

invite careful watching and listening, creating complex impressions. These complexities mirror Totó's ambivalent nature, as he is caught between his Italian roots and his need to rebel against those very traditions. Thus, *Totó* is a work of defamiliarization, where what is habitual is shown in a new way, so that the viewer sees the world from a different perspective. It is well worth the effort.

—FRANK P. TOMASULO

*City College of New York, City University of New York*

### Works Cited

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*Pane Amaro (Bitter Bread): The Italian American Journey from Despised Immigrants to Honored Citizens.*

By Gianfranco Norelli and Suma Kurien.

Euros Productions, 2009.

103 minutes. DVD format, color and black and white.

*Pane amaro (Versione Rai Tre)*

By Gianfranco Norelli and Suma Kurien.

Euros Productions, 2010.

104 minutes. DVD format, color and black and white.

In Italy the phrase *pane amaro* (bitter bread), evoking the story of exodus, has long been used by poets and writers to describe the pain of exile, separation, and loss—a reminder of the sacrifices made in the hope of a better future. In 1925, the Neapolitan song "Lacrime Napuletane" (Neapolitan tears) explicitly linked the phrase to the experience of early twentieth-century transnational migration. Produced and directed by Gianfranco Norelli and Suma Kurien, *Pane Amaro* anchors the history of Italian migration to the United States between 1880 and 1950 in the heartbreak, violence, and possibilities of prosperity underpinning the decision to emigrate. This finely crafted documentary traces how American racial ideology fell hard on the first generation of immigrants, placing all Italians below white Americans in the racial order that defined status, rights, and opportunities. The marginalization and denigration of Italians informed migrant settlement patterns, social relations, and politics. Yet, as the subtitle of the film suggests, many of the immigrants who stayed ultimately triumphed, carving out new communities and lives in North America. Italian migrants and Italian Americans came to play an active role in shaping American society and politics well into the twentieth century. Weaving together a wealth of material culled from print,

film, and interviews with scholars and members of the community, the film provides a powerful and compelling story of how Italian migrants became Italian American.

In Norelli and Kurien's telling, the migrant experience is rooted in violence. The film opens panning over a postcard from 1910, depicting the lynching of two Italians in Tampa, Florida. Thirty-nine Italians were lynched in the United States between 1886 and 1916. In American history, lynching is generally understood as the brutal legacy of slavery and reconstruction. Lynching, a form of racial discipline, speaks volumes to the Italian experience in the United States. In the Reconstruction South, a person's social, economic, and political status depended on the perceived color of his or her skin. Southern Italians, who constituted the majority of Italian migrants who came to work in the cotton and cane industries in the South, could not be marked as either white or black as defined by U.S. culture and law and did not fit easily into the racial hierarchy. Their presence challenged the boundaries of the U.S. Southern racial order and left the migrants socially, economically, and physically vulnerable.

The racial violence that marked the Italian immigrant experience in the South was fused with the social Darwinism of late nineteenth-century America and permeated national politics and culture. The film depicts how from the moment Italian migrants began arriving in the United States they entered into a world that assumed all Italians to some extent, but southern Italians in particular, were genetically inferior, intellectually stunted, violent, and cunning. The "stiletto-wielding Italian" seeped into popular culture, leaving all Italian migrants suspect of being *mafiosi*.

The framing of the Italian immigrant experience through the lens of American racial hierarchies is one of the great strengths of the documentary. Historians have only recently explored the ways in which race shaped the meanings of ethnicity among European migrants, and very few students of U.S. migration know the racial history of Italians. Therefore, it is worth noting that the images of the degenerate, knife-wielding Sicilian *mafioso* were not purely a product of U.S. racial fears. Although the filmmakers focus exclusively on the U.S. experience, the figure of the backward, violent southern Italian was inextricably linked to the making of modern Italy. Politicians, doctors, scholars, and journalists had long written about the genetic, cultural, and social differences that distinguished northern Italians from southern Italians. Italian stereotypes took on a new life in the United States, albeit with different consequences—in Italy these ideas strengthened regional and local divisions, whereas in the United States they served to erode the barriers marked by culture, language, and history. Because all Italians were branded with negative stereotypes, southern Italians lost their distinctive characteristics in relation to other Italians in the eyes of Americans. Fierce local allegiances that defined individual and collective identities were replaced with the name *Italian*.

Shifting from the ways in which all Italians, to a greater or lesser degree, were stereotyped and slandered, the film focuses on the particular experiences of migrants who settled in the New York City area. Here the story moves to more familiar ground. Through interviews with first- and second-generation immigrants, the film beautifully documents life in Little Italy in lower Manhattan and East Harlem to the north. The importance of family, church, and community shines through in the memories of those who grew up in these neighborhoods. These depictions of immigrant life, recognizable to readers of popular histories of American immigration or visitors to historical sites such as the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, tell a story of resistance to the racialized

stereotypes that engulfed Italian migrants. In the Little Italies, informal (neighborhood) and formal (mutual aid societies) networks reinforced regional and village identities. Kin networks maintained ties to the villages they left behind. As the filmmakers so eloquently document through interviews and letters, within the intimate space of family the pain of physical separation is manifest. For those who chose to stay in America, anger, guilt, and love flowed back and forth. The film makes it clear that within the community, local allegiances were reconfigured but never disappeared.

