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Mobilities and Citizenship: Rethinking Migrations, Individual and Collective Civil Rights, and Their Representations

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Mobilities and Citizenship: Rethinking Migrations, Individual and Collective Civil Rights, and Their Representations

Valerio Massimo De Angelis and Maddalena Tirabassi

Introduction

In February 2018, the mission statement of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a federal agency charged with immigrant affairs, was radically changed, and the words "America's promise as a nation of immigrants," promoting "an awareness and understanding of citizenship" along with "ensuring the integrity of our immigration system," were deleted, to be substituted with the intimation that the immigration policy of the USA must tend towards "adjudicating requests for immigrant benefits" while "protecting Americans" and "securing the homeland." This stark opposition between "immigrants" and "Americans" tells a lot about the recent and brutal dismantling of what, since the founding of the first English Colonies in North America, has always been one of the central tenets of the American concepts of national identity, citizenship, and civil rights – *i.e.*, the inextricable interconnection between the endless flow of migration waves and the necessity to insert them in a social and political structure inevitably bound to continually redefine both itself and the set of duties and rights upon which belonging to "America" as its citizens is based. This special section aims at exploring the complex and contradictory development of this dynamics, and the ways in which it has been represented, celebrated and criticized by American culture.

The articles selected deal with diverse issues and from very different perspectives. They go from legislation and official politics to autobiography and personal experience, and literary representation. Up to the Obama administration the watershed was 9/11. But, as the essays in this issue well show, the real turning point in migratory policies takes place with Trump: before him the two major parties had found an overall agreement on immigration, seeing both its pros and cons, and trying to govern the migratory flows so that they could be integrated into the fabric

of US society and culture – more often than not in very ambiguous and equivocal ways, up to the point that under President Obama, who in his first Inaugural Address celebrated "our patchwork heritage" and firmly stated that "[w]e are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this earth" (Obama 2009, n. pag.), the removal of illegal immigrants was, as Ayman Al Sharafat shows in his article on "Attitudes of the United States' Presidents Towards Immigration," comparatively higher than during both George W. Bush's two terms and Donald Trump's first two years of presidency.

As a matter of course, twentieth- and early twenty-first-century US policies on immigration and citizenship have greatly varied according to the different historical situations, and also to the different national/ethnic/religious groups involved. The mythical connection of the granting of US citizenship with having been born on the America soil – the *jus soli* – has been repeatedly questioned and overridden when issues of political convenience suggested the drawing of a boundary between "natives" and newcomers to ensure a check on mobilities that could otherwise be bolstered by the presumed easiness of becoming "American" and thus radically change the ethno/demographic outlook of the nation, potentially undermining a WASP hegemony which has never been really infringed. But the open and loud hostility of the current administration against migrants and their desire to acquire US citizenship is a paradigmatic shift, as it is shown by Trump's recent racist insults against non-white Congresswomen such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna Pressley, Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, all invited to "go back home" – and Omar is the only one who was not born in the USA. On the other hand, this shift can also be – at least partially – seen as the logical consequence, brought to its extremes, of a long history of a more or less systematic discrimination, marginalization, and even criminalization of the racialized "others" coming from somewhere else and claiming the right to be accepted as "Americans."

An example of this strategy can be found in the manifold contradictions, inconsistencies and difficulties Asian immigrants had to face in order to apply for American citizenship and naturalization studied by Stefano Luconi's in "The Color of Citizenship: Asian Immigrants to the United States and Naturalization between 1870 and 1952," which focuses on

the period between the adoption of the 1870 Naturalization Act and the congressional approval of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter Act). In so doing the article adopts an approach that scores two major points. First, it shows how the cultural construction of race entered the judicial discourse and courts' pronouncements. Through the analyses of courts' judgments and rulings, the author also gives a good and clear analysis of the ways in which "racial discourse" evolved and encompassed issues like skin color, religion and culture at large. Besides, the article explores the cultural construction of races and the idea that Christianity and certain kinds of cultural backgrounds could be a shortcut for the whitening of non-white migrants, discussing some cases in which on the one hand Asian applicants tried to exploit voids in US naturalization laws and on the other judges and courts felt the need to variously redefine the criteria for the definition of "Asian." The 1870 Naturalization Act granted migrants from Africa and their descendants the right to apply for US citizenship. As a result, while blacks joined whites among the potential beneficiaries of this measure, Asians were excluded from the naturalization process until the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act repealed the "alien ineligibility to citizenship" clause from US immigration legislation. The article thus points out the paradoxes engendered by the equivocal use of race as a pathway to citizenship, and helps understand the ever-changing attitude of the US political and judicial system in dealing with the issues of migration and citizenship.

