitution but only after Cultrera engaged a lawyer and pursued his own investigations. His unsettled life seems to bear testimony to the trauma he endured and held in secret for much of his adult life. (For one, he attributes the failure of his first marriage to his inability to reveal his painful secret.)

The film, directed by the abused man's brother, Joe Cultrera, is a justifiably angry response to the abuse of Paul Cultrera as a teenager and the unconscionable

administrative response to similar documented reports. Paul was 53 years old at the time the film was made in 2006. He narrates the film with frequent close-up reflections by extended family members, along with clips from home movies and photos taken while the children were growing up. The parents of the abused man, remarkably, maintain their devotion to religion, although not without stirrings of anger and deep resentment against Church officials.

The film details Church mismanagement of clergy accused of sexual abuse, punctuating a series of devastating accusations with sometimes visceral visual effects that suggest the intense disillusionment that motivated the film's making. It speaks more to hypocrisy and insensitivity to the victims rather than to the question of clerical celibacy or to Church teachings on sexuality in general. The lure that Birmingham seemed to use was counseling boys who confessed to self-abuse. While teaching rigid sexual standards, accused priests preyed on teenagers made vulnerable by their pious upbringing. Near the end of the film we hear the soulful lament of the alienated brother: "I want the magic to be real. I want to believe the impossible but the Church is all too human."

*Hand of God* ends with the Vatican's announcement of Cardinal Ratzinger's election as Pope Benedict XVI. The closed clerical culture of the Church that operates in secret underlies the pain and resentment in this family and community.

—DAVID M. BOSSMAN  
*Seton Hall University*

### *Sacco and Vanzetti.*

By Peter Miller.

Willow Pond Films, 2007.

80 minutes. DVD format, color.

On April 15, 1920, a robbery occurred at a shoe factory in South Braintree, Massachusetts, during which a paymaster and his guard were shot to death and nearly \$16,000 of the company's payroll was stolen. A few weeks later, two Italian immigrant anarchists, Nicola Sacco, a shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, a fishmonger, were arrested as suspects in the crime. The following year they were tried, found guilty, and, although the evidence against them was contradictory and inconclusive, they were sentenced to death.

Set against the background of the Red Scare, the case rapidly won the attention of radicals, labor organizations, and the Communist Party, becoming a national and international *cause célèbre*. As motion after motion for a new hearing were denied, worldwide support reached enormous proportions with millions becoming convinced that the two men were innocent. Rallies and demonstrations were held in all major world cities, dozens of pamphlets were written by famous intellectuals, poets, and artists, and hundreds of petitions were signed to protest the unfairness of the trial. But all attempts to save them were vain: on August 23, 1927, Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted.<sup>1</sup>

The “passion of Sacco and Vanzetti,” as artist Ben Shahn described their ordeal, has generated extensive scholarly attention and inspired hundreds of artistic and literary works, including poems and songs, plays, paintings, and films. Indeed, the case “that will not die” continues to spur interest and controversy. In the last few years alone three new books have been published: *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Men, the Murders and the Judgment of Mankind* (2007) by Bruce Watson; *The Sacco and Vanzetti Case* (2005) by Michael Topp; and *Representing Sacco and Vanzetti* (2005), an anthology edited by Jerome Delamater and Mary Anne Trasciatti.

Released on the eightieth anniversary of Sacco’s and Vanzetti’s deaths, Peter Miller’s 82-minute film, entitled simply *Sacco and Vanzetti*, is the latest contribution to this rich legacy. From a historical point of view the film does not add anything new to the existing literature: It provides no stunning revelations, interpretations, or original evidence. Yet, as the first full-length documentary of the case, it is a much needed and welcome addition.

A producer of several PBS historical documentaries and a collaborator of Ken Burns, Miller tells the story accurately and engagingly. It is obvious that he has carefully studied the case, using all available primary and secondary sources, including the writings of Sacco and Vanzetti (mostly letters they wrote in prison), which are dramatically interpreted in the film by actors Tony Shalhoub and John Turturro.<sup>2</sup> Rather than using a single narrative voice, which he found too authoritarian for a movie about anarchists, Miller lets historians who have studied the case (Nunzio Pernicone, Mary Anne Trasciatti, Michael Topp, David Kaiser) and people with personal connections to Sacco and Vanzetti (such as Joe Galvani, a neighbor of Vanzetti, or Fernanda Sacco, the niece of Nicola Sacco), tell the story. Their commentaries are carefully interwoven with archival footage, photographs, newspapers articles, and clips from the 1971 Italian film, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, by Giuliano Montaldo, who is also frequently interviewed. The film’s outstanding original score, composed by musician John La Barbera and inspired by Italian folk music, along with a few songs about Sacco and Vanzetti written by Woody Guthrie and performed in the film by his son Arlo, help provide the perfect sound track to the story.

The film can be divided into three parts—the first part provides biographical information about Sacco and Vanzetti, their Italian backgrounds, their experience in America, and their political beliefs; the second part reconstructs the crime and the circumstances of Sacco’s and Vanzetti’s arrest; while the third part focuses on the vicissitudes of the trial and the eventual execution.

As the film makes clear, although Sacco and Vanzetti have been inextricably linked by their arrest and execution, they had very different lives. Vanzetti came from a small town near the northern city of Turin; Sacco came instead from the southern region of Puglia. Vanzetti had a difficult childhood, constantly struggling against poverty while Sacco had a relatively comfortable life. Unknown to each other, both left Italy in 1908 in search of better opportunities, although the film suggests that Vanzetti’s choice to migrate was also strongly motivated by his mother’s death from cancer.

Sacco traveled with his brother Sabino and settled in Milford, Massachusetts, where a family friend helped them get jobs and accommodations. He eventually became a skilled shoemaker, married, and lived comfortably, earning much more than the average worker’s wage. To a large extent, his was a “successful” immigrant story.

