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Efrem Bartoletti in the Mesabi Range: A Wobbly's Efforts to Mobilize Immigrant Italian Miners

THIERRY RINALDETTI

A number of creative works have focused on the intricate interplay of class consciousness and ethnic solidarity in the immigrant communities of the United States and among Italian immigrants in particular (Bezza 1983; Cannistraro and Meyer 2003; Gabaccia and Ottanelli 2001; Guglielmo 2010; Pernicone 2009; Topp 2001b; Vezzosi 1991), drawing attention to the difficulty of organizing workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds into class-conscious movements. In the early twentieth century, the issue was especially crucial for an industrial union like the Industrial Workers of the World (also known as the IWW, or Wobblies), whose goal was to organize all workers of an industry regardless of their skills and origins. While the trade unions of the American Federation of Labor, its major rival, were dominated by skilled, male, Anglo-Saxon workers, IWW locals primarily recruited the transient, the unskilled, the recent immigrants of all backgrounds, and they did not exclude blacks or women either. In particular, the massive presence of unskilled Italian immigrants in most industries, and in many IWW locals, made the task even more complicated for Wobbly organizers. For while the success of mobilizations and strikes often depended largely upon the active participation of Italian workers (Cartosio 1983, 384; Topp 2001a, 139–142),[1] Italian immigrants were divided not only ideologically—like workers of other ethnic groups—but along regional lines as well. At the beginning of the twentieth century, most of them had no sense of national identity but rather viewed themselves and their fellow countrymen as natives of specific regions and provinces of Italy.

This article addresses these issues, not from the perspective of Wobbly leadership but from that of an IWW local organizer, Efrem Bartoletti. In Italy, he had completed only a rudimentary education. Once in the United States, he alternated his work as a propagandist for the IWW with his job as a miner, while organizing his fellow Italian-American miners in the local community to which he fully belonged. A number of primary sources documenting Efrem Bartoletti's life and work are available, which is not the case for his peers: his correspondence with prominent Italian-American (and non-Italian-American) radicals, several articles he published in the Italian-language radical press, his first poems collected in one volume by the IWW, and the drafts of some of his speeches.[2] It is thus possible to hear

a voice that is generally unheard. Drawing upon some of these sources, this article examines the role Bartoletti played as a local radical activist and IWW organizer among his fellow Italian-American miners of the Mesabi Range (Minnesota), mainly—though not exclusively—in the context of the miners' strike of 1916 and the crackdown on radicals that followed the U.S. declaration of war in 1917. Bartoletti's propaganda and organizing efforts, his speeches and poems in particular, contributed to uniting and mobilizing Italian-American workers divided along regional and ideological lines by appealing to their sense of Italianness during the strike in 1916. But his achievement was short-lived because of major, and well-known, obstacles to the Italian Americans' (and non–Italian Americans') long-term commitment to revolutionary industrial unionism, as his correspondence confirms. Indeed, with the fierce repression of the IWW, the disruption of its networks and the divisions among its leaders, the mission of a local organizer like Efrem Bartoletti became almost impossible.

Efrem Bartoletti's Major Challenge as an IWW Organizer

When he first left Costacciaro, his native village in the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines, Umbria, in 1907, Efrem Bartoletti was only eighteen years old. He worked for a while in Luxembourg and then traveled to Hibbing, Minnesota, in 1909, where he boarded with an Italian-American family on Cedar Street—together with a dozen other, mainly Umbrian migrants—and worked as an iron ore miner in the Mesabi Range underground pits. Actually, like the majority of young men from Costacciaro and the nearby Umbrian localities,[3] he was following in the footsteps of other inhabitants from the four corners of the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines who since the turn of the twentieth century had engaged in circular labor migrations between their native villages and specific localities in a number of mining areas of Europe and the United States: in the small iron-mining towns at the borders of Lorraine and Luxembourg, in the anthracite region of northeastern Pennsylvania, in the coal basins of Illinois and southeastern Kansas, in the Mesabi Range of Minnesota, and in the iron ranges of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Together with Pennsylvania's Lackawanna County, the Mesabi Range happened to be the most popular destination in Costacciaro among migrants headed for the United States, as over 40 percent of them chose to go to Hibbing, Eveleth, or Virginia, three small towns located at a short distance from one another in Saint Louis County (Rinaldetti 2013, 69–70). It is not certain whether Bartoletti was already active in Italy or whether it was the American experience that radicalized him, but his father Giuseppe had probably shared his socialist ideas

with him ("Efrem Bartoletti, emigrato ed esiliato politico" 2001). As early as 1911, that is to say just two years after he arrived in the United States, Bartoletti already had some articles published in *L'Operaio Italiano* (Letter, G. Cesare, November 20, 1911, AB), even though he had completed only the first three years of elementary education in Italy (Letter, P. de Amicis, January 12, 1911, AB). He soon became a dedicated labor activist. He was for a while the organizer of Local 490 of the IWW–affiliated Metal Mine Workers Industrial Union (MMWIU). He was a member of the strikers' executive committee during the IWW-led strike that hit the whole Mesabi Range in 1916. And he also played an active part in the defense of the IWW activists arrested in 1917.

When he returned to Italy in 1919, Bartoletti brought back more than 200 of the letters he had received during his ten years in Minnesota.[4] The letters were hidden away during the Fascist period and then rediscovered by his descendants, and a local scholar I met in Umbria during my PhD research, Luigi Galassi, eventually gave me a digital version of the letters—which can now be accessed online at the Archivio Bartoletti (www.romanoguerra.it/efrem.php). Some of the letters were from relatives and friends who had stayed behind in Italy or settled elsewhere in the United States. But most of his correspondents were prominent figures of the Italian-American radical movement. There were editors of well-known Italian-language radical publications including *Il Proletario* and *L'Operaio Italiano*, IWW officials such as Giovanni Ettor (who was for a while the union's general organizer) and Duilio Mari (the head of the committee of the Italian section), and organizers from other unions such as Giovanni Baldazzi from the Italian Bakers Federation and Henry Windle from the United Mine Workers of America. The collection also includes a number of letters from IWW prisoners, twenty-one letters from Carlo Tresca himself, and eight from his wife Holga, as well as the drafts of several speeches Bartoletti made in the small mining towns of the Mesabi Range, one of the articles he wrote during the 1916 strike, and, finally, all of his poems published by the IWW in the collection titled *Nostalgie proletarie* (Proletarian nostalgia) (Bartoletti 1919). First of all, the breadth of Bartoletti's correspondence testifies to the hyperactivity of an ordinary labor activist. Like many other Italian-American radicals, both leaders and rank-and-file organizers, who engaged in a wide variety of union activities and literary pursuits (writing poetry, short stories, dramas, and articles), Bartoletti was entrusted with numerous, usually unpaid organizing tasks and missions—which came on top of the already long hours in the underground mines—and he still found the time to write poems, articles, and long and frequent letters as well. As the local contact of several radical publications, Bartoletti took care of

subscriptions, raised funds, prepared the editors' propaganda tours in the Great Lakes area (Letter, P. de Amicis, November 23, 1911, AB), and above all passed on whatever local information he had (Letters, C. Tresca, n.d. [1]; A. Faggi, October 17, 1916; R. Fazio, December 17, 1917, AB). In addition, from 1914 onward the editors of several newspapers regularly asked him to send articles: for the celebrations of May 1 (Letter, A. Faggi, April 12, 1917, AB), about the situation in the Mesabi Range (Letter, R. Fazio, August 21, 1916, AB), or else to defend some imprisoned fellow radical (Letter, C. Tresca, n.d. [2], AB).

Bartoletti's major challenge as an IWW local organizer and camp delegate probably was to mobilize fellow Italian-American workers who were divided because of differences of regional origin, political ideology, and social status. As in many other Italian "colonies" in the United States, a first source of division among Italian Americans in the Mesabi Range resulted from the antagonism between regional groups. Northern Italians, who came first to the Great Lakes area, were followed by immigrants from the center and the south of Italy in the early 1900s (Vecoli 1983, 287). Each group founded its own associations along regional lines. There was, for instance, a mutual aid society named after the regions of the Marches and Umbria in Eveleth and one called Roma in Virginia (Vecoli 1998, 684). Regional divides were further reinforced by the segmentation of the labor market in the Mesabi Range, where Italians from Northern and Central Italy, a number of whom had acquired some experience in the mines of Lorraine and Luxembourg, were hired in the underground pits while Southern Italians usually worked in the open pits (Vecoli 1998, 287). This situation had repercussions, as the workers' grievances were not the same everywhere. In the strike of 1916, for instance, wages were the main concern in the open pits, whereas it was the contract system that had sparked the strike in the underground pits (Sofchalk 1971, 228). Such regional schisms sometimes proved impossible to overcome, as, for example, when the different regional groups in Hibbing failed to agree on a very mundane project for an Italian-American farmers' cooperative (Speech, September 21, 1913, AB).

Moreover, residential patterns in the small mining towns of the Mesabi Range resulted in the territorial dispersal of Italian immigrants, who were therefore further estranged from each other. There were not many company towns in the Mesabi Range; instead, the companies provided the miners with places of residence known as "locations," which consisted merely of a few houses built just outside the mines. As these houses were designated for families, single men usually crammed into makeshift shacks, which they sometimes even had to build themselves. Then, further away from

the mines, the municipalities received other Italian immigrants who were staying in boarding houses or had come from the locations in search of better housing conditions (Sofchalk 1971, 218–219). Testimonies published in a local Italian-language newspaper revealed the resentment recent Italian immigrants sometimes felt toward their fellow countrymen who had better material conditions. In Bessemer (a small mining town in the nearby iron ore fields of Michigan's Upper Peninsula), for instance, recent arrivals were blaming more established residents for owning their own homes, having nice sums of money in their bank accounts, and bribing the bosses in order to get the best jobs in the mines (*Il Lavoratore Italiano* 1907).

Undoubtedly, the task must have been hard for an IWW organizer such as Bartoletti. In 1910 in the Mesabi Range, the Italian Americans and the Scandinavian Americans were the two largest population groups after the Finnish Americans, the Slovenian Americans, and the Croatian Americans, so that "any attempt to establish industrial unions could hardly be a success without the participation of the Southern Europeans" (Sofchalk 1971, 227). But many Mesabi Range miners from Montenegro, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, *and* Italy had been recruited in 1907 by companies determined to break the first major strike led by the then-powerful Western Federation of Miners (Gallagher 1989, 55). And among the Italian Americans, Umbrians, who made up the largest regional group in the eastern Mesabi Range, actually came from villages that had remained largely unaffected by the peasant riots of the 1900s, while their neighbors from Umbria's small towns with a stronger tradition of social and political struggle had settled in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania or in the coal fields of eastern Kansas (Rinaldetti 2013, 71–72; 120–121).

Altogether, Italian Americans in the Mesabi Range did not seem particularly inclined to revolutionary industrial unionism. In this regard, the Mesabi Range was certainly no exception, and Tresca lamented that so few Italian Americans were inclined to read, study, or reflect, adding that the evil presence and activity of the numerous Italian-American priests, *padroni* (bosses), and *camorre* (gangs) seriously hindered the cause of the revolution (Leaflet, C. Tresca, n.d., AB). In their letters to Bartoletti, newspaper editors and union leaders alike frequently complained that their efforts to propagate the revolution did not meet with much success, not only in the Mesabi Range but elsewhere too, in Michigan, in Ohio, etc. (Letters, P. Pieri, January 20, 1919; P. de Amicis, November 28, 1911, AB). Therefore, fieldwork by local organizers such as Bartoletti was crucial, and Tresca actually urged his fellow activists: "Tu devi darti alla caccia dell'abbonato straordinario" (Leaflet, C. Tresca and Nieri, n.d.; You must really give yourself to the hunt [for extra subscriptions] with total abandon). During a propaganda

tour around the Great Lakes for *L'Operaio Italiano*, Piero de Amicis wrote Bartoletti that he counted on him all the more in Minnesota as things had not worked out as well as he had expected in the neighboring Upper Peninsula of Michigan (Letter, P. de Amicis, November 28, 1911, AB). Raimondo Fazio relied on him to circulate *L'Avvenire* among the miners during the 1916 strike and to explain the purpose of the union to the nonstrikers and arouse their interest (Letter, R. Fazio, August 21, 1916, AB).

Bartoletti's Calls for National Unity: A Necessary Step toward a Broader Goal

Bartoletti's main concern as an IWW organizer was to bring together fellow Italian-American workers. In his speeches he would repeatedly urge them to overcome their divisions, as in August 1914, just a few days after the celebration of Hibbing's twentieth anniversary, when he addressed his fellow countrymen in the following words:

> É questa la seconda volta nella breve storia della colonia italiana d'Hibbing che noi ci troviamo tutti uniti senza distinzioni di partiti e d'ideali diversi [. . .] quel cosi-detto regionalismo, che sovente ci ha divisi e tenuti lontani gli uni dagli altri, come se le sedici regioni, di cui l'Italia nostra è composta, fossero state da noi considerate ciecamente altrettante nazioni straniere, di modo che i profughi del nord guardavano quasi in cagnesco gli emigrati del Mezzogiorno e gli esuli [del] centro. (Speech, August 17, 1914, AB)

> This is only the second time in the short history of Hibbing's Italian colony that we have all come together regardless of our political affiliations and ideals [. . .] that so-called regionalism, which has often separated and kept us apart, as though the sixteen regions of which our fatherland, Italy, is composed could be viewed (are we really so blind?) as just as many foreign nations, and the refugees from the North should look down on the emigrants from the Mezzogiorno and the exiles from the Center.

His reiterated calls for unity always stressed those things all Italian Americans of the Mesabi Range had in common. Naturally enough, emigration and exile were two much-discussed topics, all the more so as the harsh winters in the Great Lakes area only accentuated the immigrants' feelings of isolation, estrangement, and homesickness. Such feelings were expressed by Bartoletti himself in the following terms in one of his speeches:

> Noi siamo qui un nucleo di laboriosi e forti lavoratori, una poderosa falange umana, strappata inesorabilmente dal destino alla dolcezza del clima, alla bellezza del cielo, all'ubertà del suolo ove crebbe, e trapiantata,

> per cosi dire, in questo lembo di terra nord americana, ricca di metalli nelle profonde sue viscere, ma povera e nuda in superfice, priva di bellezze naturali e gelida e fredda in buona parte dell'anno, qual'è infatti il Minnesota dove ci troviamo. (Speech, n.d., AB)
>
> We're a small group of strong, industrious workingmen, a powerful human phalange, which destiny has inexorably uprooted from the pleasant climate, the beautiful skies, and the fertile soil of our native land, and transplanted, so to speak, into this strip of land in North America, one rich in ore deep under the surface, but poor and bare on the surface, without any natural attraction, cold and frozen for a good part of the year. Such is Minnesota, the place where we have landed.

The long, cold winters of the Great Lakes area were a challenge for the Italian Americans, and those who could not withstand them would often resettle in Pennsylvania or return to Italy (Vecoli 1998, 686). Unsurprisingly, the local climate was a common topic of conversation between Bartoletti and his correspondents. Even the seasoned editor of the Pennsylvania-based *Il Proletario* could not fail to add a few lines about it when writing about his tour in Michigan and Minnesota: "Qui mi trovo fra i ghiacciai . . . e il tempo è un inferno. Ti scrivo dall'ufficio postale ed ho le mani quasi rattrappite dal freddo" (Letter, P. de Amicis, November 28, 1911, AB; I'm right in the middle of a lot of ice . . . the weather's a nightmare. I'm writing from the post office and my hands are almost numb with cold). One letter from some unidentified author even expanded on the issue over a half-page:

> Abbiamo passato un inverno lunghissimo sebbene non troppo freddo, solo qualche giorno da 31 a 36, però neve una tal quantità che non rammento l'uguale nei quindici inverni già passati ad Hibbing. Il giorno del Venerdi e Sabato santo abbiamo avuto lo *storm* più forte che abbia registrato la storia d'Hibbing; la quantità di neve caduta in quarant'otto ore continue con un vento che raggiunse la velocità di 60 miglia aveva fatto veri monti della *beautiful* come la chiamano gli americani e per due giorni non si è potuto lavorare coi nostri *trucks*. Ora sembra che vada al meglio sebbene la temperatura si mantenga *below freezing point*. (Letter, unknown sender, April 13, 1920, AB)
>
> We've had a very long winter, though not too cold, with just a few days between 31° and 36°, but I've never seen so much snow in the past fifteen winters I've been in Hibbing. On Good Friday and Holy Saturday we've had the biggest storm ever recorded in the story of Hibbing; with all the snow that fell non-stop for forty-eight hours and a wind of sixty miles per hour, Hibbing the beautiful, as the Americans call it, was turned into a mountain

> of snow and for two days it was impossible to work with our trucks. Now things seem better even if the temperature is still below freezing point.