George W. Bush "introduced a number of concepts that would become hallmarks of the post-9/11 rhetoric," and, by "employing terms such as 'American,' 'citizen' and patriot,'" he "outlined an ideal spectrum of social and political identity," states Alice Balestrino. Her reading of Amy Waldman's *The Submission* takes us to the turning point of the debate, with a novel that, she argues, "questions the sharp discrimination between the three groups" amplified by the terrorists' attack, "by depicting a fictional backdrop against which US social cohesion – nominally encouraged but, in fact, undermined by the post-9/11 rhetoric of 'us vs. them'" and media patriotism – "is torn apart, leading to a split in the comprehension of the notion of safety itself." The rhetorical distinction between "American," "citizen" and "patriot" indeed opens a way to a realignment of the criteria

of national identification that creates a hierarchy of positions, so that belonging to the "United States" is not anymore a matter of legal status but of personal adhesion to a system of values – and, besides, one's location along the spectrum of different levels of national allegiance is subject to a constant and obsessively securitarian scrutiny, that can lead to social ostracism. Another paradox comes in: the search for absolute security produces its exact opposite – the loss of any sense of safety for a wide range of individuals and ethnic or religious groups, especially those of recent "Americanization," who are thus displaced from the former spatial mobility and precariousness of migration (which they hoped to have exchanged for the stability promised by the new country) to a renewed social and cultural instability enforced by the logic of the "clash of civilizations."

In "Attitudes of the United States Presidents Toward Immigration" Ayman Al Sharafat examines how the redefinition of these notions has been reflected in and triggered by the three Presidents' policies towards immigration during the period from 2001 to 2018. He shows that while US immigration entry policies under the Lyndon B. Johnson administration and after became a hallmark of ideological openness, designating the United States as the unquestioned leader of a freer and fairer world order, in the aftermath of 9/11 both the domestic and the international security scenarios changed, affecting the immigration debate. Increased security threats gradually pushed the discussion on migration towards issues of national security, mainly in the form of increased entry restrictions. Donald Trump's approach to immigration maintains the tone of urgency introduced with 9/11. By analyzing a number of presidential documents, Al Sharafat is able to demonstrate that while Bush and Obama, albeit from different parties, shared a similar attitude toward immigration, appreciating its benefits notwithstanding the security issues, Trump has unashamedly exploited the fears of the public opinion regarding any possible "alien" threat to overturn the previous general consensus about the United States being fundamentally a nation of migrants – and this, we might add, is also part of the widespread phenomenon of the rise and consolidation of populist and nationalist movements throughout the Western world (and beyond).

How much the ongoing debate on migration and citizenship in the USA resonates with what is just now happening in Italy is made clearly

evident in Lindsey Kingston's "Healing the Scars of Forced Migration: An Italian-American Story," which not only combines and compares the historical emigration from Italy to the current immigration flows, but also examines past and present migration policies in the USA and Italy. This multiple perspective is achieved through an original approach, with the author going back and forth between her personal experience and historical events. In addition, immigration laws are seen for once from a third-generations immigrant perspective. In this research-informed essay, the author also connects her Italian American heritage (and the political processes by which Italians "became" white and American) to current migration issues within the United States and Italy. She argues that migration comes with consequences, good and bad, such as the loss of home as much as the gaining of a new one. "By telling stories from our own families, and by recognizing the complicated and sometimes ugly histories from countries such as the United States and Italy", she contends, "we can begin to re-humanize migrants in our political discussions," and also to create a much wider comparative horizon that may go far beyond the scope of scholarly research, and reach to different individual and collective experiences of migration, to be compared not only "from the outside," through the observer's gaze, but also "from the inside," thanks to the exchange of personal stories of migration – something that should be systematically done both in Italy and the USA, and elsewhere.