Vanzetti, by contrast, had a terrible experience in the New World. Alone and with no relatives or friends to welcome him, he first lived in New York City where he worked as a dishwasher under grim conditions. He eventually quit and began moving from town to town, performing a variety of unskilled jobs and often sleeping outdoors. He finally settled to Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1913, where he rented a room in the house of Vincenzo Brini, a fellow anarchist, and began working as a fish peddler – the job he had at the time of his arrest.

What Sacco and Vanzetti shared was a deep faith in the anarchist “Ideal” and an exceptional empathy for the poor and the oppressed. Both are described in the film as decent human beings, gentle, honest, and peaceable by nature – a characterization that is strongly supported by the moving letters quoted in the film. While emphasizing Sacco’s and Vanzetti’s profound humanism and idealism, Peter Miller, however, is careful to not overromanticize them or cast them as random innocent victims. The film clearly shows that they were also militant revolutionaries, followers of the ultra-anarchist Luigi Galleani who openly advocated insurrectionary violence and armed retaliation against the capitalist system. In all likelihood it was the Galleanisti, as the followers of Galleani were known, who were responsible for the rush of bombings against authority figures that took place in 1919 in response to the infamous Palmer raids. As Nunzio Pernicone suggests, Sacco and Vanzetti were not at the core of the movement, but they certainly knew what was going on.

From Sacco’s and Vanzetti’s backgrounds, the film moves to the South Braintree crime and the controversial arrest and trial that followed. Echoing the beliefs of most historians who have studied the case, Miller suggests that Sacco and Vanzetti not only failed to receive a fair trial but were also innocent. Michael Topp, for example, recounts that the prosecution knew that Vanzetti’s gun did not match the weapon that was used during the robbery and deliberately lied to the court. In the case of Sacco, new ballistic evidence suggests that one of the six bullets that struck the two men did come from his gun (the other five came from a gun that was never recovered). But as David Kaiser notes, the question is whether the prosecution used genuine evidence. If they had lied about Vanzetti, chances are they also may have altered evidence to convict Sacco.

In addition to detailing the unfairness of the trial, the film powerfully exposes the enormous prejudices and hostility that existed in the early twentieth century toward immigrants and dissenters. Nowhere is this more evident than in the behavior of Webster Thayer, the judge presiding the case. He had, in the words of Pernicone, “a pathological hatred for radicals.” Making no secret of his contempt for Sacco and Vanzetti, during a football game he was reported to have said to a friend: “Did you see what I did to those anarchist bastards the other day? That should hold them for a while.” In fact, in a single day, Thayer had denied all motions for appeal that had been filed on Sacco’s and Vanzetti’s behalf, including a confession by Celestino Madeiros, a member of a notorious gang of criminals, who said he was the real culprit of the South Braintree crime.

The trial, in short, was a “travesty of justice.” Although Sacco and Vanzetti had both good alibis and numerous witnesses to testify on their behalf, they were considered unreliable by the jury because they were Italians. “How can you believe an Italian testifying on behalf of another Italian?” says historian Howard Zinn. “You could only believe an Anglo-Saxon testifying about an Italian, especially if you are talking to an all



Anglo-Saxon jury and judge." Sacco and Vanzetti were foreigners, atheists, and anarchists. As Mary Anne Trasciatti aptly notes, they "stood as much chance to get a fair trial as a black accused of rape in the South."

Although the film spends considerable time in detailing the trial and its significance regarding civil liberties and the rights of immigrants, what really shines through is the extraordinary humanity and dignity of Sacco and Vanzetti. As Miller himself points out in an interview (on one of the special features on the DVD), this is not just a film about injustice but about two interesting and complicated men of deep poetic sensibility and true courage. *Sacco and Vanzetti* is able to capture the spirit that animated the early twentieth-century struggle for the creation of a truly democratic and egalitarian society. Both inspirational and educational, it should be a required viewing in high schools and colleges to promote a better understanding of American history and correct many of the omissions and distortions about radicals that persist in many history textbooks.

—MARCELLA BENCIVENNI

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## Notes

1. See, for example, John Dos Passos, *Facing the Chair: Story of the Americanization of Two Foreign born Workmen* (Boston: Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, 1927); Robert Montgomery, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Murder and the Myth* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1960); David Felix, *Protest: Sacco-Vanzetti and the Intellectuals* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965); Herbert B. Ehrmann, *The Case That Will Not Die: Commonwealth vs. Sacco and Vanzetti* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969); Roberta Strauss Feurlicht, *Justice Crucified: The Story of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977); Francis Russel, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Case Resolved* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986); Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
2. See Marion Denman Frankfurter and Gardner Jackson, eds., *The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti* (1928; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1997).

## *Merica.*

By Federico Ferrone, Michele Manzolini, and Francesco Ragazzi.

Mithril Production, 2007.

65 minutes. DVD format, color.

In scholarly and artistic works, the connection between the experience of emigration from Italy and that of immigration to Italy often functions as merely a marginal device, that is, as an introductory or a conclusive reference. This is not the case for the documentary *Merica*, a well-crafted comparative work that brings history into the present and vice versa in dynamic ways by considering the implications of people's

movement for the meaning of national identity, cultural formation, and civic participation in and outside of Italy. At its core, the documentary deconstructs the myth of the American Dream by definition, a dream of social improvement that is obviously applicable beyond the United States. This deconstruction is captured in the incisive initial segment. Through the use of colorful cardboard-like figurines, quite reminiscent of Emanuele Luzzati's animated cartoons, the multimedia artist Giuseppe Ragazzini briefly depicts the assembly-line mechanism that transformed emigrants into mere goods for the labor market. It also shows how these emigrants were in part "lost" at sea during the journey, whereas others reached America and were swallowed up by a universally symbolic Statue of Liberty. The resulting canvas is a stratified image explicitly recapitulating the routes and destinies of many millions of Italians scattered throughout the world, while implicitly pointing to the perilous condition of current immigrants trying to reach the so-called First World.