Undoubtedly, homesickness was a common feature of the experience of Italian Americans in the Mesabi Range. But where was "home"? For many Italian Americans, their home was their *paese*, that is to say their native town or village. So, in his speeches, Bartoletti, who never failed to lament the splits between workers from the North, the Center, and the South of Italy, tried to arouse in them some feeling of national pride (Speeches, June 22, 1913; September 21, 1913; and August 17, 1914, AB). To this end, the exploited workers were in turn portrayed as the truest descendants of Christopher Columbus, whose footsteps they had followed into the New World; as legitimate heirs to the ancient Greeks, whose spirit of adventure and legacy Italy had preserved and transmitted to the rest of the world; as the protagonists of the verses of Giovanni Pascoli, a prominent intellectual figure of Italy's Risorgimento (Speech, n.d., AB); or as speakers of the language of Dante, even though, it was admitted, not all Italian-American workers mastered it (Speech, August 17, 1914, AB). Together with the figure of Giuseppe Garibaldi, these were actually some of the myths and symbols upon which Italian immigrants in the United States would commonly base their sense of collective identity from the late nineteenth century onward.[5]

More surprisingly, though, Bartoletti, who was an ardent advocate of internationalist and pacifist ideas, sometimes did not hesitate to recall the Italian army's feats of war in Libya (1911–1912) in order to elicit some feeling of national pride among the Mesabi Range miners[6]—a stance that also reflected complex racial attitudes. Victories, he said, would rain down on the whole Italian nation, and in particular on its exiled sons, whose social, political, and economic marginalization in the United States merely echoed the isolation of their young nation on the international stage (Speech, n.d., AB). In Bartoletti's speeches, the exploitation of workers and the discriminations against Italian Americans were two major interrelated topics: "In questa America, consacrata dal suo scopritore alla libertà e all'eguaglianza di tutti, sorse come per incanto il diritto del più forte, consequenza fatale dell'odio di razza" (Speech, n.d., AB; In this land of America, dedicated by its discoverer [Christopher Columbus] to the liberty and equality of all, the law of the strongest appeared like by magic, as a fatal consequence of racial hatred). In turn, the archenemy of all Italian-American workers found its perfect embodiment in the figure of the captain of industry, or in that of the Anglo-Saxon, thought of as essentially different from the so-called Latin race in a racialized conception of U.S. society: "Ma come cadde adunque la razza latina? . . . fu asservita dalla razza anglosassona, e fatta quasi direi

schiavi, com'è pur tutt'ora" (Speech, n.d., AB; But what made the Latin race fall so low? . . . It was once subdued by the Anglo-Saxon race, almost enslaved, and nothing has changed since).

Undeniably, the Italian Americans' shared experience of exploitation and discrimination did give rise to spontaneous forms of solidarity, even between perfect strangers, a point most clearly expressed by one Bernard Gigliotti writing from Pennsylvania: "Naturalmente non ci conosciamo personalmente: ma una volta che siamo dei sfruttati e dei perseguitati, non importa essere vicini, ma ci conosciamo lo stesso" (Letter, B. Gigliotti, October 10, 1917, AB; Of course we don't know each other in person. But given that we both belong to the exploited and the persecuted, it's of no importance, we would know each other all the same). Bartoletti declared in one of his speeches that he would not believe that there was in the audience one single Italian who did not feel, as he did, the urgent and most sincere need to unite with his fellow countrymen, on the basis of the "Latin blood that flowed in their veins" (Speech, August 17, 1914, AB). And Bartoletti exchanged long and regular letters with a number of Italian correspondents in the United States he never met in person. For instance, he had only epistolary relationships with newspaper editors Angelo Faggi (to whom he nonetheless sent his picture), Niccolo Tripodo, and prisoner Romolo Robba, among many others.

Ethnic solidarity was all the more vital as all Italian Americans somehow experienced the limits of class solidarity (Luconi 2011, 56). For instance, when Pietro Pieri complained in one of his prison letters that he had not received the Italian-language newspapers he had requested, it was not because *New Solidarity*, the only radical title available in jail, was in English but because it gave no information whatsoever on the mobilization for the imprisoned Italian-American activists (Letter, P. Pieri, June 10, 1919, AB). Under these conditions, there was nothing surprising at all about organizing fund-raisers or defending prisoners in the name of ethnic solidarity (Letters, G. Mangano, May 20, 1919; R. Robba, June 25, 1919, AB). For instance, after Carlo Tresca was arrested in the Mesabi Range in 1916, the leaflet published by his brother Ettore Tresca and Diomede Petillo read: "Noi pensiamo che Carlo Tresca non debba esser lasciato solo a combattere per la sua libertà e per il suo diritto, non fosse altro che per dimostrargli la gratitudine che noi come Italiani abbiamo e dobbiamo avere a lui per la sua opera in difesa dei lavoratori italiani qui immigrati" (Leaflet, E. Tresca and D. Petillo, July 1916, AB; We believe we should not let Carlo Tresca fight alone for his freedom and his rights, if only to show him how grateful we Italians are, and should be, for all the things he did to defend the Italian workers living in this land). For Bartoletti, unity was to be achieved at all

costs, otherwise Italians were doomed to remain the helpless children of a young nation, forsaken by their motherland, scattered across the world, and virtually enslaved by the Anglo-Saxons (Speech, n.d., AB).

For the first generation of Italian-American workers in the United States, it has been argued, "the barriers undermining class consciousness within the industrial proletariat" were almost impossible to overcome (Luconi 2011, 53). However, Bartoletti was perfectly aware of the contradictions, shortcomings, and dangers of calls for unity based on ethnic or national pride. In a speech he made in 1913 at the opening ceremony of the Italian political club of Hibbing, he deemed it necessary to warn his audience against the excesses of nationalism. Elaborating on the symbolism of the U.S. and Italian flags, he established a distinction between two forms of nationalism that he viewed as totally different. For him, the Star-Spangled Banner was the emblem of liberty, and the Tricolor flag that of revolution (in red), peace (in white), as well as patriotism and faith in the future (in green). But, he went on, the two banners and the national values they stood for had become the symbols of the workers' exploitation by the capitalist forces in the United States and by the imperialist regime in power in Italy. Finally, Bartoletti assumed that nationalism and its banners were acceptable only if they served a just cause (Speech, June 22, 1913, AB). To make his point clearer, he contrasted, in a rather lyrical moment, the noble fights for emancipation led by Giuseppe Garibaldi at Milazzo[7] or by George Washington at Saratoga[8] with the colonial ventures orchestrated in Libya by the Italian government of the time.

Bartoletti's Poetry as Propaganda

Scholars of Italian-American radical culture have shown how radicals' cultural productions—theatrical, literary, poetic, artistic—informed and sustained their activities (Bencivenni 2011; Durante 2014; Marazzi 2012). Arguably, informal cultural networks offered more opportunities to convert workers to radicalism and recruit new members than union or party meetings (Bencivenni 2011, 222). Poetry in particular, which was constantly published in the Little Italies (in book form or in newspapers), gave voice to "social and economic outsiders whose works originated in a base of real poverty, shared with their audience" (Marazzi 2012, 20). In his anthology of Italian-American literature and poetry, Martino Marazzi ranks Bartoletti in "the trio of the most outstanding Italian American proletarian poets in the twentieth century"—together with Arturo Giovannitti and the Sicilian dialect poet Antonino Crivello (Marazzi 2012, 200).

Whether Bartoletti was already writing poems in Italy or not is uncertain, but he started trying to have his verses published in several radical newspapers just a few years after he arrived in the Mesabi Range. However, not all editors showed much interest—if any at all—and those who did usually had other, more urgent priorities. For instance, in his letter to announce the publication of Bartoletti's poetry in the latest issue of *La Voce*, Giovanni Ricco made it nonetheless very clear that the paper's editor would rather have him send articles on the Italian colonies in the United States (Letter, G. Ricco, December 22, 1915, AB). Similarly, one M. Peretta from *La Giustizia* wrote that he needed Bartoletti's leading articles much more than his verses, now that his collaborator was gone and he had to print the whole paper on his own (Letter, M. Peretta, November 25, 1912, AB). Many of Bartoletti's poems were nonetheless published in a number of radical newspapers and eventually collected in a small volume published by the IWW in 1919 titled *Nostalgie proletarie*.

Like his speeches, the sixty-three poems published by the IWW echoed the constraints and inner contradictions any Italian-American IWW activist must have been confronted with when trying to mobilize his divided fellow countrymen. A significant number of Bartoletti's poems were revolutionary hymns in praise of the brotherhood of all workers and the advent of the revolution. "I Ribelli del Minnesota" (The rebels of Minnesota), for instance, calls for the unity and rebellion of all the oppressed of the world.

Un ululo straziante e disperato
sorge dai nostri petti; e da l'oscure
cave, aspirando a le dolci aure pure,
si leva ogni paria fiero e sdegnato.
[. . .]
Figli del Reno, del Danubio e quelli
del Tamigi, del Volga e de la Senna,
del Tebro e de l'Eridan siam fratelli . . . ("I Ribelli del Minnesota," AB)

An agonizing and desperate wail
springs up from our chests; and from the dark
mines, breathing the sweet pure air,
each proud and indignant pariah rises
[. . .]
Sons of the Rhine, of the Danube and those
of the Thames, of the Volga and the Seine,
of the Tiber and of the Eridan we are brothers . . . (editor's translation)

It is no surprise that the fate of the miners was a central and powerful motif in many poems, as in "Canto dei Minatori del Mare" (Song of the miners of the sea), "Canto dei Minatori del Ferro" (Song of the iron ore miners), "La Miniera" (The mine), and "Il Minatore" (The miner). In these poems, the "Trust" (the name the Oliver Iron Mining Company went by among miners) was clearly designated as the miners' common enemy ("I Ribelli del Minnesota," "La Miniera," AB). The miners were portrayed as "ombre pallide, la schiera/de' paria oppressi, incerta e mai secura/di rivedere il Sol" ("La Miniera," AB, editor's translation; pale shadows, the troop/of oppressed pariahs, uncertain and never assured/of seeing again the Sun) and as workers who suffered "ne l'ombra" (in the dark) and whose lives were made of "sangue e dolor" (blood and pain)" ("Canto dei Minatori del Ferro," AB). Their ordeals were viewed as both a true cause for revolt and a potential source of unity, which was bound to emerge out of the bowels of the earth ("Canto dei Minatori del Mare," AB).

However, the volume *Nostalgie proletarie* also included an almost equal number of poems dedicated to Bartoletti's homeland. But there again, for him as for most of his countrymen, "home" meant first and foremost the small Umbrian town where he was born, not some Italian national abstraction. His poem titled "Al mio Paese natio" (To my native place) may refer in Italian to either his native country or his native village. And if some of his "Italian" poems were dedicated to national treasures in the field of literature (such as Giovanni Pascoli) ("In morte di Giovanni Pascoli," AB), most of them actually had a more regional, if not very local, significance, such as "Umbria," which has for a setting the olive trees, the vineyards, the fertile valleys, and the hills of the Umbrian Apennines, or "Ode al Monte Cucco"—in praise of the mount overlooking his native village:

> Ma bella e in un terribile a vedere,
> o monte Cucco, è la tua gran caverna
> che giù s'apre tra roccie umide e nere
> da la tua cima, quasi bocca inferna. ("Ode al Monte Cucco," AB)

> But beautiful and in a terrible vision,
> o mount Cucco, is your great cavern
> that opens below among black and damp rocks
> from your summit, almost an infernal opening. (editor's translation)

And yet, Bartoletti's poems did appeal to many of his fellow Italian-American workers, regardless of their regional origins and dialects. It was certainly no coincidence that the Italian IWW Publishing Bureau decided to publish 1,500 copies of *Nostalgie proletarie* in January 1919 (Letter, G. Mangano, n.d.

[1], AB), or that there was talk for a while of a second edition (Letter, G. Mangano, n.d. [2], AB), which never came about because of the IWW's increasing financial difficulties. For an industrial union such as the IWW, whose primary objective was to address all those transient and unskilled workers forgotten by other labor organizations, songs and poems probably were at least as efficient as fine speeches or long texts, which might not be clearly understood—or might simply be ignored—by foreign workers if delivered or written in English, and that would speak to just one of the linguistic sections within the IWW committees (such as their executive committees, strikers' committees, or prisoner defense committees) if rendered in a foreign language. On the other hand, Bartoletti's verses, some of which were conceived as lyrics for music ("Canto dei Minatori del Ferro," AB) and that could in any case be recited, if not sung, by Italian-American activists, probably had the same type of appeal as popular IWW songs.

Many Wobblies actually wrote songs or poems, the most famous of which were printed in IWW publications such as *The Industrial Worker* and *Solidarity* or collected in the so-called little red songbook of the IWW. Not incidentally, the Wobblies have sometimes been portrayed as the "troubadours of discontent" (Conlin 1969, ix), and many IWW activists and sympathizers would sing songs during demonstrations, in picket lines, or in jail (Kornbluh 1972, 127), erasing for a time their ethnic and linguistic differences as they engaged in some choral performance of the inspiring lyrics of Joe Hill, Ralph Chaplin, or those of a Wobbly miner nicknamed Scottie from Butte, Montana. Undoubtedly, Wobbly songs had a far-reaching appeal to workers of all origins. Scottie's "Workers Unite," for instance, denounced ethnic divisions as the major obstacle to the formation of a truly internationalist working-class movement (Kornbluh 1972, 305). Himself a "troubadour," Ralph Chaplin praised Joe Hill's songs as "simple, forceful and sublime songs; songs of and for the worker, written in the only language that he can understand and set to the music of Joe Hill's own heart" (Kornbluh 1972, 131). And another Wobbly named Fred Fischer once exclaimed: "How astonishing! People from all parts of the world, all speaking different dialects and all singing the same song" (Kornbluh 1972, 131).

Like Joe Hill's songs, Bartoletti's poems were likely to cut across ethnic or linguistic lines. They certainly had a particular *lingua franca* kind of appeal among Italian Americans who had trouble communicating efficiently with each other in their own dialects. As a matter of fact, more than a few Italian-American workers seem to have been given to writing poetry, as letters from newspaper editors reveal. Ricco of *La Voce* actually complained that he was sent far too many poems (Letter, G. Ricco, December 22, 1915, AB), and Carlo Tresca did not mince his words on the subject: "Non pubblico versi.

Se fo eccezzione per te, mi toccherà poi a fare una quotidiana lotta con tanti poeti che assediano le redazioni di tutti i giornali per vedere pubblicati i parti della loro mente" (Letter, C. Tresca, October 7, 1914, AB; I don't publish verses. If I made an exception for you, I would have to start fighting with so many poets who constantly assault all newspaper offices to have the creations of their minds published). Unsurprisingly, Bartoletti's poems were a frequent topic of conversation in the letters he received from his friends and between Italian-American Wobblies, as in the Leavenworth, Kansas, penitentiary. Writing from his prison cell, Giovanni Baldazzi, for instance, made the following remark about *Nostalgie proletarie*:

> Il compagno Mangano [. . .] mi annunciò in una lettera che aveva spedito al mio indirizzo alcune copie del tuo volumetto. È affare di un mese fa! Si vede che i libri fecero ombra alle autorità del carcere, oppure il diavolo ci mise dentro la sua zampa. Sono veramente sconsolato [. . .] perchè davvero tutti i reclusi nostri di lingua italiana erano ansiosi di leggere le tue poesie. (Letter, G. Baldazzi, April 6, 1919, AB)
>
> Our comrade Mangano [. . .] wrote that he sent to me some copies of your small volume. This was about a month ago! Obviously, the prison authorities didn't look favorably on the books, or maybe it's just some trick of the devil. I'm really distressed [. . .] for all our jailed comrades who speak Italian were anxious to read your verses.

The appeal of poems in Italian to workers of other mother tongues should not be underestimated either. Workers of different ethnic groups would not only join ranks together singing Wobbly songs in English, but they sometimes resorted to other types of performances, and to other languages as well. At the Cook County Jail in Chicago, for instance, IWW prisoners would hold weekly meetings at which songs were sung, speeches made, poems recited, and stories told in different languages. One such event whose program was announced on a poster in 1917 included the following performances:[9]

> IWW Chorus—"Hold the Fort"
> Recitation—"The Tail of the Comet"—Glenn Roberts
> Song—"A Rebel I Will Be"—Harrison Haight
> Jail Suggestions—Kane
> Russian Chorus—Russian Wobblies
> "Getting Acquainted with the Bull"—Pierce Wetter
> Vocal Selection—Pete McEvoy
> Finnish Recitation—Tanner
> "The Little Bug"—Weyh

"Una Bigotta Napolitana" (Italian solo)—Parenti
Stunt—Forrest Edwards
IWW Quartette—Selection
Monologue & Poem—Stanley Clark
"Invito alla Lotta" (Italian Duet)—Parenti & Nigra[10]
The reading of the "Can Opener"[11]
Monologue—J.R. Thompson
Story—Friedkin
IWW Chorus—"The Red Flag"

Italian radical leaders made no mistake when they credited Bartoletti with having achieved a masterwork of propaganda with his book of poetry (Letter, G. Mangano, May 2, 1919, AB) or when they asked him to write beautiful verses to defend the principles of the IWW, alert the public to the fate of deported activists, celebrate the triumph of the Soviets, or commemorate the collective trial of IWW activists in Chicago (Letters, A. Faggi, June 4, 1918; A. Greci, August 30, 1919; C. Tresca, n.d. [3], AB). In a sense, the evolution of Tresca's point of view on whether verses should be published in the radical press is evidence of the significance of music, songs, and poetry in the IWW's efforts to bring together workers of different ethnic or linguistic backgrounds. In October 1914, Tresca wrote Bartoletti that he would not publish his verses, even though he appreciated them a lot, simply because there was no place at all for poetry in a paper like *L'Avvenire* (Letter, C. Tresca, October 7, 1914, AB). A few months earlier, one of his collaborators, whom Tresca had entrusted with the difficult task of reviewing all verses submitted to *L'Avvenire*, had even tried to dissuade Bartoletti from sending more poetry using the following words: "Io non mi contento di poesie se non sono più che perfette. Secondo me non c'è che un poeta in italiano: Carducci. Ma credi tu che tutti possono essere Carducci?" (Letter, Graminoto, May 22, 1914, AB; I won't be satisfied with verses that are not absolutely perfect. In my opinion, there's only one poet in Italian: Carducci. Now do you really think anybody can be Carducci?). And yet, only two years later, in the immediate aftermath of the Mesabi Range strike, which he had organized for the IWW, Tresca apparently no longer had any objections to the publication of Bartoletti's poems, some of which then appeared in *L'Avvenire* (Letter, C. Tresca, January 25, 1917, AB).

