

Reflections on the First Six Years

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Not a week goes by without my learning about a new scholarly book or article, a documentary film, a website, or an exhibition that addresses issues concerning the history and culture of Italian Americans, Italian emigration, and the larger Italian diaspora. Some of these academic works and artistic productions deal with the great wave of Italian emigration (1880s–1924) to the United States, others are concerned with the continuing migratory flows out of and into Italy in the twenty-first century. Transnational anarchists in Canada, Sicilian embroidery in Indiana, and college-educated youth in London are just some of the topics germane to this field that have recently been explored in an assortment of media.¹ The interdisciplinary study of the Italian diaspora in all its permutations is a vibrant arena for scholars, filmmakers, curators, and others to rethink the past, document the present, and explore new concepts and approaches.

Since the revitalization of the *Italian American Review* in 2011, the journal has published articles, notes, and reviews surrounding this scholarship as part of our mandate to disseminate pertinent information and advance critical discourse. The editorial and production staff, review editors, and editorial board members have worked diligently together to produce a journal committed to the highest standards of intellectual rigor, academic thought, as well as editorial and design excellence. As a result, the journal has evolved into an esteemed site for scholarly works concerning Italian American and Italian diasporic studies. I want to acknowledge their work, as well as that of the many peer reviewers, and the significant contribution to the field the journal has made because of that labor.

This issue marks the end of my tenure as editor of the *Italian American Review*. When we at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute embarked on resurrecting the journal my co-workers and I decided to devote the first six years (an editor's two three-year terms) to establishing the necessary infrastructure to ensure a rigorous peer-review process and academic integrity. I was thrilled by the challenge to help revive the moribund journal, a publication that been hampered historically by a lack of institutional commitment and essential resources. I was resolute in advancing the journal's professionalization and scholarship. With my interdisciplinary training in art history, anthropology, performance studies, and folklore and folklife studies, I sought to expand on the

journal's social science purview by encouraging the inclusion of material associated with cultural studies. To this end, the *Italian American Review* has published articles, notes, and reviews addressing such topics as popular and consumer culture, media, vernacular expressivity, and museum exhibitions. As editor, I pursued the expansion of the journal beyond the margins of Italian America so as to situate Italian immigration to the United States in conversation with Italian transnational dynamics and diasporic perspectives. And not least of all, I was concerned with and attentive to the look and feel of the finished product.

The past six years have been an exhilarating experience, profoundly instructive and immensely pleasurable, on both professional and personal levels. I am extremely gratified by the results of the journal and the scholarship it has produced. I have had the good fortune to work closely with colleagues both at and beyond the Calandra Institute who are generous, conscientious, and inspiring. I extend a heartfelt *grazie* to them for their invaluable collaboration and for their skills and energies that have made possible the new *Italian American Review*.

In 2015 we issued a call for a new editor and received a number of applications. With assistance from some members of the editorial office and board, we invited Marcella Bencivenni to be the journal's editor for the period 2017–2019. Marcella was selected for a number of reasons. She is a professor in the department of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the City University of New York's Hostos Community College. As a historian she has researched and published on migration, labor, and social movements with a focus on Italian immigration in the United States, authoring *Italian Immigrant Radical Culture: The Idealism of the Sovversivi in the United States, 1880–1940* (New York University Press, 2011). In addition, she studied with the late Philip Cannistraro, the journal's former editor and Queens College's previous Distinguished Professor of Italian American Studies. We are very excited to have her lead the journal forward on to its next stage.

As I prepare to step into my new role as editorial director, we are making two changes to the journal's previous policies. First, we are lifting the self-imposed ban on reviewing work written, edited, created, or curated by editorial board members and staff. With the journal's revitalization, I argued for such a stipulation in order to avoid any perception of favoritism. I believed this was an important step at the beginning of the journal's new life, given the relatively small field of Italian American studies. Nevertheless, adhering to this policy has deprived our readers of the *Review's* particular perspective on a number of new important works by those affiliated with the journal, works that have made significant contributions to Italian American and Italian diasporic studies.

Second, we are increasing the annual subscription rates effective with the first 2017 issue: \$30 for individuals; \$20 for students and seniors; and \$60 for institutions and international subscribers. The annual individual subscription rate has been in place since 1996 when the Calandra Institute began producing and publishing the previous iteration of the journal. This modest increase—a significantly low price compared to other scholarly journals' subscription rates—will help supplement the costs involved in producing and mailing this publication.

During the revived journal's early years, we occasionally struggled to solicit essays that met the new publication's established criteria. After six years, we find ourselves in the advantageous position of receiving a relatively steady stream of first-rate submissions and proposals. This special issue dedicated to the subject of television is a testament to the journal's high quality and dedication to advancing critical studies on Italian America. I hope you, our readers, will think so too and will continue to help support and promote the *Italian American Review* in the years to come.

Notes

1. These topics are explored in Tomchuk (2015), Teeters-Eichacker (2015), and Vullo (2016).

Works Cited

- Teeters-Eichacker, Mary Jane. 2015. *A Woman's Journey: From Sicily to Indianapolis*. Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Tomchuk, Travis. 2015. *Transnational Radicals: Italian Anarchists in Canada and the U.S., 1915–1940*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.
- Vullo, Luca, dir. 2016. *Influx. Europe is moving*. Em Production.