The emigration-immigration link is explored more directly in the rest of the documentary. The effectiveness of this comparative frame lies in its focus on the Italian law that allows descendents of emigrated Italians to become Italian citizens. While this law applies to descendants worldwide, the directors have selected Brazil in order to delve into the effects of the law. This proves to be a thoughtful choice since it offers them the possibility of looking at the double contemporary flows from a Third World country as they reconstruct stories of emigration from Italy to Brazil, a country with 25 million Italian descendants, according to the directors. The consequent structure of the documentary interlaces three registers of voices: the biographical tales of Italo-Brazilians reminiscing on their ancestors' experiences as immigrants in South America; the firsthand immigration experiences of Italian descendants who have recently moved from Brazil to Italy thanks to the above-mentioned law; and the stories of Brazilians who have emigrated to Italy, even though they had no obvious cultural tie to this country. The directors smoothly compose this mosaic of voices through a skillful montage technique resorting to parallel and alternating interviews in Italy and Brazil, aimed at emphasizing the similarities shared by migrating people across space and time.

Interestingly, the directors chose the Veneto region as the specific destination of this contemporary migrant trajectory. Simultaneously representing the major departure point for Italian emigrants between 1870 and 1915 and the richest area in Italy today, this region encapsulates the contradictions of modernity in Italy and points to the dangers of amnesia and distortion about the country's history of emigration. Through a migratory aesthetics that lets the narrative travel back and forth across the Atlantic, traces of Italian culture are mapped in the region of Espírito Santo in Brazil, an area with a high density of Italian descendants, the same way new spaces for social gatherings are identified in the Veneto region, especially in Verona and Treviso: churches for spiritual and social meetings; fairs for entertainment and political organization; and bars and shops for the consumption of goods, music, games, and the like from the place of origin. Nostalgia, cultural preservation, pride, and/or the political fight for dignity and recognition are common to all these immigrant spaces on both sides of the ocean.

As the diachronic and synchronic levels intersect to sketch a sense of the collective migration history, individual voices emerge forcefully and verbalize different migratory projects. The principal narrative thread is that of the Fantin De Oliveiras family: The Italian-Brazilian grandmother presents the return of Italian descendants

back to Italy as a Biblical prophecy. She seems certain that her grandson Tiago, an ex-night guard, now has a better life in Italy, similar to his brother Felipe, who from Brazil dreams of a free, democratic Italy, a pined-for destination for his adventure as “*un Italiano dentro*” (“one who feels Italian on the inside”). Yet, from the Veneto, Tiago voices a deep disillusionment vis-à-vis a country that fundamentally sees all those who do not speak the language and come from a non-First World country, no matter what documents they hold, as undesirable strangers. The difficulties encountered today are mirrored in the original stories of the emigrants from the Veneto who moved to Brazil, in the hope of breaking away from a country plagued by poverty, violence, and lack of prospects.

Without resorting to oversimplifications, *Merica* traces the functioning (or malfunctioning) of migration laws and plans in the past as well as in the present. On the one hand, it questions the erroneous representation of past emigrations as the result of smooth intercontinental passages opening new opportunities, and eventually success through integration, thanks to the migrants’ hard work and the social services granted by foreign countries (jobs, housing, etc.). As some of the people interviewed in Brazil point out, in the event that they were able to survive a terrible forty-day-long journey that often turned the Atlantic into an unexpected cemetery, Italian immigrants were isolated in special structures to make sure they were not harboring dangerous illnesses. If they were given land it was to function as needed labor force substituting for the slaves after the 1888 abolition: In any case, they worked under extreme conditions, without being given housing. Moreover, during World War II they were forbidden from speaking Italian for political reasons. On the other hand, the documentary also reframes the perception of the Italian citizenship law as a golden door to Italy and the First World. *Merica* clearly highlights how this law grants administrative rights (the vote) but does not address the inevitable distances that cultural differences create within a society like the Italian one, which is generally quite impermeable to accepting “foreigners.” Even though the directors do not mention the role played by the “return programs” in the Veneto, offering economic privileges such as job contracts, travel funds, and housing incentives to the descendants, the words of the then mayor of Treviso, Giancarlo Gentilini, indirectly point to a double standard. In a farcical, yet sadly real, invective-filled interview against the “barbarians invading Italy,” Gentilini defends Italian descendants as desirable immigrants for the “high-civilization”-based values they share with Italians, according to his social cleansing program. In reality, the Veneto appears as a region with a tangible presence of nondescendant immigrants (including undocumented ones) in all social and economic sectors. Increasingly unable to address in constructive ways this changing reality, the local institutions and public opinion tend instead to favor exclusionary politics. (Surprisingly enough, though, *Merica* was largely funded by the Veneto Region.)

As a result, *Merica* ultimately shows the constructed nature of citizenship, while denouncing the particularly convoluted artificiality of the Italian law, which promotes citizenship as natural, when in fact it is strongly controlled by the bureaucratic apparatus (recent requests at the Italian Consulate in Rio de Janeiro have a projected waiting period of fifteen years) and made possible by social and cultural practices. In showing the aberrations of such an approach, especially vis-à-vis the restrictive access to citizenship for nondescendant immigrants and their children residing in Italy, the directors of *Merica*

in the end suggest that all that the law produces is a sense of entitlement and a parallel sense of disillusionment among the descendants. As one of the interviewees brilliantly remarks: “Those descendants who come with the myth of fatherland roots are bound to be disappointed since they take for granted a form of belonging that is not automatic at all.” Individual paths of success are potential engines of change, but in a condition of subalternity they cannot lead to any integration unless they are supported by a collective fight for rights. This involves immigrants (descendants and nondescendants) and Italians alike in what is a crucial social “conflict” toward legalization and full social recognition, as Sergio Zulian from the Migrants Office in Treviso maintains.