The complexity of the issues involving migrant identities in search of some sort of recognition of their distinct "Americanness" is addressed in Lin Ling's article on *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Mojha Kahf's bestseller published in 2006, which explores the representation of diasporic Muslim identities in a coming-of-age narrative. Li Ling examines how religious diasporic hybrid identity is mobilized within the female protagonist Khadra Shamy, including the ways she struggles to negotiate her identity across different cultural terrains and gendered, racialized, intergenerational configurations. It attempts to show how these literary representations construct – and help conceptualize – the ways we understand diasporic Muslims in the USA. The individual experiences as narrated in the novel illuminate a series of essential socio-political questions facing the community as a religious minority in a secular context. The study addresses these questions through the representation of cultural hybridity in the

literary narrative within the framework of postcolonial theory, and shed new lights within the so called diasporic "cultural clashes between Islamic and American social mores and norms, inter-generational conflicts between first-generation Muslim immigrants and subsequent generations, race relations among Muslims with differing cultural origins and theoretical allegiances, and the varying interpretations of Islamic codes among the community." The use of the veil, the way the protagonist wears or rejects it, epitomizes this multiplicity.

It is this same multiplicity – of issues, of methodologies, of perspectives, of the geo-cultural locations of their authors – which characterizes the five articles as a whole. We hope that their different approaches may shed some new light on the current debate about the interconnections involving the processes of global mobilities and the changing status of US citizenship, and on the contradictions all this is engendering.

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Stefano Luconi

The Color of Citizenship: Asian Immigrants to the United States and Naturalization between 1870 and 1952[1]

Introduction

Penning his veto message of the McCarran-Walter Bill in 1952, US President Harry S. Truman admitted that the proposed piece of legislation had at least one merit: "All racial bars to naturalization would be removed" (Truman 441). The measure aimed at reiterating the bigoted national origins system that had been discriminating against prospective immigrants from Eastern and Southern European countries since the 1920s. Yet, it also intended to revoke the 1924 ban on immigration from Japan (the so-called Japanese Exclusion Act) and to put a definitive end to the prohibition of naturalization for the subjects of a few Asian countries, primarily Japan, the only category of aliens who had not been theretofore entitled to apply for American citizenship after the required five consecutive years of legal residence on US soil. The two provisions were strictly intertwined because the standstill of the Japanese inflows explicitly resulted from the disqualification of Tokyo's nationals for naturalization (see Ichihashi 63-64).

It was, therefore, hardly by chance that, as a memorandum to the President pointed out, Japanese Americans were the only ethnic minority that supported the McCarran-Walter Bill while all the other "major nationality groups" opposed it (Ewing n. pag.).[2] Actually, Tut Yata, the chairperson of the Pacific Southwest District Council of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), encouraged Truman to sign the bill into law on the grounds that it would delete "restrictions that have branded and stigmatized persons of Japanese ancestry as both undesirable and 'not good enough' for American citizenship" (Yata n. pag.). Likewise, Abe Hagiwara, the national president of the JACL, backed the bill because his "mother

who has resided in the United States for 35 years will at long last become eligible for citizenship. To many people like her America is home. This is where they have worked and lived. This is where they will rest forever" (Hagiwara n. pag.). Similarly, referring implicitly to Japanese Americans' allegiance to the United States during World War II, Joseph R. Farrington, the US delegate from the territory of Hawaii, contended that "it would be most unfortunate if, after all the sacrifices that have been made particularly by the Americans of Oriental ancestry in demonstrating their loyalty to this country, the fight to remove racial restrictions from our immigration laws is lost" (Farrington n. pag.).

Naturalization privileges and a token immigration quota for the Japanese, as the McCarran-Walter Bill provided for, were good politics in strengthening the relations between Tokyo and Washington within the context of the Cold War. Overall, however, the drawbacks seemed to overcome the benefits for US foreign policy. Truman vetoed the McCarran-Walter Bill because he concluded that its national origins quotas were too prejudiced against prospective newcomers from Greece, Italy, and Turkey, three countries that were key to Washington's containment of communism in Europe as members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, Congress eventually overturned Truman's veto. Consequently, the biased national origins quotas continued to be implemented. But the last vestiges of racial discrimination in the bestowal of US citizenship were swept away from American statutes in 1952.

At the time of the political debate about the McCarran-Walter Bill, joining forces with fellow officers Yata and Hagiwara, Mike Masaoka, the national legislative director and chief lobbyist of the JACL, reminded Truman's secretary that his ethnic association had been "dedicated to trying to secure naturalization privileges for our alien parents and repeal of the Japanese Exclusion Act of 1924 for more than a quarter of a century" (Masaoka n. pag.). Nonetheless, legislative lobbying by itself was unable to cause major revisions of the naturalization legislation. Actually, by the time the McCarran-Walter Act rescinded the "aliens ineligible to citizenship" clause for Asian immigrants (qtd. in Parker 25), several previous court rulings had already reassessed this provision and had managed to limit its effects for other-than-Japanese newcomers.