Bartoletti's Impossible Mission

When it came to organizing strikers, IWW leader Elizabeth Gurley Flynn herself wrote: "We have no ironclad rules [. . .] we realize that we are

dealing with human beings and not chemicals. And we realize that our fundamental principles of solidarity and class revolt must be applied in as flexible a manner as the science of pedagogy" (Conlin 1969, 84). For an IWW local organizer like Bartoletti, appealing to his fellow workers' sense of Italianness was a necessary step toward achieving the ultimate goal of revolutionary industrial unionism, namely the end of capitalism through the unity of workers of all conditions and origins. In these conditions, Bruno Cartosio's assumption that "in doing his 'educational' work in his own way, within his own community, he [the immigrant activist] relied on the belief that others like himself were doing the same in their own communities and that eventually things would change for the better" certainly applies to Bartoletti (Cartosio 1985, 431). For he never lost sight of the ultimate goal of his radical commitment, nor did he let the sirens of nationalism lure him—unlike many former Italian-American labor activists who embraced Fascism in the interwar years (Luconi 2011, 56–58). Even when urging his divided fellow countrymen to unite along national lines in the Mesabi Range, Bartoletti would simultaneously use the expressions *connazionali* (fellow countrymen) and *compagni* (comrades). And in addition to the evocations of the greatness of Italy or of the racial prejudices against Italians, he never failed to recall in his speeches, or to sing in his poems, the final objective of the struggle, which he viewed as the brotherhood of workers of all nationalities under the "rossa bandiera e a quella biancha di Pace e di fratellanza" (Speech, June 22, 1913, AB; red banner [of the revolution] and the white banner of Peace and brotherhood.) That day will come, he said, when the different peoples will demand true justice and freedom (Speech, June 22, 1913, AB). In a sense, his poems went quite some way toward achieving his dream, by encouraging fellow workers with diverse backgrounds and dialects to forget their differences and unite, if only temporarily, around the music and poetry of the Italian language.

To many, it must have seemed that the dream would come true in the early summer of 1916.[12] After a small group of miners went on strike for shorter hours, higher wages, and the end of the contract system in Aurora on June 3, 1916, many others followed suit. By mid-June some 8,000 had stopped work in the Mesabi Range; Gurley Flynn claimed in a letter dated July 24 that there were as many as 16,000 iron ore miners on strike (Gallagher 1989, 57). But after violent clashes had caused the deaths of one miner and two deputy sheriffs, a group of miners and several IWW leaders, including Tresca, were arrested in July, and the end of the strike was voted in September. Throughout the strike, Bartoletti had played an active part. As early as June 1916, he was appointed organizer and camp delegate for local union 490 of the IWW-affiliated MMWIU, to which 5,000 out of

the 8,000 Mesabi Range strikers belonged (Sofchalk 1971, 229). Bartoletti was also a member of the strikers' central committee that the IWW had set up at the start of the strike with delegates from all ethnic groups. His excellent English (Letter, G. Baldazzi, April 17, 1917, AB) allowed him to collaborate—and at times even make friends, as with Bulgarian-American local organizer Andreytchiny—with workers and organizers outside his own ethnic group, among the Slavic Americans, the Finnish Americans, the Anglo-Saxon Americans, and the Scandinavian Americans (Letter, G. Andreytchiny, November 23, 1916, AB). For instance, during the tour of the Mesabi Range he undertook in October 1916 with a view to finding new recruits for the IWW after the strike, he was accompanied by a John Perich, whom Local 490 had charged with organizing Slavic-American workers, and in Gilbert he also met with a Finnish-American local organizer named Beyman (Clipping, "Dopo lo sciopero del Mesaba," October 26, 1916, AB).

Bartoletti and like-minded local labor activists, both Italian American and non–Italian American, somehow managed to unite and mobilize workers during the 1916 strike. While the Finnish Americans arranged for strikers of all ethnic groups to use Finnish-American meeting halls as headquarters, the Italian Americans and the Slavic Americans, who were well represented in the strikers' central committee, shouldered the brunt of the organizing effort (Sofchalk 1971, 229). Yet, whereas more than half the Mesabi Range strikers had been affiliated with local 490 of the MMWIU, local union organizers like Bartoletti had a hard time trying to mobilize after the strike, once such leading IWW figures as Tresca, Gurley Flynn, Joe Ettor, Joe Schmidt, and Sam Scarlett had left the Mesabi Range (Sofchalk 1971, 239). My assumption is that Bartoletti's achievement was short-lived because major obstacles to the pursuit of his propaganda and organizing efforts jeopardized the Italian Americans' long-term commitment to IWW radicalism. His correspondence reveals that over the years as a local activist he was faced with considerable, and possibly insurmountable, difficulties including: the need to constantly "educate" transient migrants; an increasing number of tasks to carry out; the repression against and disruption of radical networks; and, last but not least, growing tensions among Italian-American radical leaders who happened to be personal friends or acquaintances.

It has been suggested that many Italian workers had turned to the IWW because of the victories it had won in a number of strikes rather than for its revolutionary ideology (Conlin 1969, 88). And indeed, Bartoletti actually observed in the field that there were, among Italian-American miners, a significant number of men willing to confront the companies but who had no understanding whatsoever of the principles of industrial action and

who needed to be trained through sustained propaganda work (Clipping, "Dopo lo sciopero del Mesaba" October 26, 1916, AB). Unfortunately, most Italians sojourned in the Mesabi Range only very temporarily—for periods of just a few months to a couple of years at most—before moving on to some other U.S. or international destination or else returning home. The Italian-born population of Minnesota, who were almost exclusively concentrated in the Mesabi Range, declined steadily after a peak of 10,000 in 1910, and among Umbrians—the single largest Italian regional group—only 10 percent of those present in the state in 1910 actually put down permanent roots there (Vecoli 1982, 191). Such instability certainly proved hard to reconcile with any form of sustained propaganda or organizing work, especially if Dirk Hoerder's claim is right that an immigrant worker's social and political commitment increased in proportion with the number of years he had spent abroad (Hoerder 1991, 91).

Opposition to the IWW proved another major, and well-documented, obstacle to the propagation of revolutionary industrial unionism, notably in the Mesabi Range, where the powerful U.S. Steel Corporation-affiliated Oliver Iron Mining Company recruited spies to prevent any form of union activity, radical or moderate, and the local establishment (including most newspaper editors and businesspeople as well as progressive politicians such as Hibbing's Mayor Victor L. Power) condemned the methods of the IWW in spite of their support of the strikers (Sofchalk 1971, 230–234). In the aftermath of the strike, Bartoletti himself lost his job, as did many other strikers, while his role as local organizer caused him to be blacklisted not only in the whole Mesabi Range (Letter, Giovanni Ettor, March 1, 1917, AB) but in Michigan as well (Letter, C. Tresca and G. Ettor to V. Power, March 20, 1917, AB). As the nationwide pressure on the IWW and the radical circles at large intensified (with stricter police controls, the sequestration of offices, the arrest of leaders and organizers, and the interdiction of so-called subversive titles), the number and difficulty of the tasks increased considerably for local radical activists, as Bartoletti's correspondence reveals. Tresca, for instance, now asked him to promote his paper *L'Avvenire* not only in Hibbing but in "the four corners of Minnesota" as well; to secure renewals of the subscriptions that had been registered the year before by a fellow activist now in jail; to take charge of other titles (*La Parola del Medico*); and to make occasional trips to Michigan. Bartoletti even had to pay for his own travel expenses, which were to be reimbursed only after he had reached his subscription goals (Letters, C. Tresca, September 30, 1916; C. Tresca, n.d. [4], AB). Bartoletti might have complained about the extra workload; one of the editors of *Il Proletario* admitted that the times were hard not only for the newspaper but for its contributors too. And

indeed, a number of fellow activists seemed to have put an end to their active collaboration with *Il Proletario* given that the same editor, who had praised Bartoletti's dedicated work, voiced the wish that everybody else did their duty like him (Letter, A. Greci, August 25, 1919, AB).

At the same time, Bartoletti was contacted by a number of union leaders and newspaper editors asking him to take over for them. In just one year, from April 1917 to April 1918, Bartoletti was contacted by Angelo Faggi, who had suggested his name to replace him as chief editor of *Il Proletario* in case he were deported (Letter, A. Faggi, April 15, 1918, AB), by Giovanni Baldazzi, who offered him his job as organizer of local 46 of the Italian Bakers Federation (Letter, G. Baldazzi, April 17, 1917, AB), and by Chas Jacobson, the secretary treasurer of local 490 of the Metal Mine Workers Industrial Union, who asked him whether he would be the new local organizer, a function that was paid 15 dollars a week and that Bartoletti had already assumed a year earlier during the miners' strike on the Mesabi Range (Letter, C. Jacobson, May 24, 1917, AB). That Bartoletti should have been faced with so many requests testifies to the man's undeniable and oft-praised organizing skills, but it also indicates how problematic it had become for radical organizations to find new recruits or merely to keep their networks operative once U.S. authorities began cracking down on radicals. Writing from his prison cell in Kansas, Pietro Pieri, a friend of Bartoletti's and a fellow IWW activist, complained that his cries for help had remained unanswered by former "comrades" and that the Virginia camp he had known had "died" with the defeat of the strikers in 1916 (Letter, P. Pieri, June 10, 1919, AB).

After the arrest of 165 activists in the fall of 1917, the IWW was forced to devote most of its time and energy, and basically all of its funds, to the defense of its members who were prisoners, despite what opponents to political or judicial action within the IWW had to say on the subject (Portis 1985, 118). Unsurprisingly, Bartoletti now concentrated his efforts on working with a number of committees created to defend IWW prisoners in Chicago and in Leavenworth, Kansas, writing articles in their defense, collecting funds for their trials, and circulating information between them and the outside world; Bartoletti's excellent English once again proved indispensable as prison authorities in Leavenworth did not allow prisoners to write their letters in Italian, only in English (Letter, G. Baldazzi, January 26, 1919, AB).

Given the vigorous pushback against the IWW, tensions within the movement's leadership became unmanageable (Portis 1985, 117), and Bartoletti was now often placed in a difficult position as estranged IWW leaders frequently confided in him their doubts and resentments. For instance, after Joe Ettor and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn had arranged for the

release of Tresca and the other IWW leaders arrested in July 1916 in the Mesabi Range in exchange for the conviction of three Montenegrin prisoners who hardly spoke English and had pleaded guilty to a murder charge, Bill Haywood condemned the IWW leaders who had broken the chain of solidarity by accepting such a bargain (Gallagher 1989, 60–62; Kornbluh 1972, 292). Ettor then complained to Bartoletti about Haywood, whom he accused of only pretending to be interested in the fate of the three Montenegrins (Letter, G. Ettor, May 26, 1917, AB), after which Bartoletti received two letters from former editor of *L'Avvenire* Raimondo Fazio asking him to ascertain Tresca's statement that one of the Montenegrins had been accused by his own wife (Letter, R. Fazio, January 8, 1918, AB) and then to check whether Ettor had in fact hired a lawyer to defend the three men (Letter, R. Fazio, February 18, 1918, AB). And after Tresca, Ettor, and Gurley Flynn successfully arranged for their own cases to be examined separately in the otherwise collective 1918 Chicago trial of 165 IWW activists arrested in 1917, Bartoletti received several letters from fellow Italian radicals trying to persuade him that Tresca was unworthy of his continuous support and praise (Letters, R. Fazio, January 8, February 18, 1918; G. Mangano, July 14, 1919, and 1919 no precise date, AB).

As only the letters he received, and none of those he wrote, have been kept, the reasons that led Efrem Bartoletti to return to Italy in 1919 are not clear. One may suppose, however, that he was moved by a desire to see his homeland and his family again after ten years in Minnesota, especially as the war had practically put an end to his correspondence with his three brothers, Artemio, Angelo, and Giulio, who had all been drafted. The increasing pressure and difficulties he was faced with as a radical activist probably also acted as a potent factor at a time when many of his comrades and friends had left or been jailed or deported.

In many ways, Bartoletti's lifelong radical commitment was emblematic of the relative fluidity that characterized the ideology of Italian-American radicals, many of whom were hard to classify as socialists, syndicalists, or anarchists (Vezzosi, 2001, 134–135). During his sojourn in Minnesota, for instance, he published articles not only in a large spectrum of radical newspapers but also in *Il Messaggero*, which its chief editor Niccolo Tripodo described as a liberal title aimed at defending workers (Letter, N. Tripodo, March 7, 1917, AB). Of course, as a local labor organizer, he emphasized the many immediate and practical benefits the Italian Americans of the Mesabi Range would draw from being united. For instance, he urged them to found a single Italian Federation in Hibbing in order to save a lot of the money that was being wasted on maintaining the town's numerous Italian-American societies[13] and to have a larger and better meeting hall as well

(Speech, September 21, 1913, AB). But he was also deeply concerned with political power and elections. Once united, he said, the Italian Americans of Hibbing would become one of the town's most powerful communities, one that could influence the outcome of local elections and have a say in local political affairs. He viewed citizenship and participation in elections as a way for the Italian Americans to be "sempre più temuti e rispettati dagli altri stranieri e dagli Americani stessi" (Speech, August 17, 1914, AB; increasingly feared and respected by the other foreign groups and by the Americans themselves). Bartoletti acquired American citizenship on September 18, 1915, and, shortly after his return to Italy, he joined the local Socialist movement and was elected mayor of Costacciaro in 1920. At the same time, he committed himself to union activism again and became a member of a number of local cultural and political circles. The abuses of the Fascist regime forced him underground and then into exile in 1930 with his wife and their six-year-old daughter. This time too, he traveled to the United States, but he chose Old Forge, Pennsylvania, where he became very active in the town's Italian Socialist community (which had been set up by fellow immigrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines [Tosi 1983, 94–98]) and where the entire administration of his native Costacciaro eventually joined him (Vezzosi 1991, 59–60). Efrem Bartoletti's 1916 poem "I Ribelli del Minnesota" praised "l'inno che fra gli oppressi mai non muore" ("I Ribelli del Minnesota," AB; the hymn that never dies out amongst the oppressed). He certainly remained true to this line of verse his entire life.

Notes

1. For Bruno Cartosio, the correlation between the Italian Americans' declining interest in revolutionary industrial unionism and the demise of the IWW is evidence of the part Italian Americans played in the IWW. As for Michael Miller Topp's account of the 1912 Lawrence strike, it reveals that Italian-American workers were at the forefront of the first successful mass East Coast strike led by the IWW.
2. In addition to *Nostalgie proletarie*, Bartoletti published *Nel sogno d'oltretomba: cantico libero* (1931) and *Riflessioni poetiche* (1955).
3. Depending on their year of birth, between one-half and two-thirds of all young men born in nearby Fossato di Vico between 1891 and 1895 emigrated before they turned twenty (Rinaldetti 2013, 143–144). For some of these young people, emigration to the United States was a way to avoid the national military service.
4. All the documents cited in this article from the Archivio Bartoletti can be found on the *archivio*'s website. The collection consists of letters written to Bartoletti, drafts of speeches the organizer wrote, leaflets, and his original poetry. A list of the cited documents appears at the end of this article as a separate Works Cited section. Documents are identified by

name of the writer, type of document (clipping, leaflet, letter, poem, or speech), and date of document, and each includes a URL that directs one to the specific document PDF in the online collection under the umbrella URL http://www.romanoguerra.it/efrem.php. "AB" stands for Archivio Bartoletti. The website was accessed from September 2011 to September 2014. The *archivio*, like all the documents it contains, is written in Italian. All English translations of the original quotes in Italian are mine, unless otherwise noted.

5. On the figure of Christopher Columbus, see Marie-Christine Michaud (2011).
6. In his speech, Efrem Bartoletti referred to the Italian Empire's conquest of Ottoman Libya in 1911–1912.
7. At the battle of Milazzo in July 1860, Garibaldi's Mille expedition triumphed over the Bourbons' army of the Two Sicilies.
8. The battle of Saratoga (1777), where George Washington's Continental Army defeated the British, is often considered a turning point in the Revolutionary War.
9. The poster is reproduced in Joyce Kornbluh (1972, 330).
10. Pietro Nigra exchanged letters with Efrem Bartoletti; Parenti's name appeared in some of these letters.
11. The *Can Opener* was the newspaper written by IWW inmates in the Cook County penitentiary.
12. For accounts of the strike, see Gallagher (1989), Kornbluh (1972), and Sofchalk (1971).
13. Unfortunately, no specific information could be found about the several Italian-American societies that Efrem Bartoletti said existed in Hibbing in the 1910s.

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The Afterlife of a Classical Text: Representing Ethnicity in the Stage Productions of *Marty*

JONATHAN J. CAVALLERO

Ernest Borgnine's performance as Marty Piletti in director Delbert Mann's film *Marty* (1955) has become perhaps the most well-known fictional representation of Italian-American men from the 1950s. Originally a 1953 episode in NBC's *Philco-Goodyear Television Playhouse* (1948–1956) with Rod Steiger in the title role, the material was then adapted into a highly successful film that was released only two years after its original appearance on TV.[1] But *Marty*'s presence in American popular culture extends beyond its enormous success in the 1950s. Both the television and film versions are widely available, and both are screened frequently in film and television classes. Additionally, two adaptations of *Marty* have been produced for the stage.[2] *Marty* was performed as a musical play in 2002, and the original television script was later featured as an invitation-only live stage reading at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in the summer of 2012. Although both had limited exposure, they are nonetheless important to our understanding of *Marty*. This article provides critical analyses of the representations offered by each production. Additionally, through original interviews, it offers a backstage look at the production process of the stage reading and a descriptive analysis of the event, which is especially notable since copyright constraints prevented any recording of the performance.[3]

Taken together, the musical and the stage reading have provided an ongoing commentary about the social meaning, rhetorical use, and cultural significance of Italian-American ethnicity. As the cultural context surrounding Italian Americans has changed so too has the meaning of Italian-American representations in *Marty*. What once seemed progressive may now seem clichéd, harking back to a time when the full diversity of Italian Americana was ignored in favor of an easily defined experience characterized by an urban existence, a particular accented speech pattern, and a working-class background. Of course, these markers identified (and to a lesser degree continue to identify) many Italian Americans, but they do not and never have defined *all* Italian Americans. This is not to suggest that working-class life is an inadequate vehicle for the expression of universal themes or an understanding of American culture. I merely mean to propose that there is a great deal of diversity within the Italian-American community historically, and as scholars who concern ourselves with Italian-American ethnicity, we need to strive to speak about Italian-American experiences

rather than *the* Italian-American experience. Otherwise, we may perpetuate a very narrow definition of Italian Americans.