*Merica* is an ideal resource to open a course on immigration in Italy or to conclude one on emigration from Italy, but it can also be used in a class on international migrations in order to consider European colonial legacies as well as citizenship theories and policies. Within a seminar on film, it also represents an interesting example of innovative documentary-making for the nonsynchronous use of the sound (including radio program excerpts); a large palette of language mixtures and dialect inflections; and the painting-like quality of the shots of industrial, rural, and urban landscapes dialoging with the collage of interviews. Finally, the documentary – with its ability to speak to different generations from personal and institutional perspectives, productively bringing together the individual and the citizen – would certainly be appropriate for a film series, especially one geared toward both academic and nonacademic audiences.

– TERESA FIORE

*Montclair State University*

### *Ricordati di noi!*

By Paul Tana.

École des Médias at the Université du Québec à Montréal, 2007.

26 minutes. DVD format, color.

This short documentary is in many ways a film about film. More specifically, *Ricordati di noi!* is about *Teledomenica*, an Italian-language television program broadcast for thirty years in Montreal beginning in 1964. It is the story of how a recent chance encounter between the director of the documentary and the host of the show led to the salvaging of over one hundred reels of film that had been lying forgotten in the basement of a television studio. The documentary shows spools of film being cleaned, cataloged, synchronized, and stored in the vaults of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, a film archive founded in 1963 and supported by the Québec provincial government. Two weeks after the move, we are told through a voice-over narration, a flood badly damaged the film’s original repository. Fate, it seems, wanted *Teledomenica* preserved for posterity.

After World War II, Canada received as many immigrants from Italy as did the United States. But, unlike the United States, this wave completely overwhelmed the over-100,000 Italians listed in the 1941 census. By 1971, Italians numbered 730,000 and

were concentrated in Canada's two major cities, Montreal and Toronto. A new breed of ethnic entrepreneur emerged to serve their needs. *Ricordati di noi!* throws the spotlight on one of these promoters, Alfredo Gagliardi, *Teledomenica's* mastermind. Owner of a successful travel agency, editor of the weekly *Corriere italiano*, occasional speech-writer for Quebec's conservative Union Nationale Party, Gagliardi quickly realized the enormous potential in advertising revenues represented by this expanding and consumer-oriented audience. He was part of the vanguard of what was then commonly and unashamedly termed "foreign-language" or "ethnic" television, which the federal government officially allowed only in 1964.

Broadcast on Sundays at noon, *Teledomenica* was a community information program. It covered news relating to local organizations, parishes, and businesses, as well as family events such as weddings and baptisms. A particularly popular segment of the show, called *Saluti dall'Italia*, featured Italians in small towns and villages in southern Italy sending their greetings to kith and kin in Montreal. Some of these clips have been incorporated in *Ricordati di noi!* But a separate, longer version, lasting 51 minutes, forms part of the DVD—it is a montage of greetings emanating from five localities in the province of Cosenza in Calabria. Some of these are quite moving, as when some older participants, so overcome with emotion at the prospect of instantaneous communication with a departed relative, are unable to speak. Nevertheless, the overall effect is one of tedium. In fact, the repetition in *Ricordati di noi!* fails to hold the viewer's interest, in part because of the editing and lack of a compelling musical score.

At a distance of almost half a century, the documentary's juxtaposed images of the *paese* and Canada's metropolis, a status Montreal still enjoyed in the 1960s, unwittingly reinforce stereotypes of immigration. The *paese* appears to be poor and backward, relatively untouched by Italy's budding Economic Miracle. Its inhabitants are awkward, inarticulate, and unschooled peasants. Many of them address their good wishes to the microphone rather than the camera. These greetings, however, remain unreciprocated since no Italian equivalent of *Saluti* was ever made, nor would most *paesani* have had the means to acquire a television set to receive them. *Ricordati di noi!* instead features their relatives in Montreal seemingly enjoying the good life, eating abundantly at perennial banquets, dancing to the latest music, and sporting fashionable clothes, hairstyles, and accessories. The Italian shops they frequent are bright, airy, and inviting. To them family members back home often repeat the imprecation *Ricordati di noi!*, reminiscent of Dido's celebrated aria *Remember me* in Henry Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas*. Like the Queen of Carthage abandoned by her ambitious lover who is determined to found an empire, their only power lies in the ability to stir up memory. Like Aeneas, the immigrants are single-mindedly focused on the goal to *fare l'America*, that is, to establish their personal empire. The future clearly belongs to them. They embody modernity. The black-and-white sequences of the Old World tellingly contrast with the colored footage of the New. (Indeed, who could have guessed that, as Gianni Amelio's 1994 film *Lamerica* so forcefully shows, Italy would become *l'America* for Albanians, Romanians, and, later, Africans and Asians.)

*Ricordati di noi!* makes reference to another film, the 1963 epic *Pour la suite du monde* by Pierre Perrault and Michel Brault. Both it and *Saluti dall'Italia* are documentaries made in black and white using a hand-held camera. Because they were both produced

in the early 1960s, they now lie side by side in the Cinémathèque Québécoise. In their own way, both capture the passing of a way of life. But the similarities end there. *Saluti dall'Italia* does not pretend to record life in Calabrian *paesi*. If it does so, it is quite by accident and ineptly. In one scene, for example, an impatient interviewer snatches the microphone from an elderly woman who is having trouble remembering the names of the relatives she wishes to greet. We miss the respect that Perrault and Brault show to the fishers of l'Isle-aux-Coudres and their way of life. The Italian film is also very anxious to showcase Cosenza's modernity through images of spanking new businesses, high rises, and automobiles, an aspect completely ignored by *Ricordati di noi!* *Saluti* also highlights the petit bourgeois, in the guise of priests, local politicians, entrepreneurs, and travel agents, perhaps to neutralize the voices of an embarrassingly premodern peasantry. If the 1960s were the golden age of the documentary in Canada, *Saluti dall'Italia* is unlikely to stand out as an example of the genre.