In the New York City region, Italian migrants found work in the burgeoning garment trades and manufacturing and construction industries. Poorly paid and performing dangerous work, many joined in the early unionization efforts, and the film delves deeply into this history of radical Italian-American politics. Norelli and Kurien place the emergence of Italian anarchists and labor activists in the industrial cities of the Northeast against the backdrop of the growing fears of radical politics across the United States. Italian anarchists, in particular those who advocated violence, became targets of the U.S. government. Despite the efforts to squash the radical movements, Italian workers in New York and New Jersey were active in the growing workers' rights campaigns, and by the 1930s many of these movements fused with anti-Fascist campaigns. In the aftermath of World War II, Italian-American political leaders actively supported progressive causes and the civil rights movements on a national scale.

Alongside the history of struggle and resistance, the film traces the competing story of assimilation. Through settlement houses and schools the government sought to remake Italian immigrants into American citizens. Although the effort to erase Italian culture and to track children labeled as slow into vocational schools fostered a deep distrust toward schooling and government institutions, the emergence of college-educated community leaders and nationally recognized politicians (e.g., Leonard Covello, Fiorello LaGuardia, and Vito Marcantonio) attests to the appearance of a new Americanized Italian. For Norelli and Kurien, World War II marks the culmination of the process of assimilation. The patriotism of the Italians who rushed to join the U.S. Army speaks to the growing sense of belonging. As the film points out, assimilation did not mean acceptance or equality. Italian Americans continued to be suspected of disloyalty and duplicity, and many were arrested and detained under the Enemy Alien Act. Yet, the war was a watershed. In the postwar years, the children and grandchildren of the prewar migrants moved from the cities into the suburbs, and new immigrants moved into Harlem and lower Manhattan. As the filmmakers remind us in the conclusion, the violence, loss, sadness, community, and joy entwined in the history of Italian Americans echoes in the stories of all migrants.

As fascinating as the stories of Luigi Galleani, Nicola Sacco, Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Carlo Tresca, Covello, and LaGuardia are, they are only part of the history of Italians in America. The film is so powerful that at times one forgets that these are the experiences of Italians who settled in the Northeast. Although the history told here would resonate among those who grew up in Italian-American communities in many industrial towns across the country, for those who made their homes in the smaller cities and towns of the Midwest, South, or the West coast it may not. Italian Americans, even those from the Northeast, were not as uniformly radical or progressive in their politics as the film suggests. This is not necessarily the story of shopkeepers, fishermen, miners, lawyers, doctors, or women. While Norelli and Kurien point to the divisions within the New

York City community, focusing on the figure of Generoso Pope, a media tycoon and business man who emerged as a strong supporter of Mussolini, they do not explicitly acknowledge the regional and class divisions that marked the history of the Italian-American experience. The desire to incorporate personal narratives and tell a visually and emotionally compelling story requires a local perspective; however, recognizing the particular location of the subjects of the film would have made the film even stronger.

The Italian version of the film was broadcast on Rai in 2007, two years before the English edition appeared in the United States. The Italian production is particularly significant. For too long the history of Italian emigrants has been marginalized within Italian historiography. Scholars have focused on the economic, political, and social impact of emigration and repatriation but have only rarely considered the experiences of the migrants who settled overseas as part of the history of Italy. As Italy struggles to make room for a new generation of immigrants, *Pane amaro* offers a well-timed reminder to Italians of the violence and pain inherent in a migrant's journey from outsider to insider.

—LINDA REEDER  
*University of Missouri*

*Ho fatto il mio coraggio.*

By Giovanni Princigalli.

Héros Fragiles Cinéma Art Culture & Production, 2009.

50 minutes. DVD format, color.

Love letters and photographs sent across thousands of miles are valuable cultural artifacts that have spurred the imaginations of countless women and men in their thoughts (and dreams) about marriage and migration. Montreal-based Italian-Canadian filmmaker Giovanni Princigalli transforms these memories into visual life stories in his documentary film *Ho fatto il mio coraggio* (I got up my courage). To view this documentary is to gaze through a stream of filmic poetry and catch a glimpse of humanity in a myriad of constellations. Princigalli's profound sensitivity and respect for his theme and interviewees are acutely rendered in his visual style that gives center stage to the experiences retold by Italian-Canadian women and men. Filmed mostly on the premises of the Conseil Régional des Personnes Agées Italo-Canadiennes (Regional Senior Council for Italian Canadians), the Centro Donne Italiane di Montreal (Italian Women's Centre of Montreal), and in the migrants' homes, the film features women and men who emigrated from Italy's southern regions (Abruzzo, Apulia, Campania, and Molise) to Montreal in the 1950s and 1960s, the decades that saw the highest concentration of Italians immigrating to Canada.

While the film does not discuss immigration policy and statistics on Italian postwar migration to Canada, some background knowledge is useful here. In the decades following World War II, over half a million men, women, and children arrived from Italy to settle in cities such as Montreal, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Vancouver and in