This problem became more pronounced when *Marty* was restaged with only minimal revisions. Political silencing and exclusionary racial practices had characterized the 1950s mediascape, and the McCarthy era's restrictive conservatism had limited the choices available to producers like *Philco-Goodyear*'s Fred Coe. One of the program's regular directors (and the director of "Marty"), Delbert Mann, often lamented the ways in which the anti-Communist blacklist limited his casting choices and negatively affected not just his programs but the programming that television as a whole offered. "It was just beyond belief awful that the actors who previously had worked over and over and over again would suddenly no longer get calls," Mann wrote in his autobiography. "I feel that it was one of the major contributions to the start of the decline of the live television era" (Mann 1998, 37–38). This political silencing was exacerbated by the era's racism. Even if "Marty," under the supervision of progressives such as Coe, Mann, and screenwriter Paddy Chayefsky, worked to change the implications of ethnicity by offering a white ethnic character who represented the average everyman, the effect was tempered by the racially exclusive world in which the character lived. This was not unusual at the time, since most television programs took place in such a world, but that representation carried significant political consequences. As Judith E. Smith has written, "television drama thus became associated with a representation of universality that contributed to racial exclusion" (2006, 271). Of course, historical productions that confronted different institutional and historical conditions should not be held to modern standards, but when an opportunity arises to adjust those representations in a more modern era, producers' willingness or unwillingness to do so gives insight into notions on the general place of ethnicity in the present and also on how the meaning of Italian-American ethnicity specifically has changed.

The musical version of *Marty* seems to have offered little comment on the original, preferring instead to more or less resurrect a beloved character and narrative from the 1950s. This kind of nostalgic embrace laments a supposedly less complicated past and implicitly serves as a critique of the multicultural present where Italian-American neighborhoods and identities are not as isolated and easily defined as they once were.[4] In order to facilitate such a critique, the musical mobilized some of the historical ethnic markers listed earlier (speech patterns, urban existence, working-class background) with apparently little regard for the generic or historical/cultural differences that surrounded the production. The live stage reading, on the other hand, downplayed the ethnic specificity of the Pilettis' neighborhood

and extended family, choosing instead to emphasize the characters' inability to conform to traditional notions of beauty, the treatment they endure as a result, and the generational conflicts that lie at the heart of the play. The live stage reading, then, moderated the play's Italianness in order to emphasize issues that cross ethnic boundaries and carry the potential to build multi-ethnic alliances.

Marty's journey from the screen to the stage was an arduous one; the first mention of such a project seems to come in 1969 when the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported that Chayefsky said he was "writing the lyrics for a musical version of his play 'Marty'" (*Wisconsin State Journal* 1969).[5] That particular version of the narrative never came to fruition, but others did. After Chayefsky passed away in 1981, interest in a musical adaptation of *Marty* continued. Chayefsky's widow Susan and his son Dan were very protective of the writer's legacy, and together they declined several opportunities to sell the stage rights. In 1996, a team led by actor Jason Alexander finally convinced them to authorize a stage version of *Marty*. Alexander, a Broadway veteran, had risen to stardom on the strength of his Emmy-nominated role as George Costanza on *Seinfeld* (NBC, 1990–1998), and, according to trade press reports, Alexander's fame was instrumental in swaying the Chayefsky estate (Evans 1996).

Despite Alexander's involvement, *Marty*'s production history would be lengthy and tumultuous. By the time the musical went before audiences at the Boston University Theater in November 2002, Alexander had left the project to pursue other television work, and the original librettist Aaron Sorkin had been replaced. Nonetheless, a number of prominent names were still involved. John C. Reilly had been cast as Marty, and famed Broadway composer Charles Strouse (*Annie*, *Applause*, *Bye Bye Birdie*) and his frequent songwriting partner Lee Adams (*Golden Boy*, *Applause*, *Bye Bye Birdie*) had written the music. The involvement of these stars along with the enduring popularity of *Marty* created enormous anticipation, and the musical broke "all previous advance sales records" at the theater (Hernandez 2003).

While a video copy of the musical is not currently available, much can be discerned about the show from published reviews and Strouse's reaction to those reviews in his 2008 autobiography, *Put on a Happy Face*. As Strouse acknowledges, critical reaction to *Marty* the musical was mixed, but one review, in particular, drew the composer's ire. He writes:

> The local reviews ranged from superb to constructive, but (and this was a very big BUT), the *Variety* review—the only one to reach New York—said that John was *too* perfectly cast, and wasn't it a shame we couldn't find someone more different than the character so that the results might have

> been more "invigorating.". . . My personal reading of this was that they were suggesting a black actor who was perhaps more hip-hop or rock, but I'm overly sensitive to the prevailing winds. (2008, 285)

Rather than saying Reilly was "*too* perfectly cast," Markland Taylor's *Variety* review read, "Mark Brokaw's direction is never less than sensitive, but if everyone involved had taken an entirely new approach to the Chayefsky material—extending even to the casting and portrayal of Marty—the results might have been invigorating, rather than merely familiarly present" (Taylor 2002, 35). Strouse's suggestion that this critique was somehow calling for the casting of a racially different Marty is baffling. There is no indication of that anywhere else in the review, and Taylor's suggestion that the show break with previous iterations of *Marty* lest it seem repetitive was not unique. Carl A. Rossi, for example, had suggested something similar, writing, "the essence of Marty and Clara lies in their homeliness . . . if they're made to sing like an angel and dance like a dream, you may wonder why they have trouble getting a date on Saturday night. Messrs. Strouse and Adams' intentions are good: keeping their leads as plain, awkward people—Marty and Clara's voices are kept firmly in the middle register, nor are they made to dance—but they don't allow their misfits to bloom, either" (Rossi 2002). Both Taylor and Rossi seem to suggest that the generic expectations of a Broadway-style musical and the ordinariness of Marty and Clara seem antithetical—a situation that appears to have little, if anything, to do with the racial identity of the musical's protagonist.

Perhaps Strouse's comments have less to do with the *Variety* review than with the failed efforts to bring the show to Broadway after its initial run in Boston. The composer reports that Gerald Schoenfeld, who worked with the Shubert Organization, requested a meeting with the musical's principal creative personnel to discuss the possibility of staging it on Broadway. When Schoenfeld's suggestion to cut the cast's size in half was rejected, he asked the producers to meet two other conditions. First, no one was allowed to use an Italian accent; and, second, there could not be "a set that represented the front of a house in Brooklyn" (Strouse 285–286).[6] Both suggestions, but especially the one about Italian accents, attempt to downplay the show's ethnic Italian elements in favor of a more contemporary, multicultural vision.[7] Schoenfeld's suggestions endeavored to move beyond a nostalgic embrace of the 1950s in order to highlight some of the play's other themes. He seems to have wanted the musical's representation of ethnicity to be a minor aspect of the story rather than the story itself. It is easy to see how Schoenfeld might think that the use of 1950s Italian accents could add an unintentionally comic and possibly offensive angle to

the show, especially since Italian-American organizations were at that time protesting media representations of their ethnic group on programs like *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999–2007).

In the forty-nine years since "Marty" had first appeared on television, cultural attitudes had changed. A more diverse (though still somewhat narrow) range of Italian-American media representations was being offered, and Italian Americans had further assimilated into the American mainstream. Those sociological and cultural changes had implications for how ethnic representations would be received (Hall 2010, 77–88). As Stuart Hall has shown, the cultural, historical, and institutional norms that surround a program's production (its "encoding," in Hall's language) and its reception (its "decoding") have profound effects on the representations a production offers and how those representations are understood by an audience. In Hall's model, the cultural surround is inextricably linked with the program and its representations. Thus, the show becomes a kind of cultural artifact that reveals aspects of the culture(s) that produced and consumed it. The concern that Schoenfeld seems to have had was that the musical's new representations did not update the material enough. After all, "Marty" was encoded in a time with much different norms, and Schoenfeld might have worried that the ethnic representations, in particular, would not translate very well in a more modern era.[8] Strouse rejected this position and the conditions Schoenfeld had laid out, writing that the absence of Italian accents was an "odd and unmeetable" demand. As of this writing, *Marty* the musical has yet to be performed on Broadway (Strouse 2008, 286).

Ten years later, however, actor/producer Patricia Bethune's decision to moderate (not erase) the 1953 teleplay's Italianness would add considerable weight to the Television Academy's live stage reading. Bethune's involvement with the stage reading began during a meeting of the Academy's Activities Committee in early 2012. At some point during the meeting, the discussion had turned to the live stage readings that Jason Reitman had been directing at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Throughout the 2011–2012 season, these one-night-only performances had brought together contemporary Hollywood stars and classic scripts.[9]

As the Activities Committee members discussed the live reads, one member wondered if similar events could be staged at the Television Academy, bringing together classic television scripts and today's TV stars. The committee was enthusiastic about the idea and asked Bethune, a committee member, to produce the first event. Bethune immediately thought of "Marty." "That's the [early television show] that everyone knows and cares about," she said in 2012, "It really broke through and changed everything" (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012). Bethune had

seen the film version of *Marty* years before and had been drawn to Borgnine's performance, especially since the character reminded her of her own working-class, non-Italian father. Bethune thus recognized the broad appeal of the material immediately, and as a result of that viewing, she later watched the TV version of "Marty" and *The Catered Affair* (Richard Brooks, 1956), another film that was based on a Chayefsky television script and starred Borgnine.[10]

But it was not just the teleplay's significance to early television history that attracted Bethune. The producer/actor also believed that the fifty-nine-year-old script continued to be relevant to contemporary audiences, not necessarily because of the ethnic representations but rather the connections between economics and family that the play presents as well as the relationship issues that the play confronts. In Bethune's estimation, a sluggish economy had led more young adults to move back in with their parents, and the ubiquitous presence of new technologies and social media sometimes enabled the kind of cruel treatment that Clara and Marty lament in Chayefsky's teleplay. "There's no difference in hurting feelings by breaking up over Twitter or pawning someone off on someone else in a dance hall," Bethune contends (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012). Bethune was obviously enthusiastic about *Marty*, but before the play could be performed she needed to secure the necessary rights and permissions from Paddy Chayefksy's son Dan, who co-owns the rights to *Marty* with MGM. Initially, Dan Chayefsky was hesitant about the idea. "I feel a responsibility that I can't guarantee that I can fulfill, because I'm not my father," Chayefsky says, "I don't have the consciousness that he had about the material" (D. Chayefsky, telephone interview, July 13, 2012). On one hand, the younger Chayefsky was grateful for the continued attention his father's work receives. On the other, he did not want to authorize adaptations or re-stagings that might damage the standing of the original. Bethune's insistence that the script continued to be relevant along with her assurance that her casting would modernize the material swayed Chayefsky, who had worried that *Marty* might seem dated in part because of the play's historical ethnicity.[11]

With Chayefsky in agreement, Bethune began assembling her cast. Her choices were based on three principles. First, she wanted actors who were enthusiastic about participating in the event and ones that she believed would deliver high-quality performances. Second, she wanted actors who represented each of the major television networks. And third, she wanted actors who would not be competing in the same Emmy category. These casting practices would ensure a more democratic representation of the Television Academy's membership while lessening the chance that the

event would turn into a competition. Noticeably absent from this list is the actor's ethnic background (although, as will be shown, this does seem to have been a factor in the casting of at least two of the play's most prominent roles) or their ability to speak with an Italian accent. "I am not making anyone do Italian accents," Bethune had assured Dan Chayefsky, "It's *not* about the accent" (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012). For Bethune, the accents were a potential distraction from the themes that she believed continued to make the play most relevant to twenty-first-century audiences. Had the entire cast mobilized character traits that were relatively homogeneous, the distraction would have been even more apparent.

Despite the backing of the Television Academy, Bethune rarely got to speak to potential cast members directly. "I had to write my feelings about [the project] and hope that their publicist or manager would actually pass it along to them," she remembers (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012). Ray Romano was the first to sign on to the project. "It was a piece that was always very close to him," Bethune recalls. "He changed [his whole schedule] around to be able to be there. That's how much it meant to him" (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012). Next, Bethune turned to the role of Teresa, Marty's mother. While Bethune wanted a multiethnic cast in order to moderate both the original's ethnic specificity and the possibility that some theatergoers might see *Marty* as a play that was about *only* Italian Americans, she nonetheless recognized the importance of acknowledging and retaining some of the original teleplay's Italian/Italian-American aspects.

This desire for fidelity may have been tied to characteristics that (rightly or wrongly) continue to be attached to Italian-American ethnicity. Bethune's casting of Brenda Vaccaro, an Italian-American actress who had been friends with Paddy Chayefsky and was happy to perform one of his scripts, in the role of Marty's mother placed actors with Italian-American backgrounds in two of the play's most prominent roles.[12] This worked to "explain" the relationship dynamics. Marty's willingness to show consideration for his mother's feelings even if that means delaying his pursuit of his own desires may seem somewhat strange for an American audience, given how steeped U.S. mythology is in individualism. Perhaps, for some, it would seem less strange if the actors (and by extension their characters) were marked by a culture routinely associated with strong family backgrounds, overbearing mothers, and immature sons who cling to their adolescence rather than accepting the responsibilities of adulthood.[13] This is not to suggest that the stage reading crudely mobilized all of these clichés, but the long-standing history of their existence may have informed the representations that the stage reading offered.

With Romano and Vaccaro in place, Bethune began filling the other roles. She approached Anna Gunn after a Television Academy event that featured the cast of *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008–2013). Gunn, who was familiar with *Marty*, was happy to play the role of Clara/The Girl telling Bethune, "Just tell me the day and when, and I'll be there." Dermot Mulroney was also enthusiastic about being included. The actor had studied *Marty* in college, and he jumped at the chance to play Angie. Bethune later cast Loretta Devine in the role of Aunt Catherine; Pauley Perrette and Raymond Cruz in the roles of Virginia and Tommy, the married couple who struggle with Catherine's constant presence; and Max Adler, Joel McHale, and Cleo King in a variety of bit parts. With her cast assembled, Bethune made a bold decision. She felt that the actors were already being "very generous" with their time, and she believed that it would be difficult to schedule rehearsals given the variety of scheduling conflicts that might arise. As a result, the live stage reading at the Television Academy would be the first time the cast would read the script together (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012). In order to allow them to prepare, Bethune sent each of the actors a copy of the script along with a note that described how she saw the character and what function she thought the character served in the play. Over the next several weeks, Bethune informed her actors which stage directions she would be reading, which ones she would not, and who the other members of the cast were so that the actors could "get a visual of who they were talking to" (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012).[14]

The live stage reading of *Marty* took place at the Academy's Leonard Goldenson Theater on June 4, 2012. Upon entering at the rear of the theater, attendees saw a stage that featured eleven white chairs arranged in a semi-circle. Nametags lined the front of the stage, identifying each of the actors, and images of 1950s New York were projected on a large screen behind and slightly above the chairs while music from the likes of Frank Sinatra (a noticeable Italian-American marker) and others played over the sound system. The event began with a nearly seven-minute video, assembled by Bethune and Bob Telford from the Academy Archives. Featuring Mann, Borgnine, Max Wilk, James L. Brooks, and Nancy Marchand, the video (which as of this writing is available on YouTube) provided a brief history of the production of both the television and film versions of *Marty* along with a discussion of the TV program's historical and artistic significance. After the video, an Academy representative acknowledged the sponsors who had helped to make the event possible, thanked Dan Chayefsky for allowing the reading to take place, and then introduced the cast. Each actor walked onstage to applause and carried a black binder with a color insert cover that identified the binder as the *Marty* script.

With all of the actors seated, Bethune began: "FADE IN: A butcher shop in the Italian district of New York City." Romano sat with his script in his lap, pretending to use a meat slicer, as he spoke Marty's first lines. The reading progressed smoothly, and it became clear that *Marty* still resonated with an audience. Theatergoers sat rapt throughout the entire performance, listening intently to the dialog. On multiple occasions, the audience went from laughing in one moment to being on the verge of tears in the next—a demonstration of just how powerful Chayefsky's artistry remained. To varying degrees, Bethune and Dan Chayefsky had been concerned that the material would seem dated to the audience, but whenever something of that nature came up during the reading, it seemed to enhance rather than diminish the audience's enjoyment. In one such example, during the play's second act, Teresa and Aunt Catherine discuss getting older. "What shall become of me?" asked Loretta Devine in the role of Aunt Catherine. "These are terrible years. I'm afraid to look in the mirror. I'm afraid to see an old lady with white hair, just like the old ladies in the park. Little buns and black shawls waiting for the coffin. I'm fifty-six years old. What am I to do with myself?" Devine, who was sixty-two at the time, and Vaccaro, who was seventy-two, laughed with each other as an audience that included several individuals who had passed the age of fifty-six joined with them. Importantly, it was not the representation of ethnicity that was humorous or dated here but the representation of age.[15]

The cast, despite this being the first time that they had read together, demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the script. In between acts, cast members would swap chairs, allowing actors who shared upcoming scenes to sit next to one another. Rather than recycling previous performances of the material, each actor played his or her part in a unique way. For example, Ray Romano, well known as a comic actor from his Emmy Award-winning performance as Ray Barone on *Everybody Loves Raymond* (CBS, 1996–2005), played Marty in an emotionally restrained manner. Neither as melancholy and weepy as Steiger nor as ebullient as Borgnine, Romano's performance conveyed Marty's complex and conflicting emotions without resorting to parody or leaning too heavily on Romano's obvious comic gifts. Romano's performance then worked against the notion that Italian Americans are overly emotional and foreshadowed his performance as the more serious and socially awkward photographer Hank Rizzoli on *Parenthood* (NBC, 2010–2015).