What in the final analysis is *Ricordati di noi!*'s appeal? Those who like me grew up in Montreal at the time will feel stirrings of nostalgia when presented with long-forgotten images of the past. But the documentary's very local focus will also limit its potential to attract a wider audience. Moreover, like so many *images d'Épinal*, its unmediated and uncontextualized treatment of postwar Italian immigrants will only reinforce sentimental and distorted notions of this subject. Sadly, the opportunity to deal authentically and meaningfully with this important aspect of immigration has been missed.

—ROBERTO PERIN  
York University

*If Stone Could Speak (Se la pietra sapesse parlare).*

By Randy Croce.

Labor Education Service, University of Minnesota, 2007.

67 minutes. DVD format, color.

Of the millions of Italian job-seekers who emigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most worked as unskilled laborers, often in construction or on the railroads. Indeed, the conventional image of the New Immigrant—not just Italians—is that of the unschooled manual worker. This fascinating documentary by labor educator Randy Croce tells the story of a lesser-known immigrant group: the stone carvers, or *scalpellini*, who left their homes in northern Italy to work in the “Granite Capital of the World,” Barre, Vermont.

It is a story, first and foremost, of the search for employment. In the Italian north, the earth yielded itself up to quarrying easier than to farming, and generations of men in villages such as Viggìù took up the *scalpello*, or stonecutter's chisel, as a way of feeding their families. In the telling phrase of a local historian, “Stone was the bread of these people.” After passing a long apprenticeship in the village design school, a *scalpellino* could be relatively well paid and might even be hired to work on the Milan

cathedral, whose unquenchable thirst for statuary provided steady employment—in the words of one Viggiù resident, “*pane sicuro*” (literally, “secure bread”). But even such a coveted position was insecure, which is why so many skilled carvers sought work abroad, and why literally thousands of them ended up in Barre, where they could quadruple the wages they made in Italy.

While some *scalpellini* returned to Italy, many settled in Vermont, where they chiseled the local stone into beautifully detailed statuary for gravesites, churches, and public buildings around the country. By 1900 Barre contained a thriving *colonia italiana*, complete with an opera, a theater, multiple brass bands, a bakery, Italian-language newspapers, a mutual aid society, and a cooperative attached to the Socialist Labor Hall, which imported olive oil, salami, and other Italian specialties. As the film shows, in this community of transplanted artisans and their families, people continued to practice cultural traditions borrowed from Italy, ranging from making home-made wine (even during Prohibition) to singing socialist anthems on May Day.

As in other immigrant communities of the time, radical sentiment was high. The film celebrates this sentiment visually and musically—we see newspapers entitled *La Rivendicazione* and *Il Proletario* while “Bandiera Rossa” (often thought of as the unofficial anthem of the Italian Communist Party) plays in the background—but it also acknowledges the internal wrangling of the left. In a touching interview, a *scalpellino*’s daughter recalls the names that her father gave his children—Lincoln, Liberia, Avvenire, Aurora—as evidence of the immigrants’ yearning for social justice. But we also learn that the labor hall was so often the site of violence between socialists and anarchists that it was popularly known as the “bucket of blood.” It’s a sobering glimpse at the complications of solidarity.

The film’s most disturbing sequence, however, involves the stonemasons’ battle with silicosis, a lung disease caused by prolonged exposure to granite dust. In Italy, where *scalpellini* worked in open sheds with hand tools, silicosis had not been a problem. In Vermont, the sheds were walled against the weather and the men used pneumatic tools that filled the interior of their work spaces with a particulate-heavy fog. The result was a local epidemic of the asphyxiating scourge that killed most Barre carvers before they reached fifty and that gave rise to the fearsome epithet “Mal d’America” (the “American disease”). Workers who contracted the illness were often isolated from their families in the local sanatorium, and many of them took their own lives to avoid the horrors of a lingering decline.

Even more tragically, all of this human suffering was preventable. As early as 1903, unionized by the Granite Cutters Association, *scalpellini* struck to demand dust reduction. That modest request for humane treatment was met with the managerial intransigence typical of the period, and it wasn’t until 1938 that shed owners finally agreed to put in suction devices. These were so effective that no one who joined the stonemason ranks after that year contracted the “American disease.” Lest one give too much credit to right-thinking employers, however, it should be noted that the union was made to pay for the new technology: Members agreed to a dollar-a-day pay cut to offset the cost. In an interview with the *Minnesota Labor Review* (August 2008), Croce called the stonemasons’ victory “an important example of what collective action under a union can do.” Perhaps. But it also illustrates who, in collective bargaining, holds the aces. In Barre in 1938, it wasn’t the workers.

Croce tells the stonecutters' story largely through interviews with surviving family members—both Italian and American—and many of these are enormously affecting. To hear second-generation stonecutter Angelo Ambrosini recall how at the age of six he watched his father die of silicosis; to hear a young Viggìu carver speak of using the same tools that his grandfather used in the 1930s; to hear elderly Vermonters recall Italian grocers extending credit during the Depression—these are wonderfully evocative moments that personalize the wider story. There's a fruitful balance, too, between these intimate recollections and the more general observations of Italian and American scholars. Brief appearances by the late Rudolph Vecoli are especially notable, since Croce was inspired to make the film after hearing the distinguished historian lecture on the *scalpellini* in an Italian-American history class at the University of Minnesota.

"Every stone monument tells a story," the film's narrator begins, "of those it honors and of those who created it." If I have one quibble with the storytelling in *If Stone Could Speak*, it is that the stone itself—that is, the statuary fashioned by these artisans—is not very often allowed to speak. We see men tapping chisels and we see finished monuments. But we are told so little about these monuments that they remain anonymous—the unnamed "works" of unnamed "workers." Perhaps it's the frustrated art historian in me, but I kept hoping both for more biographical detail and for some stylistic analysis of what are, after all, fine works of art. I wanted to hear something like this: "Angelo Ambrosini's father finished this statue of Saint Thomas for a Minnesota church around 1910. Note how delicately he has caught the saint's expression of incredulity." But on details such as these, the film is mostly silent.