The legal identification of an Asian person was not intuitive. The contours of Asia turned out to be somehow blurred when it came to peoples residing in regions bordering with Europe and Africa. So was the color of Asians' complexion. Both ambiguities paved the way for court litigation on the part of immigrants from these regions who wanted to overcome restrictions on naturalization. By drawing primarily upon a few landmark cases before the Supreme Court and lower federal courts, this article highlights the efforts of a few Asian-born applicants who endeavored to exploit loopholes in the law to become US citizens. It also examines the racial and religious criteria to which federal judges eventually resorted in order to establish who was Asian and, thereby, not eligible for naturalization and accommodation within US society.

Actually, jurisprudence was not only a means of disentangling from often inconsistent and conflicting biological criteria for the definition of whiteness, as Ian F. Haney López has argued while extending the contingent notion of race from the field of social sciences to the legal sphere and Tom K. Wong has more recently reiterated, suggesting that "race in the United States is a legally constructed concept" (Wong 27). Since naturalization is "a significant index of the integration of the foreign born into American life" (Bernard 100), it can be easily suggested that the action of granting immigrants the host country's citizenship was also the quintessential instrument by which the adoptive land accommodated newcomers. Therefore, the standards set for naturalization were tantamount to the criteria for the acceptance or rejection of strangers and, consequently, can aptly cast light on the profile of the ideal immigrants by the standards of the US mainstream of the time.

This article focuses on how the socio-cultural construction of races helped shape jurisprudence about the Asian immigrants' right to acquire US citizenship and, accordingly, on how courts' rulings contributed to defining the level as well as the range of inclusiveness of American society on the basis of a number of criteria that comprised skin complexion, religion, and culture as a whole. The essay also shows that Asian newcomers endeavored to exploit loopholes in the US naturalization legislation and tried to be classified as whites on the grounds of their blood, phenotype, Christian faith or cultural background, causing the courts to constantly

redefine the criteria to assess who was "Oriental." Finally, the article points to the influence of Washington's foreign policy on both the judicial pronouncements and the laws regulating naturalization.

Other-than-African "People of Color" and the Challenge to the Jus Soli

At the dawn of the Republic, to most legislators debating the rules for immigrants' prospective naturalization in the first Congress in 1790, US citizenship was to be regarded as a privilege that had to be restricted to a few qualified individuals (*Annals of Congress* 561-67). Consequently, in a primarily white society, where more than four fifths of residents were of Caucasian extraction and slaves from African background accounted for a majority of the remaining inhabitants according to the 1790 census, it was not surprising that naturalization was initially restricted on racial grounds to "free white persons" under the 1790 Naturalization Act, although this piece of legislation did not define exactly what made a white individual. After all, a few years earlier, when Benjamin Franklin deplored the alleged Germanization of Pennsylvania, he made a point of questioning the whiteness of immigrants from Germany on the grounds that they had a "swarthy complexion" to challenge the legitimacy of their presence in the territory that was still a British colony (Franklin 10).

In 1870, in the wake of the Civil War, radical Republicans tried to speed up the integration of former slaves within American society and to sweep away any possible discrimination against people of African origin and ancestry. In this context, the 1870 Naturalization Act extended the benefits of US citizenship also to newcomers who were "persons of African descent." This black-oriented measure, however, maintained the ambiguities about who a white individual was. It did not provide for Asian immigrants either, even though at that time more than 63,000 Chinese lived in the United States, where they had begun to settle, especially in the western regions, following California's 1848 gold rush (see Coolidge 146, 501).

In spite of the endeavors for the accommodation of people of African descent, postbellum US immigration policies continued to be racially

biased and xenophobic toward other-than-Caucasian newcomers. But, after the formal opening to blacks, the only remaining targets were Asians. Not only did Congress suspend the entry of Chinese workers in 1882: it extended it in 1892, and made it permanent in 1902. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act also designated these nationals as aliens ineligible for citizenship, reiterating the ban of naturalization for immigrants who were neither white nor from African background (Lyman 172).

