

Notes

1. Professor Shannon King's ongoing research on policing in 1940s New York promises to deepen our understanding of another key feature of racialized governance under La Guardia.
2. Text and video of Cuomo's 1984 convention speech can be found at <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/01/02/374529943/watch-mario-cuomos-1984-speech-to-democratic-convention> (accessed June 19, 2018).

Works Cited

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- McElvaine, Robert S. 1988. *Mario Cuomo*. New York: Scribner.

Bound by Distance: Rethinking Nationalism through the Italian Diaspora.

By Pasquale Verdicchio.

New York: Bordighera Press, 2016.

234 pages.

As Pasquale Verdicchio writes in "Prefacing the Preface," this is not a revision but an updated paperback edition of a book first published in 1997. His motivation for this edition has been to utilize the Italian case to expand the current dialog about rethinking nationalism, a timely issue given the contentious political climate in many countries. This edition has been enhanced with the addition of several notes that update the text, clarify how terminology has shifted, and address political and literary developments since the book's original publication.

Verdicchio's study employs the theories of Antonio Gramsci and Gayatri Spivak to argue that the "feigned homogeneity" (xv) of the Italian nation is a postunification construct purchased at the price of the colonization of Southern Italy by the North with its attendant constructions of Southern Italians as "backwards" and "racially other." Interrogating this historical colonization, Verdicchio analyzes works from the Italian literary canon alongside those by emigrant Italians and by filmmaker Elvira Notari and author/filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Chapter 1, "The South as National Dissonant Subject," traces the history of Italy's unification in 1861 to demonstrate that the overthrow of foreign powers managed only to replace one oppressive colonial power with a new elite, the Northern Italian territories, and suggests that the colonization of the South had roots in the Roman Empire's expansionist program. This chapter also outlines

the role of Francesco Crispi's government (1887–1891, 1893–1896) in solidifying the repression of Southern Italy by the North and racializing Southern Italians. It demonstrates how the nationalist literature of Ippolito Nievo, Giovanni Pascoli, and Enrico Corradini was utilized in the discourse of repression enacted in the name of nation building.

The second chapter, "Subaltern Written/The Subaltern Writing," focuses on the construction of the "Neapolitan stereotype," the "Gennariello": the streetwise street urchin character in works by Pasolini and Notari. The author reads the Gennariello figure as embodying regional diversity and resistance to the homogenizing discourses of nationalism and the personification of Pasolini's invective against society. Verdicchio supports the interpretation of Pasolini's views of the Gennariello character as an expression of the subaltern, with the power to revolutionize society. At the same time, that very revolutionary power would be compromised if appropriated by bourgeois discourses such as national programs for education. Verdicchio is aware that "any attempt for Gennariello to . . . act according to Pasolini's suggestions would be an act of conformism, exactly what the author warns against" (88).

Chapter 3, "Bound by Distance: The Italian Immigrant as Decontextualized Subaltern," presents a convincing argument that the Italian literary canon should be enlarged to include the writings of those who left Italy, such as Pietro di Donato, John Fante, Dodici Azpadu, Dôre Michelut, Antonio D'Alfonso, Marco Micone, and Mary Bucci Bush, regardless of the language of their texts. The author traces the particular social place assigned to Southern Italian immigrants in Canada and the United States and their history as racialized, ethnic minority. He explores the intersection of race and class in his analysis of the role of Italian American characters in Spike Lee's films *Do the Right Thing* and *Jungle Fever*, to argue that the racial ambiguity assigned to Southern Italians has an economic base and historical connections to the repressionist discourses essential to Italy's unification.

The final chapter, "A New Way of Being Gramscian," takes its title from Pasolini's belief that cultural renewal was possible by applying Gramsci's ideas beyond their narrow appropriation by the Italian Communist Party. Verdicchio here positions Gramsci within the framework of cultural studies as a way of expanding what he sees as the field's use of a series of limiting binary oppositions (inside/outside, black/white). The author contends that efforts to fit Gramsci's thought within a strict Marxist tradition have culminated in situating Gramsci into "a white, Eurocentric, first-world context" (182), an error Verdicchio strives to correct. As a corrective, he points to Gramsci's views on folklore as a way of recuperating the regionalism and heterogeneity that nationalism ignores or erases, and he continually stresses the need to read Gramsci's works not as pure theory but as a theoretical stance inseparable from Gramsci's own position

as a Southern Italian with regionalist preoccupations. Verdicchio also introduces early texts produced by migrant authors in Italy (the novel *Immigrato*, by the Tunisian Salah Methnan with Mario Fortunato; the novel *Io, venditore di elefanti*, by the Senegalese Pap Kouma; and the memoir *Volevo diventare bianca*, by the French-Algerian Nassera Chohra) as another kind of challenge to the discourse on the formation of a homogenous Italian national identity. Further examples of “new ways of being Gramscian” include a brief discussion of two social phenomena: first, the spread of Centri Sociali Occupati Autonomi (CSOA, Autonomous Occupied Social Centers, now called CSA, or Centri Sociali Autogestiti), social centers independent of traditional sponsorship by a political party that created social spaces where workers, students, and residents of the neighborhood could meet to discuss and confront relevant issues such as the integration of migrants and the proliferation of drug use and organized crime); and second, the adaptation of hip-hop by Southern Italian musicians.

In the more than twenty years since this book’s first publication, the cultural works outlined in its final chapter have increased dramatically in scale and number, inviting fresh analyses of the artistic production by more recent multicultural writers and musicians in Italy. The author’s new notes in the final chapter clearly acknowledge the need for a more extended analysis of this growing field, even as a fuller treatment of contemporary multicultural migration literature in Italy would have made a text that now stands as a cohesive volume into a very different project.

The book’s arguments about the connection of racial and ethnic hierarchies to the repression of otherness in the discourse of national superiority resonate loudly in the current social and political context, with the heightened awareness of racial conflict, the antimigrant hysteria, and the rise of populist nationalisms. This volume also serves to highlight how cultural studies approaches have done much to expand many diverse strains of academic inquiry. It remains a revealing reflection both on how far society has come and on how much progress remains to be made, at a time when culture continues to be “bound by distance.”

—MARIE ORTON
Brigham Young University