One notable exception is provided by a statue of a Vermont child, Margaret Pitkin, who died young and whose memorial was commissioned by her grieving parents on the condition that the carver (he is not named) copy in stone exactly what is shown in a family photograph. He does so, presents the exquisite result, and is told by the girl's father that he will not pay because, on the statue, a button on her shoe is left undone. "Looka the pic, looka the pic," responds the *scalpellino*. And in the photograph, sure enough, the button is undone. It's a beautiful, and unusual, moment of personalization, one that reveals the stonecutters' artistry no less than the precariousness of their existence. Here the stone of Barre truly does speak.

*If Stone Could Speak*, in English and Italian with subtitles, was produced in cooperation with the Labor Education Service of the University of Minnesota. The running time is just over an hour. It's an excellent film for classroom use, and it belongs in any library collection devoted to Italian Americans, immigration, or labor history.

—TAD TULEJA  
*Independent Scholar*



*Closing Time: Storia di un negozio.*

By Veronica Diaferia.

A Tiny Director Productions Film, 2005.

30 minutes. DVD format, color.

In 1910, Neapolitan immigrant Ernesto Rossi opened a shop at 187 Grand Street, in the heart of New York's Little Italy. In 1930, the eponymous E. Rossi & Company moved just down the street to 191 Grand, at the corner of Mulberry. In 2004, after nearly a hundred years in business, the shop closed, a victim of escalating Manhattan rents and the decline of the ethnic neighborhood that had supported it. Italian-born director Veronica Diaferia's documentary *Closing Time: Storia di un negozio*, winner of the Best Short Documentary awards in the 2006 Atlanta Film Festival and the 2006 Big Apple Film Festival, is a fine, if incomplete, account of E. Rossi & Company's last month in business, and a charming tribute to an Italian America that has all but disappeared.

In *Closing Time*, which she calls in the press release material "a handicraft film, intentionally rough," Diaferia uses a combination of informal interviews and archival footage to construct a paean to an urban Italian-American community facing obsolescence. Most of the action takes place within the cramped, claustrophobic quarters of E. Rossi & Company, where its present proprietor, Ernie Rossi (grandson of Ernesto) packs and talks, talks and packs, in advance of his eviction date. The longtime lease deal, negotiated on a handshake decades earlier, has been called in by Rossi's new landlord, who plans to raise the monthly rent to \$25,000 and wants Rossi to vacate the premises by the end of 2004 (the film does not mention that the Rossis reopened a few doors down on Grand Street, in a much bigger space, in 2005). The story of E. Rossi & Company is presented as an oral history told during the Rossi family's bemused preparations for the move, gleaned from Diaferia's numerous interviews with shoppers, neighbors, Italian tourists, and members of the Rossi family, including Ernesto Rossi's nonagenarian son Luigi, who sits in despair in a corner of the shop as he watches its piecemeal demise. These conversations are skillfully edited by Michael Slavens, giving the overall effect of a foray into ethnography; and certainly, to an Italian like Diaferia, Little Italy is a foreign country of sorts, where a third-generation Italian-American shopkeeper purveying T-shirts that plead "Pray for me, my wife is Italian" may have only a passing acquaintance with the language and culture of his forebears.

The danger in all of this is that, in spite of her obvious affection for her subjects and her wise decision to let them speak for themselves, Diaferia exaggerates the present-day influence, and even existence, of Little Italy, and in so doing runs the risk of parodying the very people whose culture she aims to preserve. Robert Rossi, a grandson of Ernesto who, with his long gray hair and beard, resembles an aging Garibaldi, complains to the camera that "when people look at our people, it's gangsters, it's loudmouth comics, it's more gangsters . . . but this romanticism . . . *la dolce vita*—that's what our people are really all about, and it would be nice if once in a while someone would find that out." But surely, as representations of Italian Americans from *Marty* to *Moonstruck* suggest, the Italian American as gangster is only one side of a binary stereotype. In the nonethnic American imagination, Italian Americans—urban, passionate, fetishizers of family and food—are, in their very difference, romantic, and one suspects that Diaferia sees them as such herself.

For, ironically, in spite of her sympathy for the plight of the Rossis, Diaferia is guilty of her own ethnic idealizing. The camera pans on shots of delivery trucks emblazoned with Chinese characters as Ernie Rossi's sister-in-law says, "You see more and more different ethnic groups moving into this area, and little by little the feeling of Little Italy is not the same as it was maybe thirty or forty years ago." A neighboring shopkeeper, like the Rossis forced out by skyrocketing rent, tearfully embraces the local barber, whose shopfront sign is in English and Chinese. Ethnic encroachment is hinted at darkly. But even thirty and forty years ago, Little Italy was rapidly losing ground to expansion from Chinatown to its south. The intrusion of chic from SoHo to the west is of a more recent vintage, however. Robert Rossi, walking around the overstuffed shop and indicating the plaster images of saints and the piles of "Kiss me, I'm half-Italian" baby bibs, asserts that "a world that is as clean and as neat as the SoHo that you know about—that doesn't exist. That's somebody's fantasy. This here is what's *real*." But is it?

In its heyday at the end of the nineteenth century, New York's Little Italy boasted 40,000 residents of Italian descent and covered seventeen city blocks; in the more than a hundred years since, however, its Italian population has shrunk steadily as Italian immigrants became acculturated and moved to more desirable climes. The Immigration Act of 1965 and the improving postwar Italian economy sealed the fate of the neighborhood once and for all. Little Italy now spans little more than two city blocks, and the 2000 Census reported that the neighborhood's residents claiming Italian ancestry had dwindled to a mere 1,211. Over the past thirty or forty years, Little Italy has become a *de facto* museum and gift shop for tourists—many of them, like Diaferia, Italian nationals. The neighborhood now employs two public-relations executives, a grant writer, and a bus-tour coordinator.<sup>1</sup> As sad as the story of E. Rossi & Company's closing is, one can't help but sense that the store's number actually came up long ago. Owing, perhaps, to her status as a relative newcomer to New York and an outsider to the culture of Little Italy, Diaferia either ignores or neglects the sociohistorical context for E. Rossi's closing.