Nevertheless, at times, some members of the audience struggled to shake the memory of Romano's comic past, laughing at lines that were not meant to be funny. One such moment came during the play's famous "blue suit-gray suit" monolog. In the scene, Marty's mother badgers him about

going to a dance at the Waverly Ballroom. Marty, who privately wants to avoid the pain of rejection, is resistant, publicly saying he would rather stay home and watch Sid Caesar on television. However, his mother is insistent, saying that he should put on his blue suit or gray suit and find his future wife lest he "die without a son." After much hounding, Romano as Marty snapped, "Ma, the blue suit or the gray suit. I'm a fat, little man. A fat, ugly little man." A few audience members could be heard chuckling, if only briefly. Romano's fine performance and the seriousness of the line make it likely that such reactions were inspired by the memory of Romano's past roles (or the fact that Romano himself hardly appeared fat, ugly, or little onstage). But when the actor barked Marty's next line, "That's what I am!" the laughter quickly subsided and the script's seriousness won out. It seems that initially some audience members were reading new material through an old lens. Not yet familiar with Romano's more serious, dramatic work, these theatergoers (at least initially) decoded his performance as another iteration of his more famous comic persona.

While Romano's Italian-American roots are a prominent aspect of many of his fictional characters as well as his star image, most of the reading's other actors do not claim Italian heritage.[16] By freeing the actors of the need to conform to working-class Italian-American accents and overly expressive body language, Bethune allowed them to move beyond ethnic imitation. Using their own voices made it less likely that audience members would be distracted by the spectacle of known actors mobilizing accents that were foreign to them, and the play benefited as a result.[17]

For example, in the second act, Gunn sat silently for several minutes while two unnamed male characters (one played by Joel McHale and the other by Max Adler) discussed who would take Clara (Gunn's character) home. At this point in the script, McHale's character has been set up on a blind date with Clara, but he does not find her attractive. After seeing a female friend with whom he would rather spend the evening, he offers Marty $5 to take Clara home. Marty, who has endured similar treatment in the past, is appalled by the cruel nature of the offer and says as much to McHale's character, who quickly shuns our hero and approaches the more agreeable Adler. In both the TV program and the movie, the character played by McHale is performed as a selfish, disinterested individual who, like Marty, seems to be in his mid-thirties. McHale played him in a much more dynamic, youthful way, and Adler followed suit. In McHale's and Adler's hands, the characters were not just trying to get rid of a date, they delighted in the (to them) brilliant plan that they had hatched. McHale's voice was crisp and strong and his body language was dynamic rather than the more mumbled, secretive tones and lethargic body language of

the character's film and TV counterparts. The young characters were so bound up in their own cleverness that they were blissfully unaware of the emotional damage they were causing. The audience responded to them in kind. While the characters were not entirely likable, they carried a kind of repulsive charm—more misguided young boys than malicious men fully aware of their treachery.[18]

As Gunn continued to sit quietly, Bethune's stage directions described how Clara (who Marty's mother says "doesn't look Italian") silently rejected the offer of a walk home, how Marty witnessed the entire scene from afar, how a shaken Clara scurried out of an exit and onto a fire escape, and how Marty followed her and eventually asked her to dance. As the scene unfolded, Gunn, who had yet to speak, began crying silently. Pulling a tissue from her pocket, she softly dabbed her face as the tears fell from her eyes. Reviewers of earlier versions of *Marty* have been quick to criticize the casting of Clara. Both Marchand (in the TV version of "Marty") and Betsy Blair (in the film version) were deemed too traditionally attractive to be believable in the role of a homely woman in her late twenties. A similar statement could be made about Gunn. But that criticism is predicated on the notion that physically attractive people's looks have allowed them to avoid insecurities and cruel treatment of any kind. Gunn's physical presence in the theater stripped away the glitz and glamour associated with the big and small screens. Her genuine reactions to the scene had the effect of humanizing the character and allowing the audience to identify with her pain.

Gunn's unique take on the character also led to a slightly less assertive Clara, especially in the scene where she and Mrs. Piletti meet for the first time. After some initial pleasantries, it becomes clear that Mrs. Piletti's notion that a mother should continue to live with her son after he is married cannot be reconciled with Clara's more modern idea that married couples should have a home to themselves. As Vaccaro hurled questions at Gunn, Gunn almost immediately retreated to a more conciliatory tone. Marchand and Blair had both been more assured and assertive in their performances of this scene. Gunn spoke the same lines, but she was more timid. Her voice was softer, and she made less eye contact with Vaccaro. Almost sixty years had passed since Chayefsky penned *Marty*, but Gunn's performance rendered a less modern if perhaps more believable Clara. Here the insecurities that Clara would feel not just in her interactions with potential suitors but also with other women were emphasized. Clara's recognition of and deference to Mrs. Piletti's cultural norms—norms with which Clara disagrees but of which she wants to be respectful and sensitive—only intensified the situation and added another layer to Clara's uneasiness.

Dermot Mulroney's performance as Angie made the character smarmier and less pathetic. Whereas Adler and McHale had worked to make their unappealing characters more young and likable, Mulroney endeavored to make Angie more repellent. In the TV and film versions, Marty's best friend, played by Joe Mantell, struggled with the possibility that Clara might soon replace him. While Angie's actions were self-serving, they seemed to garner some sympathy from the audience since he did not seem fully aware of the emotions that were driving him.[19] In Mulroney's hands, Angie became more aware of his selfishness. The actor played the character with a near constant smirk on his face, slouching in his chair at times, and sighing frequently to convey his impatience with Marty and Marty's attraction to Clara. The absence of an ethnically specific world made it less likely that audiences would dismiss Angie's actions as culturally specific. In other words, the material moved closer to non-Italian-American viewers who could not use ethnic difference to distance themselves from the material. This was an important move for the play to make since movies and television shows from *Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham, 1977) to *Jersey Shore* (MTV, 2009–2012) to the more recent *Don Jon* (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, 2013) often frame Italian-American men as undesirably chauvinistic, sexist, and aggressive. By stripping *Marty* of some of its Italian-American specificity, the character of Angie became a comment on some forms of American masculinity and avoided the clichéd, often derogatory representation of Italian-American men. Thus, the stage reading bucked the media's willingness to divide individuals along ethnic lines and highlighted our shared struggles.

Raymond Cruz's performance as Tommy (Marty's cousin and Catherine's son) and Pauley Perrette's as Virginia (Tommy's wife and Catherine's daughter-in-law/nemesis) also emphasized aspects of the characters that were not apparent in previous versions of *Marty*. In a scene from Act I, Virginia and Tommy ask Mrs. Piletti to allow Aunt Catherine to live with her. Perrette played Virginia as an anxious, unsure-of-herself young wife with a mother-in-law problem. Sitting in her chair, she bent at the waist and moved in a somewhat sporadic manner, as she leaned inconsistently toward and away from the other characters. She stammered over her words as she relayed her problems with Catherine's constant presence, appearing both edgy and unsure of herself. The performance simultaneously conveyed how frazzled Catherine had made Virginia and how desperate Virginia was to have the problem addressed. Cruz (Perrette's on-stage husband) sat in his chair, bent at the waist, his legs spread wide apart as he looked down at the script he held in both hands. His performance as Tommy seesawed from vitriolic rants to comments spoken in whispered, secretive tones to Marty, the only male relative in the scene

and the individual to whom he feels he can confide. Cruz played Tommy as the henpecked husband, who is simultaneously fearful and annoyed at the prospect of brokering a peace between his wife and his mother. As Virginia/Perrette became more flustered, Tommy/Cruz struggled to contain his own nervousness and sometimes failed to subdue the anger that rested just below the surface.

In the 1953 television version of "Marty," Betsy Palmer had played Virginia as irritated and angry, speaking in a sharp voice and gesturing heatedly with her hands. Lee Phillips had played Tommy nervously, constantly fidgeting with his fingers, only speaking in mumbled, muted tones, and looking down at the table in an effort to avoid eye contact. In the live stage reading, Perrette and Cruz played the roles in a radically different way. Now Virginia was nervous, and Tommy was irritated and angry. At times, Cruz as Tommy became so enraged that he stumbled over the words he was speaking. The performance was one of Bethune's favorites. "I loved the spin he put on his role," she recalls. "I thought, 'That was something that wasn't played in either of the previous versions, and should have been'" (P. Bethune, telephone interview, June 7, 2012). While Romano played Marty in a manner that diverged from his comic persona, both Perrette and Cruz's performances drew energy from some of their most well-known roles. Cruz's anger hinted at his prior performance as Tuco Salamanca, an unstable Mexican drug lord on *Breaking Bad*, while Perrette's high-energy Virginia echoed her performance as the overcaffeinated tech geek Abby Sciuto on *NCIS* (CBS, 2003–present).

In the play's final scene, Marty meets with Angie and two of his other male friends. The guys make fun of Clara and tell Marty he should not call her, but eventually our eponymous hero discounts their objections. With the receiver in hand, Marty turns to Angie. "Hey, Angie, listen," Marty says. "When are you going to get married? You know, I mean, you're thirty four years of age. All your brothers and sisters are married. When are you going to get married? You better get married, because if you don't you should be ashamed of yourself you know." Clara comes on the line (although we do not hear her voice), and Marty closes the phone booth's door. With the dialog concluded, Bethune read the play's last stage directions, and the audience burst into applause giving the performance a standing ovation.

Bethune had promised Dan Chayefsky that she would use her casting choices to make the piece more relevant to a 2012 audience, and she had followed through by deliberately assembling a multiethnic cast and allowing them to speak in their own voices. As a result, none of the cast members felt the need to cater to exaggerated patterns of accented speech in order to be "true" to the original material. From the stage came a cascade

of accents—African American, Latino, Italian American—creating a kind of harmony that carried transformative potential—a potential that is seldom realized in a world and an industry that still often seeks to divide individuals by classifying them into different racial and ethnic groups. Bethune's choices allowed the play to shift some of its attention from the way the actors spoke to the problems they faced, thus highlighting issues that are prevalent within, yet stretch beyond, Italian-American families and communities. Here the markers that were once used to identify Italian Americans as obviously different were subdued in favor of multiethnic representations that subtly recognized differences but stressed commonalities. Further, Bethune's revisions created a stage reading that rejected the notion that the past was preferable—an admirable move since the so-called simplicity of the 1950s ethnic landscape was often built on racially exclusive policies.

Nevertheless, Bethune's approach may raise concerns, especially on the part of some Italian Americanists. After all, the ethnic specificity of *Marty* is perhaps the most important aspect of the material for those of us who specialize in ethnic representations, and toning down the play's Italian markers might offer the impression that the "twilight" of ethnicity has indeed been reached. Relatedly, it could be argued that Italian-American specificity had been replaced with the middle-class homogenization of cultural life. It is important to remember, however, that the stage reading included actors from various ethnic backgrounds and allowed them to preserve their ethnic accents. In this way, Bethune embraced ethnicity while showing that some struggles transcend ethnic difference. The performance was best classified as an instance of ethnic plurality, rather than ethnic homogenization or erasure.

When it was first written in 1953, both the Jewish-American Paddy Chayefsky and the southerner Delbert Mann saw Marty's ethnicity as incidental. Throughout his life, Mann would insist that the character's experiences not be reduced to his ethnic background. "[Chayefsky] arbitrarily chose an Italian background," Mann had written in his autobiography. "The story would work equally well with almost any specific setting where tradition, family values and concerns are strong" (Mann 1998, 60). It is difficult to imagine Mann returning to the point so frequently if most viewers recognized the program's/film's universal aspects already. Chayefsky, in fact, had based the characters on various Jewish Americans that he knew, and, for decades, Mann had kept fan letters (which are now available in the archives at Vanderbilt University) that recognized the story's universal appeal. *Marty* may be a story about Italian Americans, but it is not *just* a story about Italian Americans. Despite its ethnic foundation, it is (and always has been) a story that appeals to individuals of various

backgrounds, and Bethune's decision to use an ethnically diverse cast was motived by a desire to emphasize that cross-ethnic appeal.

Still, Bethune's decision to cast Romano and Vaccaro at the core of the stage reading carried significant meaning. Certainly, there was an effort to preserve some of the most well-known and identifiable aspects of the original play. But Bethune also seemed to recognize that despite the play's universal appeal there remain some dynamics that appear quite specific to Italian-American culture—or perhaps more broadly some ethnic cultures. Would Marty's commitment to his mother and his desire to respect her opinions, even if he disagreed with them, be as believable if he were nonethnic? Perhaps, but Bethune was not willing to take that risk. By keeping Italian-American ethnicity at the core of the stage reading's most prominent, familial relationship, Bethune ensured not just a sense of fidelity to the original but also the ethnic dynamics of the original's mother-son relationship.

Ultimately, Italian-American ethnicity is still very relevant today, just not in the same way it was in 1953 or 1955. Italian Americans as a group have progressed to a higher socioeconomic standing that includes positions of power in the media industries, and with that power has come a greater diversity of ethnic representations (although it still remains somewhat narrow) and a better understanding on the part of the general public of the kinds of diversity that exist within the community, making representations simply resurrected from the 1950s seem far more alien than they once were. Additionally, the multicultural adaptation of a text that once had a strong sense of ethnic specificity not only carries the potential to make the text more relevant to an increasingly multicultural world but also more relevant to many modern-day Italian Americans. After all, the majority of Italian Americans now live or work in multicultural environments where they interact with individuals of many different ethnic backgrounds. This was less the case in the 1950s when urban ethnic enclaves such as the one featured in *Marty* were more prevalent and isolated. By carefully moderating the specificity of Italian-American ethnicity, media-makers can help us to see the struggles that reach across ethnic lines while still acknowledging the importance of ethnicity today.

The specifics may change—Facebook and Twitter may replace some forms of face-to-face contact, for example—but the general struggles that we face remain relatively consistent. Perhaps this is why *Marty* continues to be of interest to artists from an array of ethnic and social backgrounds. Dan Chayefsky reports that "a popular television/stage actor" has approached him about a nonmusical stage version of the material, and "a prominent rap star/actor inquired about a movie remake" (D. Chayefsky, email comm.,

July 29, 2012). In 2006, Fox was developing a comedy series titled *Call Me Marty*, written by Danny Jacobson who had been a writer on *Roseanne* (ABC, 1988–1997) and *Mad about You* (NBC, 1992–1999). The series was to focus on "a blue-collar butcher from Yonkers, who winds up joining a snooty Westchester country club" (Schneider 2006, 5).[20] None of these versions have been realized, but one hopes that if and when they are, the artists will see the continued relevance of Marty and Clara's stories today rather than trying to relegate their tale to a nostalgic notion of an ethnically specific past.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. When referring to the film version of *Marty* (and its script), this article will place the title in italics. The TV version of "Marty" (and its script) will be placed in quotation marks. If both versions are being referenced at the same time, the title will again appear in italics.
2. The appearance of live television-era plays on stage is not altogether unusual. Rod Serling's television work has been performed onstage at both Ithaca College's biennial conference on the writer and at Binghamton High School in Serling's hometown of Binghamton, New York. In 2008, the Ithaca College Department of Theatre Arts helped to put on *Noon on Doomsday*. Binghamton High hosted a live stage reading of Serling's television classic *Patterns* in 2012, which was produced by the Rod Serling Video Festival in association with S.T.A.R. (Southern Tier Actors Read). Additionally, although *I Love Lucy* (CBS, 1951–1957) and *The Brady Bunch* (ABC, 1969–1974) were not live programs, they too have been adapted to the stage. Scripts from *Lucy* were staged live in Los Angeles starting in 2011, and *The Real Live Brady Bunch* was staged in Chicago and Los Angeles in the 1990s.
3. Presently, reportage on the stage reading has been relegated to abbreviated writeups in the Television Academy's magazine, *Emmy*, photos from the red carpet (or very rarely the actual reading), and online red-carpet videos that feature short interviews with Ray Romano and the reading's other stars. See "Bringing back Classic TV with 'Marty' " (2012) and Slate (2012, 80–81).
4. For a discussion of how immigrant neighborhoods have changed, see Kosta (2014). For a discussion on the dynamics of nostalgia, see Cook (2005) and Jameson (1991).
5. This clipping is typewritten on a notecard in the Paddy Chayefsky Papers at the Wisconsin State Historical Society. No author or headline is listed. The clipping is identified only as coming from the *Wisconsin State Journal* (July 23, 1969). The notecard reads, "Paddy Chayefsky said at Camelot he's writing the lyrics for a musical version of his play 'Marty.' "