Furthermore, federal authorities tried to interfere with the bestowal of American citizenship on Oriental newcomers' US-born children. The latter were supposed to be US nationals pursuant to the Fourteenth Amendment in their condition of "persons born [...] in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof." This provision, however, was specifically conceived within the legislative frame aiming at African Americans' incorporation. Its purpose was to nullify the Supreme Court's 1857 notorious decision that even "a free negro of the African race, whose ancestors were brought to this country and sold as slaves, is not a 'citizen' within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States" (Dred Scott v. Sandford 393). The Fourteenth Amendment was not intended for the progeny of Asian aliens and, therefore, attempts were made to understand it so as to prevent the measure from being applied to the offspring of Oriental immigrants.

Wong Kim Ark's experience offered a case in point. Born of Chinese immigrants in San Francisco in 1873, Wong was an American citizen by birthright. Yet, when he tried to return to the United States in 1895 after a visit to his parents' native country, his admission was denied. According to US district attorney Henry S. Foote, who argued the case on behalf of the federal administration, Wong had "been at all times, by reason of his race, language, color, and dress, a Chinese person" and, as such, was barred from entering the country by the 1882 statute (qtd. in Lee 72). The wording of the Fourteenth Amendment's citizenship clause apparently allowed an alternative interpretation to the jus soli. "Subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States might identify people who were not subject to the jurisdictions of another country. After all, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 – which the Fourteenth Amendment intended to shield from charges of unconstitutionality, thus providing insights into the legislators' intentions – granted US citizenship to "all persons born in the United States and not

subject to any foreign power" (Lash 115). This was not Wong's case on the grounds that he had inherited his parents' Chinese citizenship *jure sanguinis* and, therefore, was a subject of such another entity as China.

When the controversy reached the Supreme Court in 1898, for the bestowal of American citizenship on the children of other-than-white newcomers who were given birth in their parents' adoptive land, race – rather than nativity – became the litmus test in the words of Chief Justice Melville Weston Fuller. Actually, he contended that otherwise the US-born sons of a Mongolian or a Malay "were eligible to the presidency, while children of our citizens, born abroad, were not." Associate Justice John Marshall Harlan concurred because, in his view, the Chinese were "a race utterly foreign to us and never will assimilate with us" (qtd. in Przybyszewski 120-21). Remarkably, two years earlier, Harlan had fought – albeit in vain – against the "separate but equal" doctrine that had legitimized African Americans' segregation (see Luxenberg). His position on the rights of Chinese Americans as opposed to those of blacks provided additional evidence that color made the difference in the treatment of other-than-white nationals.

Yet, Fuller and Harlan were in the minority. Eventually, by a six to two decision, the Supreme Court upheld a federal district court ruling that had acknowledged Wong's citizenship by birthright. However, dissenters outside the legal arena continued to play on racial issues to criticize the jus soli. For instance, California's most authoritative newspaper, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, contended that the principle according to which individuals born "within the territory of the United States of all other persons, of whatever race of color," were US nationals set a dangerous precedent because it could lead to endowing not only the Chinese but also the Japanese, and even "native Indians," with citizenship and the ensuing franchise in the case of adult males ("Questions of Citizenship" 6). As this daily's subsequent campaign against an alleged "yellow peril" reached a climax in 1905, an Asian Exclusion League was established in order to lobby for a number of nativistic measures that included the repeal of birthright citizenship for the progeny of the Oriental immigrants who had already settled in the United States (see Ichihashi 284 and Shimazu 75). According to this organization, racial groups such as Asians had physical and mental

features that turned their members into "separate and distinct people with us but not of us," as well as a source of concern for the homogeneity of the US population (Asian Exclusion League 278-79).

Looking for Loopholes in the Citizenship Legislation

The proposal of the Asian Exclusion League led nowhere. But race remained a hindrance to the naturalization of Asian newcomers. The Ark verdict recognizing the jus soli did not affect the status of the Chinese who had settled in the United States before 1882. As immigrants from regions other than Europe and Africa, they continued to be considered ineligible for US citizenship. So did the Japanese, who were similarly affected by a restrictive reading of the qualification for naturalization, as Takao Ozawa found out for himself.

An immigrant from Japan who had moved to California in 1894 before settling in the territory of Hawaii in 1914, the following year Ozawa deluded himself into exploiting an apparent loophole in the legislation, namely the eligibility of "free white persons" without any further qualification, in the effort to become a US citizen. The Naturalization Act of 1906 had reiterated the color requirement. Still, the concept of whiteness was so vague for immigrants with light skin that the 1910 Census of the US population listed 1,368 naturalized Chinese and 400 naturalized Japanese (Ueda, "Naturalization and Citizenship" 741). Upon these precedents neither Ozawa nor his counselors challenged the discriminatory provision, but he played on his own fair complexion and contended that, since "my skin is white," he was "a white person" (qtd. in Spickard 171).