Another disappointment is the surprisingly short shrift Diaferia gives to the store's early days as a center of Italian-American music publishing. Ernesto Rossi was one of the leading publishers of Neapolitan and Italian-American songs during the prewar years, an important American distributor of Neapolitan art and popular music as well as an exporter of songs by Italian-American composers written in Neapolitan style, which were shipped back to Italy (making E. Rossi & Company an early force for cultural globalization; one wonders how much of the Neapolitan ethos in the twentieth century was actually created in Little Italy). The musical legacy of E. Rossi & Company is alluded to briefly in shots of yellowing sheet music and photos of Enrico Caruso and Giovanni Martinelli, and in Ernie Rossi's comment that his grandfather "got involved in music." In fact, the music archives of Edizione E. Rossi are significant enough to be of great interest to scholars of Italian American studies and historians of music and popular culture; this reviewer would have liked to see Diaferia explore this aspect of the store's history more extensively.

By the time *Closing Time* was filmed, however, the wider cultural significance of E. Rossi & Company was virtually forgotten by all but a few scholars and aficionados, and the store is shown as a present-day purveyor of Italian-American kitsch. Toward the end of the film, Ernie Rossi expresses the wish that future generations might be

able to visit some semblance of his grandfather's shop and, in so doing, discover that Little Italy is not "all about . . . pasta and spaghetti and meatballs and cannolis." They might then, he hopes, find out "what Little Italy is all about." But the question, in her affecting ode to a Little Italy that exists only in the shared cultural memory of the Italian-American diaspora, goes unanswered by *Diaferia*: What is Little Italy, and, by extension, Italian-American culture, all about?

—JULIA GRELLA O'CONNELL  
*The Risorgimento Project*

### Notes

1. Bill Tonelli. "Arrivederci, Little Italy." *New York Magazine* (September 20, 2004); <http://nymag.com/nymetro/urban/features/9904>, accessed September 23, 2009.

## Digital Media Reviews

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*Italian Americans in California:*

[www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans](http://www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans)

*Italian Los Angeles:*

[www.italianlosangeles.org](http://www.italianlosangeles.org)

*Italians in the Gold Rush and Beyond:*

[www.IGRB.net](http://www.IGRB.net)

Three websites, accessed between September 1 and 15, 2009, dedicated to various aspects of the Italian immigrant experience in California ([www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans](http://www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans); [www.italianlosangeles.org](http://www.italianlosangeles.org); and [www.IGRB.net](http://www.IGRB.net)) present material that can be useful for researchers and also interesting for the general visitor wanting to learn more about Italians in California. They can also serve, however, as examples of what works and what doesn't work when one attempts to develop a website designed to educate as well as generate interest and furnish important information that might not be readily available or accessible.

Italian Los Angeles, [www.italianlosangeles.org](http://www.italianlosangeles.org), with sponsorship from various sources (foundations and the Italian government's Istituto di Cultura), is a project involving members of the Los Angeles academic, civic, cultural, and commercial community under the leadership of Luisa Del Giudice, founder of the now sadly defunct Italian Oral History Institute. The site attempts to counter the widely held perception that the Italian presence in Los Angeles is scattered and largely invisible. Designed to make the Italian community in Los Angeles and its resources better known both to insiders and outsiders, the site is intended "as a village piazza – providing a familiar meeting place in this diffuse city of Los Angeles." The ultimate goal of Italian Los Angeles is to foster a sense of community – however virtual – and to highlight its richness. As such the site is ambitious, documenting the history, folklore, architecture, etc., of the Italian-American presence in Los Angeles, while also providing information about businesses, restaurants, products, and services related to Italy that are available in the city.

The historical section draws on the research of scholars in the field, with a historical overview that begins with the 1823 presence of Giovanni Leandri in El Pueblo and moves all the way to an excellent analysis by Del Giudice of today's diverse Los Angeles Italian-American community. Further focus is furnished by a short history of the Italian-American fishing community of San Pedro. References to scholars of Southern California Italian history (together with contact information) are included, as well as an extensive bibliography. Given Del Giudice's specialty in folklore, the section on folklife, covering foodways and traditions, gardens, celebrations of saints' days, harvest festivals, folk art, and artisans is particularly interesting. The point is made throughout that Italian life is still alive in these Los Angeles residents of Italian descent as they maintain Old World traditions or establish new ones (such as the feast of San Gennaro).

This site is rich in information for a general audience but also for the researcher. It has links to outside sources, excellent visuals that are integrated in the text, demonstrating

sound yet accessible scholarship. Besides researching various aspects of the Italian immigrant experience in Los Angeles, Italian Los Angeles could be used as the basis for drawing up an itinerary of Italy-related sites in the LA area, from the Watts Towers to Hollywood; one could also use it to find out where to buy a *bomboniera* (party favor for a rite of passage celebration) or get information about where the nearest Italian regional club is located.

Italian Americans in California, [www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italian-americans](http://www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italian-americans), is the work of The Bancroft Library, the special collections library at the University of California–Berkeley whose mission includes major research and instructional activities. The project was in part funded by the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) and the text written by a graduate student, Dan Lee, in the History Department at UC Berkeley. The site is designed as a virtual exhibit, much like the experience one would have in a museum walking from room to room. Italian Americans in California includes five virtual rooms, each covering a different period of Italian history in California and each containing very brief textual information supplemented by links to photographs from the library’s collection. The exhibit also attends to changes in the community over time, covering this topic in a creative if very limited way. This should not serve as a criticism, however, since the major highlights of the Italian experience are covered.