6. Strouse suggests that the latter condition was motivated by Schoenfeld having seen similar house fronts in other shows (Strouse 2008, 286).
7. *Jersey Boys* opened on Broadway in 2005, not long after the discussions about *Marty* would have taken place. *Jersey Boys*' use of Italian accents and nostalgia for the 1950s and 1960s certainly did not impede its success. Nonetheless, that show's biographical/historical roots and its documentary impulse necessitate a somewhat different critical lens than the one used for *Marty*.
8. Hall recognizes that this is an imperfect process where a variety of meanings are often ascribed to these representations, but he is adamant that the processes of encoding and decoding are grounded in cultural, historical, and industrial contexts.
9. The first season consisted of six events, including nights that featured Steve Carrell, Pierce Brosnan, and Natalie Portman reading *The Apartment*; Laurence Fishburne, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Terence Howard reading *Reservoir Dogs*; and Kate Hudson, Bradley Cooper, and Olivia Wilde reading *Shampoo*. The stage readings became so popular that later in the year *The Apartment* reading was restaged in New York with a cast that now featured Paul Rudd, James Woods, and Emma Stone, and a live reading of *American Beauty* featuring Bryan Cranston, Christina Hendricks, and Mae Whitman was performed at the Toronto International Film Festival.
10. While Bethune saw the universal appeal, it seems that not all viewers did. As will be developed later in the article, Mann's lifelong efforts to highlight the arbitrariness of Marty's Italianness indicate that some viewers still needed to be convinced of the character's cross-ethnic relevance.
11. In fact, Bethune and the Television Academy were not allowed to record or broadcast the live reading in any way.
12. Brenda Vaccaro played Gloria Tribbiani (Joey's mother) on *Friends*. She appeared in only one episode, "The One with the Boobies" (Episode 1.13).
13. See, for example, the representation of Italian and Italian-American man-children in *I vitelloni* (Federico Fellini, 1953) and *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973), respectively.
14. Bethune had seen other stage readings where the stage directions told the actors how to act. She believed that the best thing for the play would be to free up the actors to express themselves in any way they wished, and so she cut any lines that carried this potential. She was also mindful of the fact that stage directions might create unintentionally comic moments where the actors' choices would contradict the lines read by the stage director.
15. At another point in the performance, Mrs. Piletti offers Clara a late-night snack of either lasagna or a half of a chicken during their first meeting. The audience barely chuckled. Similar reactions accompanied many of the play's other ethnically grounded jokes.
16. For more on "star theory," see Dyer (2008).
17. Whether or not it is fair to obsess over an actor's performance of an accent is debatable. After all, doing so often allows a critic to focus intently on one small part of an actor's performance while ignoring the whole. Nevertheless, discussions of "good" and "bad" accents seem to be a favorite pastime of moviegoers and critics, as a 2009 *All Things Considered* story on National Public Radio made clear. During the piece, film critic Bob Mondello quoted a *New York Times* article in which George Clooney discussed his reasons for eschewing a Boston accent in *The Perfect Storm* (Wolfgang Petersen, 2000). "I'm a fairly famous guy," Clooney said. "When you suddenly hear me with a weird accent, it'll take away from everything else. I don't want the audience spending the first 15 minutes of this movie like the RCA Victor dog, trying to figure out what I'm doing." Fair or not, the use of an unusual accent can detract from a narrative and its themes by focusing audience attention on the actor's star image and real-life voice rather than the thoughts and emotions of the character they are playing. See "Awful and Astounding Movie" (2009) and Kennedy (2000).
18. Since recent television programs like *Jersey Shore* have generated a resurgence of the Italian-American Guido, it is possible that these characters from *Marty* might have

perpetuated that currently *en vogue* representation of Italian-American masculinity. Donald Tricarico has argued that the Guido not only works to narrate the history of Italian Americans but also represents a form of cultural resistance (2010, 163–199). Nevertheless, young, Italian-American, male characters such as Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino are sexist and self-centered to an extreme and lack any sense of self-awareness (or at least they are represented that way). The show's aesthetics and its narratives highlight the characters' supposed stupidity with audiences seemingly in on a joke of which the characters themselves seem ignorant.

19. Chayefsky acknowledged the play's homoerotic elements, and Jon Kraszewski has provided an analysis of them. See Kraszewski (2010, 76–78 and 89–91) and Chayefsky (1955, 174–175).
20. The program never aired, and after a brief note in *Daily Variety* it was never again mentioned in the trade press.

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Book Reviews

Italoamericana: The Literature of the Great Migration, 1880–1943.
Edited by Francesco Durante. American edition edited by Robert Viscusi.
New York: Fordham University Press, 2014.
997 pages.

Francesco Durante's *Italoamericana* is the English-language edition of an anthology (by the same title) first published in Italy in 2005. Under the editorship of Robert Viscusi, the American edition has been significantly improved, featuring as it does his insightful introduction as well as a thorough bibliography, brought up to date by James Periconi. Moreover, the success of this anthology rests in no small measure on the collaboration of twenty-four translators—some of them well known in literary circles—who had to engage a wide range of voices, genres, and registers: a daunting task that greatly benefited from Anthony Tamburri's direction as translation editor.

It is not an exaggeration to characterize this work as monumental, not only for the large number of original sources it includes in its nearly one thousand pages but also for its variety and organization. Francesco Durante—a well-known Italian journalist and scholar—spent several years in public and private archives, both in Italy and in the United States, seeking to identify and retrieve previously published and unpublished Italian immigrant writings. His determination to enrich the documentary body available to students of Italian Americana has clearly been rewarded. The texts he has selected for this anthology were written during the years of Italian mass migration to the United States, a movement that was turned into a trickle by the restrictive quota laws passed by Congress in the 1920s. The anthology's time frame, however, is extended to 1943 in order to more completely reflect Italian-American life as people experienced the complex process of incorporation within U.S. society and culture.

Durante has structured the book into five parts, each corresponding to one of several major themes of the Italian-American experience: (1) "Chronicle of the Great Exodus," (2) "Colonial Chronicles," (3) "On Stage (and Off)," (4) "Anarchists, Socialists, Fascists, and Antifascists," and (5) "Integrated Apocalyptics." Each section is introduced by a long essay that provides an essential analytical framework and a wealth of historical information. The texts written by the seventy-five writers Durante has selected appear mostly in their entirety, with several excerpted from a variety of publications. Moreover, he has done his best to help readers to contextualize the selections—both historically and in terms of their content. He has prefaced each author's contribution with relevant biographical and critical information and basic bibliographic references. Taken together, Durante's introductions to the five parts of the book and his prefaces to each author have an additional value: They help project a historical-cultural universe that was crisscrossed by a broad array of individual trajectories—some rooted in the realities of Little Italies, others reflecting transnational lives—all of them carving traces of the Italian-American experience as those writers saw it.

Durante explains in the Preface that his anthology covers "almost all literary genres: from poetry and theater to memoirs, fiction, and a wide variety of social and political

commentary" (xi). It is thus not surprising to see authors such as Luigi Galleani, Arturo Giovannitti, or Carlo Tresca—figures well-known for their political engagement within Italian-American communities—in the company of two major icons of American popular culture: Rudolph Valentino and Al Capone, the former as the author of six poems and the latter offering an interviewer his rationale for the "public service" he felt he was rendering to American society ("I give the public what the public wants") (76).

The term *literature* in the subtitle must, therefore, be understood in the broadest possible sense, and in this regard the comments Viscusi offers in his introduction are quite enlightening. Many of the texts, in fact, are commentaries by professional and improvised journalists on aspects of Italian-American life; others are polemical texts resulting from the political and ideological rifts that often erupted in those communities; still others are excerpts from memoirs or autobiographies. Creative writing, however, in the form of poetry, sonnets, short stories, plays, and lyrics constitutes a sizable proportion. Readers may find particularly illuminating the third part of the anthology, which contains a large number of texts written for various genres of theatrical performance. One finds excerpts of plays by such leading authors as Francesco Ricciardi (known as "the prince of pulcinellos") and the prolific Riccardo Cordiferro, who was possibly the leading Italian-American dramatist at the turn of the twentieth century. In his highly informative introduction to this part of the book, Durante takes the reader through the various stages that marked the professionalization of Italian-American theater, partly sustained by the establishment of a number of theater companies. And as a theater that developed during the most intense years of Italian immigration, it is not surprising (as Durante emphasizes) to find the theme of migration pervading much of that repertoire. Nor is it surprising to realize the extent to which New York City, with its large Italian-American population and its vibrant Little Italies, would constitute the epicenter for much of the creative works included in this anthology. Readers will also find this portion of the anthology a rich source for the study of the linguistic landscape and the variety and prominence of dialects in creative writing.

Yet what may surprise readers about this rich "literary" body is the central place held by poetry. More than one-third of the seventy-five Italian Americans included in the anthology are authors of poems or sonnets; and if one excludes writers of sociopolitical commentaries and autobiographies, the genre of poetry appears to have been predominant. It is not clear whether this remarkable representation is due to the availability (or lack) of sources, or whether it betrays a distinctive feature of Italian America's literary landscape of that era that merits some analytical discussion.

The value of *Italoamericana* as a critical sourcebook and teaching tool should prove to be significant, but not only for teachers. Students of Italian-American history and life, for instance, wishing to write term papers on one of its many themes will find relevant original sources not easily retrievable in libraries or websites as well as essential guidance in the editor's various introductions and prefaces.

Rich and timely as this anthology may be, Durante is well aware that a lot more research needs to be done. As he puts it, this is a "provisional" work, "a sort of permanent workshop constantly open to new research and further discoveries" (xi). Hopefully, this anthology, with the many research paths it points to, will serve as encouragement

to scholars and students working in this field that, while many "traces" of the Italian-American experience have been lost forever, others may still survive hidden in public archives or buried in old dust-covered boxes in private basements or attics.

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Il voto degli altri: Rappresentanza e scelte elettorali degli italiani all'estero.
Edited by Guido Tintori.
Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2012.
224 pages.

There is no doubt that the vote of expatriates is an issue of international relevance. Inclusiveness, representation, and citizenship are just a few important points discussed and analyzed in this book—aspects that do not apply exclusively to Italy but also to many other countries all around the world.

In Italy, the debate about expatriates' right to vote is over a century old and is deeply connected to the complex history of Italian migration. The current right to vote for citizens living abroad—either by mail or by going directly to Italy—is the result of two constitutional statutes that amended the Italian Constitution in 2000 and 2001. Since then, Italians living abroad and who are registered to AIRE (Anagrafe degli Italiani Residenti all'Estero, or Registry of Italians Resident Abroad) have had the right to elect their own representatives to Parliament—twelve for the Chamber of Deputies and six for the Senate—and to vote in referendums.

Guido Tintori, a historian and expert on migration studies and Italy's nationality laws, is the volume's editor and is also the author of the introduction and the concluding chapter. In his introduction, he clearly states that the book intends to "informare . . . e contribuire cosí ad una riforma della legislazione attuale in materia di voto all'estero" (13; inform . . . in order to contribute to a reform of the current Italian legislation on the vote abroad). He says that the inadequacies and the critical points of the current law have often been denounced by politicians, observers, and academics, and that in recent years reforming the procedures for voting abroad has been a critical item on the Parliament's agenda.

The rest of the book contains six chapters written by an equal number of contributors: M. Colucci is the author of a historical introduction of the political debate in Republican Italy, and E. Balsamo compares Italian laws and policy with similar ones from other countries. The four chapters that follow reflect the division of the four Italian electoral divisions: Anna Consonni focuses on Europe; Stefano Luconi on North and Central America; Francesco Tarantino on South America; and Simone Battiston and Bruno Mascitelli on Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Antarctica.

Consonni emphasizes the concept of the transnationality of emigrants—a "processo spontaneo e autonomo" (96; spontaneous and independent process)—who, in their political commitment both in their native country and in their adopted one,

nurture the exchanges and strengthen ties between the two. Luconi describes the "particolarismo di fondo dell'elettorato della ripartizione America Settentrionale e Centrale" (120; particularism of Central and North America's electorate), which tends toward localism and demonstrates low levels of involvement and interest in Italian political life. Tarantino delineates the "dinamicità" (150; dynamic nature) of the electorate of South America, especially Argentina and Brazil, where there is a high level of participation linked to numerous requests for citizenship. Tarantino also stresses the urgency of reform in order to avoid many problems specifically related to voter privacy and security. Battiston and Mascitelli state that there are many difficulties with implementing such legislation, as well as related allegations of electoral fraud and corruption. On the other hand, the two find, this electoral division is characterized by the dominance of native Italians among the candidates and "coinvolgimento senza precedenti nel processo politico italiano" (179; unprecedented involvement in the Italian political process).

In the closing chapter, Tintori explains that, unlike previous legislation (1912), the new Italian citizenship law (1992) explicitly recognizes the right to dual citizenship, but he adds that both statutes rely on strong ethnic connotations and the transmission of citizenship by *ius sanguinis* (right of blood), with no generational limits. Tintori, like the book's other authors, also calls attention to the relevance of Italian associations abroad—very often characterized by a regional/ethnic identity—that have always been incubators of political elites and that, since the 1970s and 1980s, have received a more formal recognition by Italy (COMITES [Committee of Italians Living Abroad] was instituted in 1985 and the CGIE [General Council of Italians Abroad] in 1989). The reader can appreciate in this book the description and analysis not only of the specificity of each geographical group of Italian voters but also of the internal peculiarities of every community, consisting of old and new migration and studded with rich and varied characteristics.

Coming from different disciplines and professional backgrounds, the authors give the reader different perspectives and analytical approaches. Considering the many studies on this issue, the novelty of Tintori's edited volume is that it focuses on how Italians living abroad vote, this time "inquadrato nel suo contesto storico, politico e sociale" (11; framed in its historical, political and social context) and in a "prospettiva di più ampio respiro" (11; wider perspective)—describing and explaining who the Italians abroad are today and who they were decades ago, with some useful clarifications. In fact, the authors explain that using the word "emigrants" to describe those registered to AIRE is actually imprecise and misleading because the bigger part of this registry is composed of second-, third-, and fourth-generation descendants. Similarly, we see how globalization and new communication technologies have, through the years, challenged and modified strategies and ways of participating in political life in the country of origin.

The book's goal has been achieved, and it can be considered an important starting point to further discussion and research on the topic. Further interdisciplinary analysis could, in fact, help to delve into the relationship between Italian immigrants living abroad, second-, third-, fourth-generation Italians abroad, and new Italians (immigrants to Italy, especially their children born and raised in Italy). The debate can be continued with more contributions from social scientists, sociologists,

and anthropologists, investigating the ideas about "Italian identity" and how the debate over citizenship, *ius sanguinis*, and *ius soli* (right of soil) is evolving inside and outside Italian society.

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The Sopranos: Born under a Bad Sign.
By Franco Ricci.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014.
336 pages.

Over a span of six seasons, from its premiere in January 1999 to its finale in June 2007, David Chase's *The Sopranos* established itself among the most popular and critically acclaimed television series of all time, ushering in what many consider to be a new "golden age" of television. Given the show's critical and popular status, it is not surprising that scores of articles have been dedicated to all facets of the series. Yet, while spawning a number of useful anthologies, the series has received scant book-length attention from scholars: There have been just a handful of books, including Dana Polan's *The Sopranos*, an excellent discussion of the series' status as a cultural marker within a vast media economy characterized by "synergy" (Duke University Press, 2009). Franco Ricci's *The Sopranos: Born under a Bad Sign* does its part to remedy this dearth of extended analyses, in the process making an important contribution to the literature.

In the years following the series' conclusion, interest remained strong among fans craving *The Sopranos*' return or, perhaps, a *Sopranos* movie or prequel, and it seemed possible, possibly even likely, that something would eventually be done. It was only with the fatal heart attack suffered by actor James Gandolfini (Tony Soprano) in June 2013 that the series seemed to have come conclusively to an end. Yet, it remained a source of interest, and a year later many critics and fans cried foul when it was reported that Chase had announced that Tony Soprano was still alive at the end of the series (Nochimson 2014). As many readers will recall, *The Sopranos*' conclusion brought up more questions than it answered: Tony, Carmela, and son A. J. sit at a booth in a diner awaiting daughter Meadow's arrival. The sense of dread and menace grows as patrons enter the diner—are they friend or foe, or merely "civilians"? Suddenly, the frame cuts to black, leaving viewers to come to their own conclusions about the ultimate fate of Tony Soprano. Years later, fans' and critics' consternation following reports that Chase had revealed the *real* ending led the series' creator to quickly issue a retraction that his comments had been misconstrued (Weiner 2014). Thus, the show's conclusion would remain ambiguous. In the end, the series was able to retain the opacity and emotional and psychological depth that had always invited viewers' active "reading" of the text.

The Sopranos: Born under a Bad Sign is a unique, extended meditation on Chase as auteur. His is, after all, the defining and sustaining intellect behind the landmark series,

and Ricci is primarily concerned with how Chase created and extended meaning, not simply via storyline and dialog but also through the series' aural and visual design. The European and Japanese art-house cinema that thrived in the United States from the 1950s to 1970s was formative in the development of Chase's artistic vision. Though cutting his teeth as a producer and writer on successful 1970s network series including *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, *The Rockford Files*, and, in the 1990s, the critical and audience favorite, *Northern Exposure*, Chase, following the example of film directors such as Fellini, Polanski, and Godard, bemoaned network television's reliance on dialog and the marginalization of visual storytelling; he aspired to a more personal form of storytelling with attention to graphic and sound design detail. With these aspirations fully realized in *The Sopranos*, maintains Ricci, the series resided aesthetically in "the hallowed aura of art house cinema" (26).

Ricci describes Chase's active cultivation of an "ideal viewer" (25). From the start, the series' superb writing was matched with detailed environments and the mise-en-scène created by Chase, always littered with the ephemera of life in the United States in the early twenty-first century. Ricci describes the ways in which Chase carries on a conversation with the show's more astute viewers, allowing an interpretive space to make meaning. Magazines, photographs, posters, paintings, films, books, and songs seen in the show are the transient artifacts and phenomena augmenting the meaning—and the process of making meaning—for the audience. Of particular interest to Ricci are the "mise-en-abîme signature moments" in which writer and viewer are complicit in a "dance of creative communion" (23). The book opens with a discussion of the core locations and settings for these moments and for the interplay of characters, narrative, and the carefully crafted, intellectually and emotionally charged objects. Dr. Melfi's office, the Bada Bing club, and the Soprano home are highly redolent environments possessing unique psychological and emotional possibilities. Within these locations, principal characters interact, the narrative progresses, events are foreshadowed and recalled, episodes and incidents reflect upon one another, all the while navigating the meaning of ethnicity in a largely postethnic United States and the accompanying problems of masculinity and identity.