Each of the first four virtual rooms covers an introduction to a specific historical period. Each has three links to subtopics, each with one graphic drawn from the Bancroft’s collection of maps and photographs. Room One, for example, covers the first arrivals with links to Italians in the Spanish and Mexican era, Italians in the gold rush, and lastly a description of the places from which most Italians came. The most interesting of the rooms is the last one, which instead of continuing the statewide story of Italian Americans in California, focuses on one San Francisco neighborhood as a microcosm of the larger experience.

Besides the virtual museum, which points out that Italian Americans have been involved in almost every major event in California’s history since the seventeenth century (something that I might question), the site also provides more detailed timelines for each period as well as information on the sources, both text and web, used for the exhibit (I was surprised that Andrew Rolle’s work was not cited here). In keeping with the virtual museum theme of the site there are easy ways to navigate from one room to the other and from one period to the other. This is a useful site for anyone interested in an overview of Italian-American history in California; it is sound in its scholarship, creative and engaging in its presentation, and while focused on Northern California does not altogether ignore other areas, such as the Italian presence in Los Angeles.

Italians in the Gold Rush and Beyond, [www.IGRB.net](http://www.IGRB.net), is said, by its promoter, Alessandro Trojani, to be an extensive project based on the history of Italian Americans on the West Coast from the beginning of the Gold Rush Era (1848) up to the present. It is described on the website as “the most complete multimedia database of Italians in North America from the Gold Rush to today,” and vaunts on its home page the sponsorship of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, the Consulate General of Italy in Los Angeles, the University of Florence, and California State University–Long Beach.

In spite of these claims and what appears to be its vast support, the site is confusing, very limited, disorganized, and incomplete. From its home page it appears divided

into four areas: Content, Web Links, Encyclopedia, and Media Gallery. The last three have no information at all other than a link to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. Its Content section consists of four parts: Documenti/Documents, Eventi/Events, Luoghi/Places, and Persone/People. The Documents section consists of 36 links, not listed in alphabetical order, with information that ranges from all the worldwide branches of *Piemontesi nel Mondo* to “*Cosa è la Niaf*,” as well as a history of Italian masonry. The Events link has nothing listed, while the Places link provides information scanned from various sources on such topics as the University of Santa Clara, a handful of towns in the Gold Country and beyond, information about New Mexico and Utah, as well as California’s military museum. Under People, the site provides links to a variety of individuals most of whom have little connection to the Italian immigrant experience in the Gold Country or anywhere in the United States, for example, links to the life of George Washington, John Quincy Adams, and even Madeline, which is hardly a person but a stop on the Nevada–California–Oregon Railroad.

The site, which claims to be “[t]he most complete Multimedia database of Italians in the North America from the gold rush to today” leaves much to be desired. Because the Chi Siamo (About Us) link is blank, there is nothing to indicate who is actually responsible for the site. The information it has scanned is useless for researchers or even the general public because it is disorganized and incomplete. The site, in spite of its pretense to focus on Italians in North America, lacks focus. It covers people and topics that are not tied to the Italian immigrant experience and is, besides, full of typographical errors in English and quotes without citation marks.

Writing a review of online material presents one with challenges not faced when reviewing a book. Besides the accuracy of the material presented, a reviewer is interested in whether the site is user friendly, whether text is interspersed with visuals that complement written material, and whether links that are provided actually connect one to relevant information. There is no doubt that anyone going to [www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans](http://www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans) or [www.italianlosangeles.org](http://www.italianlosangeles.org) will find a site that provides accurate and well-organized information presented in a creative and engaging manner. Whether a small five-room virtual museum documenting the history of Italian Americans in California, or a more extensive site where the Italian-American virtual community of Los Angeles is presented in its many aspects, these are two excellent and fascinating sites for anyone interested in things Italian and Italian-American. Italians in the Gold Rush and Beyond, instead, presents us with exactly what a site should not be. Disorganized, still incomplete after six years, and full of irrelevant material, it in no way approaches “the most complete multimedia database of Italians in North America from the Gold Rush to today” that it pretends to be. It should serve as a warning for any group or institution that puts its name as a sponsor to any site.

The web allows us to disseminate all aspects of the Italian-American experience, it is accessible to a worldwide audience, and can accommodate creative presentations that are cheaper and often not possible in print media: [www.italianlosangeles.org](http://www.italianlosangeles.org) and [www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans](http://www.bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans) furnish us with two excellent examples of the web’s endless possibilities.

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## Contributors

JOSEPH P. COSCO is an associate professor of English who teaches American literature, American studies, and journalism at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. He is the author of *Imagining Italians: The Clash of Romance and Race in American Perceptions, 1880-1910* (State University of New York Press, 2003). A native of Italy, Cosco holds a bachelor's in English from Dartmouth College, a master's in English literature from Columbia University, a doctorate in American studies from the College of William and Mary, and a certificate in Anglo-Irish literature from Trinity College Dublin. Prior to becoming a university professor, he was a newspaper staff writer and magazine freelancer for twenty years.

GEOFFREY G. DRUTCHAS is a cultural historian and clergyman who became familiar with Tommaso Juglaris in the 1980s as the chaplain at Tufts University, where the campus chapel is decorated with three of the artist's stained glass windows. Drutchas co-authored *Tommaso Juglaris: Un artista tra Europa e America (An Artist Between Europe and America)* (Famija Moncalereisa, 2004) and was guest curator for an international exhibition of Juglaris's work in Lansing, Michigan, in 2004–2005 and Turin, Italy, in 2006. A graduate of Michigan State University and Harvard University, as well as the Lancaster Seminary, he is the author of *Is Life Sacred?* (Pilgrim Press, 1999), a history of the sanctity of life concept in philosophical and theological ethics, and numerous articles on history and art. Since 1988, Drutchas has been senior pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ in Taylor, Michigan.

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