Perhaps reflecting the centrality of pedagogical and critical concerns, the concluding fifth chapter, "An Appendix of Verbal Bits and Visual Bytes," is also the book's longest. The book is the product, in part, of the first-year university-level course on *The Sopranos* that Ricci teaches. His approach is that of the cultural and literary semiotician, and his reading list for the course incorporates gender studies, ethnicity, feminist criticism, mob stereotypes, and Italian-American ("I-Am" is Ricci's preferred term) culture and language, all of which figure in the book's analyses of scenes, shots, and their attendant media. Ricci organizes the visual iconography of the show under broad categories such as "Books," "Newspapers," "Photographs," and so on. Each category is introduced with a general description of its thematic and aesthetic context, followed by specific examples. Readers' analyses may lead to different conclusions than Ricci's, given the issues of identity, masculinity, and ethnicity inscribed in the series since its debut—but this is, perhaps, the book's core achievement: It describes the issues involved and provides starting points for discussion and argument. *The Sopranos: Born under a Bad Sign* should be of interest to students and scholars in film/television studies, media studies, Italian American studies, and related fields. Ricci's

analysis also stands as a useful, and usefully extended, case study for those interested in semiotics, mass media, and aesthetics.

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In Search of Sacco and Vanzetti: Double Lives, Troubled Times, and the Massachusetts Murder Case That Shook the World.

By Susan Tejada.
Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2012.
385 pages.

Susan Tejada's *In Search of Sacco and Vanzetti: Double Lives, Troubled Times, and the Massachusetts Murder Case That Shook the World* is an impressive addition to the already considerable body of work on the Sacco and Vanzetti case. Since the two men's executions in 1927, scholars have explored many facets of the trial, analyzing the legal arguments presented, the use of inconclusive evidence, and how anarchism and ethnic prejudice negatively impacted the outcome of the court case, to name a few examples. Tejada's book continues in this vein but with a markedly different purpose in mind. Her main goal, she writes in the introduction, is "to decouple Sacco from Vanzetti and to write a double biography"—one that offers a fuller "portrait of two complex individuals" (ix). The result is a fascinating portrayal of their separate yet intersecting lives rooted within the political firestorm of labor strikes and class warfare that defined the early decades of the twentieth century.

As Tejada correctly points out, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were physically apart for much of the trial's seven-year span except for court appearances and the final months after sentencing when they were transferred to Dedham Jail. Like the torn edges of the photograph that serves as the book's cover and section dividers, many of the assumptions that have conflated Sacco with Vanzetti in the past have been shredded by Tejada's research. She upholds the singularity of each man's journey from Italy to the United States, each one's sacrifices, work history, personal life, and experience in prison, offering revised characterizations of a "more reflective and realistic" Sacco and a "more intolerant" Vanzetti than those previously depicted in earlier accounts (x).

The strength of the book lies in its attention to historical context. From chapters painting the broader cultural climate of anti-immigrant sentiment and the backlash of restrictive immigration laws to an overview of labor union struggles and major strikes that influenced Sacco's and Vanzetti's commitments to the labor movement, Tejada outlines the passing of legislative measures to suppress radical activists and to protect homeland security, drawing relevant parallels to terrorist threats in contemporary U.S. society. Part 1 also establishes a timeline of the robbery and murder set within the political and social milieu of the early 1900s, from Sacco's and Vanzetti's immigration experiences to the fateful day of April 15, 1920, when the crimes occurred. While Tejada's coverage of bombings and events leading up to Vanzetti's trial in Plymouth, Massachusetts, may be familiar to those well versed in the story of Sacco and Vanzetti, the comprehensive narrative examines previously overlooked evidence, such as Sacco's request for an attorney when he was first arrested—a fact, according to Tejada, "that apparently has remained unreported" (32).

Part 2, the shortest segment of the book, covers the inner workings of the trial of the two men. One notable section describes the five-day jury selection process as a carnivalesque procession of potential candidates overseen by Judge Webster Thayer. Tejada also offers insight into some of the identities of over 150 witnesses who testified for the prosecution and defense by naming both well-known and obscure individuals who contributed to the court proceedings, a re-examination that serves to humanize an otherwise detailed list of ballistics reports and material evidence. The ensuing account—a piecing together of witness testimony to show discrepancies and contrary voices in trial transcripts—subsequently moves quickly through the four categories Tejada uses to establish Sacco's and Vanzetti's individualities: identifying each defendant, establishing their alibis, presenting physical evidence used against them, and, lastly, examining evidence of consciousness of guilt. The effect of considering each defendant separately underscores Tejada's intent to show that both Sacco and Vanzetti had pursued severance motions as early as October 1920 that continued through June 1921, a month before the guilty verdict was returned. Tejada speculates about the possible outcome if the Sacco and Vanzetti case had not remained "conjoined" (160), stating that "it's impossible to know. In the end, Bartolo may have been as tarnished by Nick's testimony as Nick was by Bartolo's prior conviction" (161).

The inclusion of archival sources beyond court-related documents creates another lens through which to consider the distinctly different lives Sacco and Vanzetti experienced in prison. In Part 3, Tejada incorporates papers and correspondences of key individuals involved with the defense committee, such as Elizabeth Glendower Evans and Mary Donovan, alongside interviews with family members of Cerise Carman Jack and Virginia MacMechan, to broaden an understanding of the often-studied controversial case, and their words do much to shed light on Sacco's family life and psychological state during his hunger strikes as well as Vanzetti's prolific correspondences and his "hopeless love" for MacMechan (196). It is in the book's final three chapters, however, that Tejada's writing gains the most urgency, bringing to life the emotional day-by-day death watch that took place in August 1927. For instance, she includes compelling vignettes of participants indirectly involved with the case such as Robert Elliott's work history from electric engineer to executioner and Vanzetti's sister Luigia, whose devout faith and suffering became the subject of much media coverage

until the last court appeals had been denied. Chapter 17, "Afterlives," is particularly illuminating in suggesting how the case contributed to the professional and personal hardships experienced by those associated with the trial: Webster Thayer survived a bombing at his home in 1932 only to die from a stroke a year later; defense lawyer William Thompson lost a bid for the U.S. Senate and suffered health setbacks, dying in 1935; and Prosecutor Frederick Katzmann regretted his involvement and the toll it took on his wife's declining health. Tejada also includes details about the lives led by Hattie Parmenter and Sarah Berardelli, the widows of the murdered payroll guards, as well as other notable facts of key women connected to Sacco and Vanzetti such as Rosina Sacco's marriage to Ermanno Bianchini and Cerise Carman Jack's suicide in 1935. Leaving no subject unexplored, Tejada even reports on what happened to the jails that housed Sacco and Vanzetti. Her research, at times, reads like an oral history—a testimony of regional and familial ties—and that makes the book an invaluable record of lived experience. Some of the interviews with surviving relatives date back to the late 1990s and continue through the 2000s. With the realities of people passing and memories lapsing, Tejada's commitment to recording and incorporating these voices in a book-length study of Sacco and Vanzetti is a welcome approach that will surely stand the test of time.

In arguing convincingly about Sacco's and Vanzetti's unique characters, Tejada's book propels further the study of how the trial shaped the public's perceptions of their lives and will appeal to scholars and mainstream readers alike. Those concerned with solving the case will be particularly interested in the book's final chapter, which presents a new theory about the payroll robbery and double murders. Tejada explores recovered transcripts and confessions, professing that "inside information" led to the Morelli gang pulling off the heist (307). Ending the book on this note raises questions about other possibilities too and proves that the fascination with the Sacco and Vanzetti case has not waned but only increased as the world continues to remember the injustices these two immigrants faced in being stigmatized as Italians and labor radicals.

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The Mystery of San Nicandro.
By Roger Pyke.
Matter of Fact Media, Nicandro Productions, 2012.
68 minutes. DVD format, color.

The persistence of a cultural, or at least familial, memory of Judaism within many pockets of the Catholic Mediterranean was commonly covert after 1492; but in recent decades more and more descendants of the *conversos* (Jews who converted to Christianity) have been emerging from underground. Architect Santiago Calatrava, to take one notable example, has spoken to me about growing up outside Valencia in the 1950s and 1960s in Benimamet, where the population was known to contain many *conversos*, and where he was instructed in the catechism by a man said to be of rabbinic lineage. The silence had been broken even then, and in subsequent years, as the need for outward conformity has waned, reconversion to Judaism has become a small but notable trend. To give another example: Over the past few years, Rabbi Jules Harlow, a prominent figure in Judaism's Conservative movement, has been shuttling between the United States and Portugal, where he has been counseling a growing community of *conversos* as they make the transition to open and normative Judaism.

Even within this context, though, the story of the Jews of San Nicandro is odd and remarkable. It has been told repeatedly, though without lasting effect on public consciousness, starting with the newspaper and magazine accounts that came out in the 1940s after the Allied invasion of Italy brought this isolated community to light and continuing through the publication in 2010 of John A. Davis's *The Jews of San Nicandro* (Yale University Press). The documentary film *The Mystery of San Nicandro*, based in part on Davis's book, now seeks to bring the story to a wider audience, while giving it an inspirational gloss.

The facts, in brief, concern a cobbler named Donato Manduzio, who returned from World War I to his small hometown in Puglia with disabling wounds and a spiritual thirst. Gradually, he attracted a following in San Nicandro as a preacher and faith healer; and then, upon receiving the gift of a Bible in Italian translation, he became an avid student of the Hebrew scriptures, which previously had been closed to him. By the late 1920s, he had identified himself as a Jew—apparently without knowing that Jews still existed elsewhere in the world—and had begun to lead his disciples into a revival of Mosaic religion. When news came to them of an organized Jewish community in Rome, Manduzio's group enthusiastically requested formal recognition, which was denied. Even had the San Nicandro congregation not been so idiosyncratic, Italy's rabbinate would have been hard-pressed to welcome it in the 1930s at the height of Fascism.

The San Nicandro group received no fellowship until the soldiers of Britain's Jewish Brigade rolled into town and were astonished to see their Star of David insignia matched by the locals. The great majority of the San Nicandro Jews subsequently emigrated to the newly established State of Israel, where they again had trouble

achieving acceptance from the rabbinate. Today most of the surviving members of the community and their offspring live in Israel, while another group, descended from the handful who stayed behind, continues to reside in San Nicandro.

The production team for *The Mystery of San Nicandro* has done its most valuable work in tracking these people down and securing interviews with them—from the grizzled octogenarian Daniele Disalvia in Ashkelon, who recalls having been put to work after his arrival in Israel doing the tasks expected of Italians (picking olives and building roads), to Incoronata Giuliani, a thirtyish contemporary resident of San Nicandro who is seen being joyfully remarried in the synagogue in Ancona after she and her husband have undergone conversion. Sometimes moving and always vivid, these interviews reveal people who are proud of their Judaism and often speak of Donato Manduzio as a seer who they believe miraculously rediscovered the ancient religion that had been dormant in San Nicandro.

Expanding on this theme, and filling out its episodic television format, *The Mystery of San Nicandro* wanders far beyond Puglia to consider the revival of Judaism elsewhere in Italy. There are multiple segments following the vigorous and cheerful Rabbi Barbara Aiello, a Pittsburgh native who now spends much of her time in Calabria, where she investigates the region's Jewish heritage and connects, or reconnects, local people to Jewish thought and practice. In a related segment, *The Mystery of San Nicandro* provides a quasi-travelog with Laura Cattari, a very determined woman from Toronto who is shown touring Sicily in search of the Jewish roots she is certain she will discover there: whether in cemeteries, where her family name shows up on gravestones that are blatantly devoid of Christian iconography, or in meetings with her relatives, who insist with a little too much emphasis that there are absolutely no Jews in town and never have been (even though the old municipal maps identify their neighborhood as the *Giudeca*).

Although the material in these portions of *The Mystery of San Nicandro* seems perhaps to have been incorporated by virtue of being ready to hand, rather than broadly representative, these sequences, too, have the pungency of dense, particular experience. Those qualities are lost, unfortunately, in the film's reconstruction of Manduzio's life, where frequently fascinating archival images are interrupted by stiffly staged and shamelessly repetitive mime-shows in which the actor who stands in for the cobbler is most often posed in close-up behind a flickering candle.

Manduzio stares at the candle because Rabbi Barbara Aiello speaks in the film about the inextinguishable flame of Judaism in the hearts of the *conversos*, and Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl of Toronto refers to the mystical spark that is always ready to awaken in the Jewish soul. The film's many images of flames and candles are a symbolic motif overlaid on the story, in effect confirming the "mystery" of the title (whispered about speculatively by the voiceover narrator) and adding force to the interview subjects' sometimes ingenuous assertions that something greater than coincidence led Manduzio to kindle Judaism in San Nicandro.

Producer Vanessa Dylyn and writer-director Roger Pyke might have done well enough had they merely suggested the unproved but not unlikely idea that Manduzio's followers were quick to adopt Judaism because they remembered, however vaguely, the lost faith of their ancestors. Unfortunately, the filmmakers chose to go further, in San Nicandro and elsewhere, and hint at divine intervention. This wishful notion does

not spoil *The Mystery of San Nicandro*, but it does take the film beyond the categories of popular historiography and documentation and into apologetics.

—STUART KLAWANS
Film critic, *The Nation*

Texan Italian Stories.
By Sergio Carvajal-Leoni.
Three Episodes:
"Italy in Texas, Bilingual Stories," 7 minutes.
"Rekindle the Flame," 15 minutes.
"Italians from the Bottom," 16 minutes.
www.italchannel.tv.
Intercultural Transmedia Approach to Learning (ITAL), Tiburon Transmedia LLC, 2013.
Streaming format, color.

The three online videos, part of the project *Texan Italian Stories*, created by director Sergio Carvajal-Leoni and producer Romina Olson in celebration of the year of Italian culture of 2013 explore the history, influence, and family stories of Texan Italian Americans from Houston, Austin, and the often overlooked communities of Bryan and Hearne. The first episode, titled "Italy in Texas, Bilingual Stories," features interviews with Italian-American civic boosters from the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce in Houston, while the second episode, "Rekindle the Flame," celebrates the artistic achievements and talent of Italian immigrants who helped build the Texas State Capitol in Austin. The last installment, "Italians from the Bottom," explores the lives of Italian-American families who settled in the area around the Brazos River.

"Italy in Texas, Bilingual Stories" takes place at the Arcodoro restaurant in Houston and showcases the cuisine of Italy along with interviews, in English and Italian, with Texan Italian-American entrepreneurs. Over eggplant *rollatini* and prosecco, these well-established members of the Texan Italian-American community share their own unique stories about how their families ended up in this part of the country. Some of the first Italian settlers to Texas, such as the Mandola family, moved to the port city of Galveston over one hundred years ago. While many of the early Italian immigrants originally came from small impoverished towns in Sicily, the more recent Italian transplants are professionals who have come to Texas to take advantage of new market opportunities in the Lone Star State. The filmmakers give voice to this new breed of Italian investors, such as Alberto Buson, who oversees the U.S. branch of Bellelli, an Italian engineering firm, and Brenna Giannini, manager of sales and distribution of the Casalinea ceramics company.

The second video, "Rekindle the Flame," is sponsored by the Consulate General of Italy in Houston and highlights Martin Morales, who serves as the film's guide to the Italian Americans of Austin. A third-generation Sicilian, Morales explains the meaning of the "Italy Inspires U.S." tagline for the Italian government's publicity campaign

"2013: Year of Italian Culture in the United States" using the example of sculptures by Pompeo Coppini, an Italian immigrant artist of the early twentieth century whose work can be seen on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol and the Alamo Plaza. Coppini immortalized the battle of the Alamo in San Antonio and created numerous monuments honoring key figures in the founding of the state. Around the same time as Coppini was executing his work, other Italians came to Austin specifically to work on the construction of the state capitol building. The film introduces Monte Franzetti, whose father, Carlo Franzetti, a skilled stonemason from Malgesso (Varese province, Lombardy), came to Texas with a group of craftsmen he recruited to complete the massive Renaissance revival architectural structure that is known for its Texas red granite, elegant Corinthian columns, and intricately carved details.

In the last segment of this trilogy, titled "Italians from the Bottom" (i.e., the "bottom" of the Brazos Valley region where the towns of Bryan and Hearne are located), Joe Perrone proudly displays the framed historical record with the signature of King Umberto that granted Perrone's great-grandmother Dorothea and her family permission to come to central Texas. In the late 1800s, Brazos County recruited Sicilians as tenant farmers, and the majority of the Italians who settled in the area around the flood-prone bottomland of the Brazos River came from Poggioreale and nearby towns in the province of Trapani. Many of these immigrants brought with them firsthand knowledge of agriculture and fruit cultivation, and today people such as Leon Denena, owner of Anthony Denena Farms, and Professor Leo Lombardini of the Horticultural Science Department at Texas A&M University, exemplify the know-how and resourcefulness early Italians used to tackle the challenges of growing crops in the central Texas clay soil. Both Denena and the newly immigrated Lombardini are keen to acknowledge the courage of those Italian settlers whose dire poverty and desperation led them to come to such an environmentally inhospitable place in order to toil in its cotton fields, pecan orchards, and cattle ranches.

All of the people interviewed for *Texan Italian Stories* expressed a deep sense of respect and gratitude for the sacrifices of early Italian immigrants, and Denena is quick to point out that even during prohibition the Italian Americans of the Brazos Valley made an honest living. Though Denena does not explain his reasons for making this statement, I suspect that he wanted to differentiate the Sicilian Americans of the Bryan and Hearne communities from the northern Italian coal miners who settled in the nearby town of Thurber and who were notorious for bootlegging *grappa* made from grape skins and apricots (Tucker 2009). Given the established mass-media stereotypes of Italian Americans, especially Sicilians, as corrupt, underworld *mafiosi*, Denena's desire to protect the reputation of those who came before him by rejecting any whiff of criminality is understandable. The respectability of Sicilian-American farmers is here defined against the disreputable actions of northerners who in the regional politics of Italy are often depicted as more honest and ethical than southerners.

The Italians from the "bottom," as both Perrone and Denena aptly point out, occupied the bottom rung of the social ladder, and even though they worked hard to improve their lot, they were at times treated as second-class citizens. A case in point is Joe Perrone's great-aunt Lena, a spritely ninety-five-year-old woman who grew up in Bryan and remembers the Texas of her youth as a tough place. Indeed, Lena Accurso's father explicitly chose not to teach his children Italian so they could blend in with

others around them and avoid any forms of discrimination. While the narrative that Accurso tells speaks volumes about the pressures to assimilate, the desire for upward mobility, and the immigrant longing for social acceptance, I would have liked to learn more about what it was like to live as an ethnic minority for Accurso and her family.

From a cinematic perspective, the digital stories are made up of beautifully composed images that symbolically express new and old forms of Italian-American Texan identity. The opening shot of Joe Perrone riding his motorbike with its Sicily decal down the driveway of his suburban home, along with the backlit views of his car, revealing necklaces with dangling crosses, visually convey the importance of the automobile and Roman Catholicism in the lives of many of today's Texan Italian Americans who often live far from major city centers. Likewise, the quasi *American Gothic* portrait of the two young boys posing with jeans, T-shirts, and baseball caps with Texas A&M and New York Yankees logos set against the rural countryside of Denena's ancestral home eloquently illustrates the by-product of intermarriage that has occurred among Italian Americans and non–Italian Americans in the region. The lush depictions of the cotton fields gently moving in the wind and the cornucopia of Sicilian pastries on Accurso's kitchen table all poetically highlight the significance of the land and regional foodways in keeping the body and soul of the Italian immigrant family well nourished. As a scholar of ethnic folklore, I was reminded, seeing Accurso's baked goods (which included lemon meringue pie, a popular American dessert from the South) not only of the Sicilian and Sicilian-American custom of displaying food on St. Joseph's altar but also of the extent to which Italian Americans have come to embrace Texan culinary traditions as their own. The Sicilian folk music of flute virtuoso Carmelo Salemi, with its evocative Mediterranean sounds of Italian rural village life, is nicely juxtaposed against iconic images of modern progress from the United States: opening shots of Houston's cityscape and romantically framed scenes of outstretched highway dappled with oil rigs and cows reminiscent of the industries that have helped make Texas what it is today.

As a folklorist with an interest in new forms of Italian expressive culture (e.g., the online series *Nonna Maria and Friends*, https://www.facebook.com/NonnaMariaandFriends), I find it particularly gratifying to see young Texan filmmakers take advantage of the educational possibilities of the Internet, creating digital media that seeks to tell stories that both interrogate and explore what it means to be Texan Italian American. This exploration of identity included both assimilated Italian Americans and the current crop of well-educated Italian professionals who, because of the lack of opportunities back home, have come to Texas to take well-paying jobs in the fields of academia and medical research. Indeed, contemporary Texan Italian Americans look and sound radically different from the early Italian immigrants of the past who spent the better part of their lives farming the land. As the film clearly shows, the third- and fourth-generation Texan Italians are solidly middle-class Americans who take their privilege and success as a fait accompli. Unlike Accurso's father, who lived in the Texas of almost a hundred years ago and felt pressure to suppress his ethnic and linguistic difference for fear of reprisals, the Texan Italian Americans we see in this documentary feel at ease with their cultural roots and are eager to celebrate the achievements of their ancestors. Tiziana Triolo, director of the Italian Cultural and Community Center in Houston, is among those in the community today who work to recognize the lasting contributions

Italian immigrants have made to this country by hosting special events to honor individuals such as Mike Montalbano, a businessman who owns and manages the lumber company his grandfather first started in the early 1900s.

Though this three-part documentary offers a refreshing vision of Texan Italian-American identity, one of its major drawbacks is that it fails to fully engage with the issues of class and only intimates at the existence of interethnic conflict. The videos also could have benefited by focusing on how younger Italian Americans negotiate, express, and fashion their ethnicity in relation to other white ethnics and visible minorities with whom they may actually share a partial membership. The online video format tends to favor short films, so my remarks here are not so much criticisms as they are suggestions for future projects. Ultimately, *Texan Italian Stories* provides an excellent tool for introducing students to the history, language, and culture of Italian Americans in Texas; but more important, this thoughtful, often revealing film with memorable cinematic flourishes makes visible the seldom acknowledged ways in which Italian immigrants and Texan Italian Americans have helped shape the social, cultural, and physical landscape of the place they call home.

—GIOVANNA P. DEL NEGRO
Texas A&M University

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Way Down in the Hole.

By Alex Johnston.
Rifle Baby Productions, 2010.
40 minutes. DVD format, color.

> They're singing in every language in the world in that tent colony, about how those miners are unified, stuck together. (*Way Down in the Hole*)

On September 23, 1913, over a thousand people—miners and their families in Colorado—walked out the doors of their company-owned homes and headed to the makeshift tent camp of Ludlow in an attempt to make a new life by striking against their oppressive employers. This action echoed, for some, a larger journey on ships across the ocean they had made when immigrating to the United States. That autumn of 1913 these migrant families lived through (and some died for) what would become one of the most important episodes in U.S. immigration and labor history: the southern Colorado coal strike and Ludlow Massacre. In his film *Way Down in the Hole* Alex

Johnston depicts with graphic clarity what pushed these miners (the majority of whom were from southern and eastern Europe) to strike. One of the major strengths of the film is the way Johnston shows just how long and meaningful the strike's reverberations have been, from the immediate aftermath well into the twenty-first century—noting how the strike helped create solidarity in the U.S. mining community and in the labor movement outside of it.

Way Down in the Hole, Johnston's thesis project for his Master's in social documentation from the University of California, Santa Cruz, is a visually sharp document and, by including current union members' responses to the terrible events, presents a significant retelling of this historic episode in U.S. history that left dozens of men, women, and children dead. The forty-minute film weaves together archival recordings and recent interviews, as well as beautiful black-and-white strike-era photographs and vivid contemporary shots of the landscape where this tragedy occurred.

The lore of Ludlow in popular memory stands side by side with the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in Manhattan. Both disasters were signs of the early-twentieth-century moment of industrial capitalism in the raw. Unlike the Triangle fire, however, at Ludlow the forces of the state (the Colorado National Guard) and of private capital (John D. Rockefeller's Colorado Fuel and Iron Company's private police) were clearly and openly aligned against labor. The combined forces of the government and callous corporate bosses, the film argues, caused a major defeat for coal-mining unionism.

For decades prior to the strike, Colorado coal miners had built a union movement—through the Western Federation of Miners and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). By the spring of 1913 the UMWA's organizing had gained enough momentum, and conditions had sunk so low, that miners walked out some six months later. Their main concerns were working conditions, union recognition, and workplace democracy. In response Rockefeller evicted miners and their families from his company-owned homes, creating a refugee population—a familiar condition for the majority-immigrant population who made up the movement—in southern Colorado. The strikers' tent colony (comprised of roughly one thousand people) became a larger organizing ground as well as a target for continuous military attacks. By the spring of 1914, Rockefeller had hired replacement workers. National Guardsmen and company police invaded the tent colony, an action that led to the massacre that is the film's focus.

Teachers and scholars of Italian-American immigration should note that the film tells not stories of Italian Americans in isolation but rather, after the manner of the strike and massacre itself, chronicles the ways that ethnic groups in the United States came together and created what James R. Barrett calls an "Americanization from the bottom-up"—continued allegiances to town, homeland, and people, along with newfound identities in the United States (Barrett 1992). This Americanization process was about continued allegiances to town, homeland, and people that we know were central to an Italian-American cultural identity. The film reaffirms the ways in which, during the Ludlow strike as in other U.S. strikes of the era, working people from around the world created new ties that were more global and heterogeneous even while they continued traditions that were based in national and local heritages from their homelands. The strike, like many at the turn of the century, combined the work of Italian immigrants and their families and immigrants from dozens of other countries—a point underscored throughout the film.

Italian Americans, thus, are not the center of this story, but they do clearly play an important part in the history. One of the compelling narratives told in the film is that of Italian immigrant Mary Petrucci, an activist whose three children were killed by National Guardsmen during the strike. Petrucci was one of the many women aiding the strikers who integrated caretaking skills and militancy to sustain the strike.

The film highlights the everyday life of the demographically heterogeneous tent colony and reminds us of the processes of transnational mentality and internationalism that many Italian Americans experienced. Whether and how those immigrants were able to leave the Italian-American sections of their company towns is a part of the important history that *Way Down in the Hole* reiterates.

The southern Colorado coal strike and Ludlow Massacre are important stories for immigration history and for Italian Americans' role in that story. The filmmaker's ability to lace the narrative of the Colorado miners' strike and the Ludlow Massacre together with the conditions coal miners and their families had faced—along with the ways the labor movement today pays homage to those who walked off the job for union recognition—is a strength of the documentary. The strikers paid a heavy price, and the gravity with which union members tell stories about them shows that they still feel and honor it. *Way Down in the Hole* does a superb job of using narration to bring to life historical realities and gives ample space for these interviewees to explain and analyze the impact of the strike and the massacre.

Way Down in the Hole is a well-suited film for a course at any collegiate level and a welcome new way to depict Italian Americans' and other immigrants' roles in U.S. labor history.

—CAROLINE MERITHEW
University of Dayton

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Exhibition Reviews

It's in Our Very Name: The Italian Heritage of Syracuse.
Curated by Dennis Connors.
Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, New York.
September 12, 2014–March 16, 2015.

The legacy of Italians in central New York is a long one. Even in the years before local postmaster John Wilkinson, inspired by Englishman Edward Stanley's neo-Latin poem praising the ancient Sicilian city of Siracusa, officially rechristened the small village of Corinth near Onondaga Lake *Syracuse* in 1820, Italian immigrants were already involved in local building projects and infrastructure improvements. The Italian presence grew in the ensuing decades as more immigrants arrived, eventually forming the city's largest ethnic group. By the twentieth century the role of the Italian-American community had become central to the city's identity. Reflecting that prominence, local "sons and daughters of Italy" donated to Syracuse a monument honoring Christopher Columbus, and the opening ceremony for its dedication on October 2, 1934, was a major public event. Attended by 5,000 city residents, the occasion included the monument's sculptor, Renzo V. Baldi, and several dignitaries from the Italian government. Today, after almost 200 years, the Italian population, whose cultural center is Syracuse's Northside neighborhood, continues to thrive, exerting a substantial influence in the culture, politics, and economy of the city and the region.

Yet it wasn't until September 12, 2014, that the first exhibition celebrating the contributions of the city's Italian-American inhabitants was hosted by the Onondaga Historical Association in Syracuse. Among the visitors at the opening reception for *It's in Our Very Name: The Italian Heritage of Syracuse* were prominent political figures from the Syracuse area such as New York State Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli and New York State Senator John A. DeFrancisco.

The exhibition itself focuses on five major topics: Work, Food, Religion, Amusements & Social Life, and Family. Utilizing every inch of the walls and several centrally located display cases, the show maximizes all of the second floor's modest 1,450-square-foot space. Arches of red wooden latticework erected over five main panels are surrounded by numerous historical photographs in red frames and accompanied by narrative text, each panel attractively mounted on dark green backgrounds. This innovative design motif dominates the exhibit and introduces visitors to an overview of the region's Italian immigrants.

Upon exiting the stairwell, it was unclear whether to begin to the left or to the right of the life-size reproduction grape arbor complete with a wine press positioned in the center of the gallery. This reviewer chose to move forward to view photographs displayed next to the wine press, which belongs to Nicholas Fiorenza, whose family emigrated from an unspecified coastal town in Calabria. In the center aisle photographs and artifacts on loan from individuals also represent the Italian-American work experience in Syracuse: for example, a commercial steam iron used at Learbury's Clothing Factory; a homemade cheese grater fashioned by resident Paulo Raulli, founder of

Raulli & Sons Ironworks; and a purse manufactured by the Julius Resnick factory during the period when Italian-American women regularly worked there.

The highlight of the exhibition, however, is the unique handmade narrative quilt hung on the wall to the right of the elevator. Labeled "Gambardella Italian Family Heirloom Quilt," the quilt is made up of squares, each of which contains the hand-stitched name of a family member together with an emblem representing the individual's occupation or hobby. A small sign nearby briefly summarizes the history of the family, whose surname was changed to Camardella when Andrea Gambardella arrived at the Ellis Island port of entry in 1906. No further attribution is apparent, so inquisitive visitors might rightfully want more information about who created the quilt and when. Likewise, one might also wonder what family stories, if any, continue to be told about the individuals whose names are sewn on the quilt.

The Onondaga Historical Association is to be commended for initiating this long-overdue exhibition about Syracuse's sizable Italian-American community: The exhibition as a whole is educational and charming. However, the lack of an oral-history component (for example, in the form of family stories) was a bit disappointing for visitors like nonagenarian Alberta Romano, who accompanied this reviewer. This oversight could have been rectified by enlarging and reproducing on more visible display panels the interesting entries from local writer Joe Russo's printed blog; as it was, these were inconspicuously relegated to a small table. Indeed, the tales themselves were fascinating, with titles such as "The Zucchini Flower," "The Northside before Supermarkets," "Winter Fest in Northside," "The Feast of Seven Fishes," and "Fastest Hands on the Northside" detailing early street hockey games, toboggan rides, and snowball fights in this very snowy city. Russo's blog entries should have been more accessible to visitors.

Even something as simple as family recipes recorded as part of an oral-history project can reveal important regional differences. According to information included in the exhibit, most of Syracuse's Italian immigrants came from Calabria and Sicily; this indicates that they spoke distinct dialects and possessed distinct culinary practices specific to those regions. However, Tyrolean Italians also settled in the nearby village of Solvay in the town of Geddes, New York, to work at the Solvay Process Company, a soda ash plant operational from the 1880s to the 1980s. In this reviewer's opinion, the exhibition misses the chance to document some regional distinctions, such as cooking varieties; for example, while Sicilians are known for specialties such as *anelletti*, a ring-shaped pasta, *polenta*, a porridge dish made of cornmeal, remains the staple among Italian immigrants from the southern part of Tyrol. Exploration of foodways is important because most Italian-American families conserve their traditional recipes long after their native language is no longer spoken by second and third generations. Thus, a family recipe, the use of a particular spice, or a specific pasta shape can signify important regional and class differences, demonstrating the importance of recording oral tradition from firsthand interviews.

Similarly, the primary exhibition focus here is on documents, photographs, and the material culture of Italian Americans in Syracuse, whereas immigration stories of the first generation recalled by living family members are necessary for a true understanding of the heritage of any group; that's where the oral-history component would have enriched this enterprise. Had fieldwork been conducted prior to the exhibition,

the resulting documentation could have been printed in an accompanying interpretive brochure. A future exhibition with an interactive display might encourage visitors to sit and record their own family stories. Comparison of such stories would be enlightening since, while outsiders generally assume that an ethnic group is fairly homogeneous, insiders recognize differences within the group based on class, region, urban versus rural settings, and generations.

In conclusion, this inaugural exhibition was a commendable first step toward honoring the numerous contributions of Syracuse's Italian Americans to the public at large. To its credit, the Onondaga Historical Association plans to acquire more artifacts and historical photographs from city residents for future exhibitions. Hopefully, this subsequent effort will include an oral-history component that will give more insight into the Italian-American experience. For example, the signage in the "Family" section of the exhibit states, "Virtually every story about the Italian-American experience and Syracuse revolves around family." Yet what are these stories? Who tells them today? And have the stories changed over time? In the same vein another unattributed quotation reads, "You trust members of your own family first, relatives second, *paesani* third, other Italians a distant fourth, and everyone else not at all." How have sentiments of the community—now comprised of second-, third-, fourth-, or fifth-generation Italian Americans like myself—changed over time? Have traditions become hybridized in today's globalized world? By exploring these issues, the next Onondaga Historical Association exhibition could reveal fascinating intragroup complexities.

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THIERRY RINALDETTI has a PhD in American studies, and he teaches at Paris 8 University. He has published several articles on Italian immigrants in the United States in American, French, and Italian journals, and a book version of his PhD dissertation has been published in Italy.

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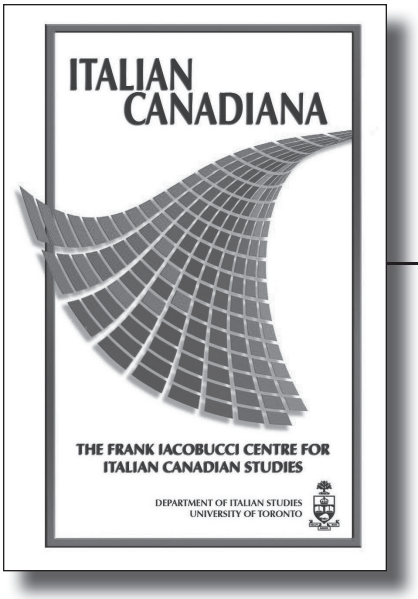

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EDITOR:
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