After being denied naturalization, Ozawa took his case all the way to the Supreme Court in 1922. Yet, unlike the decision in the case of Wong Kim Ark, this time the judges were less open-minded toward the plaintiff and unanimously upheld the lower courts' previous rulings, barring Ozawa from US citizenship. The US Solicitor General played on the issue of color in opposing Ozawa's appeal, as he stated that "the classification of the Japanese as members of the yellow race is practically the unanimous view" (qtd. in Kim 189). However, the verdict shifted the crux of the

controversy from color to race. On 13 November 1922 Associate Justice George Sutherland argued that the "color test" was impractical because it would cause "a confused overlapping of races and a gradual merging of one into the other, without any practical line of separation," and conversely the "determination that the words 'white person' are synonymous with the words 'a person of the Caucasian race' simplifies the problem"; against this backdrop, Ozawa was ineligible for citizenship because, as a Japanese, he was "clearly of a race which is not Caucasian" (Ozawa v. United States 197-98).

Yet, it took quite a short time for the Supreme Court not to live up to its new race-oriented criterion for naturalization in the Ozawa decision. A couple of months later, on 19 February 1923, Sutherland himself delivered the opinion of the Court in the case of Bhagat Singh Thind. A Sikh immigrant who had served in the US army during World War I, Thind was at first granted American citizenship, but his naturalization was soon revoked because he was neither white nor of African descent. He followed in Ozawa's footsteps as regards court litigation and argued that he was Caucasian and, thereby, white. His hypothesis seemed to be based on better reasons than Ozawa's thesis and eventually more suitable to cope with the Supreme Court's previous stand. Since the mid-nineteenth century, US anthropology had classified Asian Indians as Caucasians. It had also introduced a distinction between a fair-complexion "Aryan" group, which was connected to white Europeans, and a dark-skinned "Dravidian" counterpart, which was associated with black "Negroes" (Slate 86-87). Nonetheless, Thind's case seemed to be airtight. His brief pointed out that "[b]eing a high caste Indian and having no intermixture of Dravidian, or other alien blood, and coming from the Punjab, one of the most northwestern provinces of India, the original home of Aryan conquers, [...] it must be held that Bhagat Singh Thind belongs to the Caucasian or white race" (qtd. in Snow 264).

A court in Oregon agreed and naturalized him again, but the Immigration and Naturalization Service appealed the decision before the Supreme Court. Sutherland eventually concluded that the applicant was properly denied citizenship the first time on the grounds that being "Caucasian" did not equal being "a white person." These expressions had

the same meaning in "common speech" and "white" was "synonymous with the word 'Caucasian' only as that word is popularly understood," but the analogy was "not of scientific origin"; in particular, "Caucasian" was "at best a conventional term [...] which [...] has come to include [...] not only the Hindu but some of the Polynesians (that is the Maori, Tahitians, Samoans, Hawaiians, and others), the Hamites of Africa, [...] though in color they range from brown to black" (United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind 211, 214-15, 211). In other words, the notion of a Caucasian race, which was at the core of Ozawa v. United States, was no longer the litmus test to qualify for naturalization, and color was again the criterion for eligibility in United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind.

Blood, Color, and Phenotypes

The anthropological foundation of the Supreme Court's reversal from the Ozawa case to the Thind verdict was not unprecedented in US jurisprudence. The one-drop rule had been the legal principle of racial classification in the United States at least since the notorious 1896 case of Plessy v. Ferguson, a verdict based on hypo-descent, namely the notion that one African ancestor made a person black even if the latter looked phenotypically white and had more Caucasian than black forebears (see Davis 8-9). This principle shaped naturalization cases, too. In 1912, for instance, the son of a German man and a Japanese woman, who was "a subject of the Emperor of Germany," had his petition for naturalization rejected because he was not considered white on his maternal side; specifically, in elaborating on the verdict, the judge pointed out that "the right to become a naturalized citizen of the United States depends upon parentage and blood, and not upon nationality" ("In Re Young" 378). In the same year, partial European ancestry was not enough for the naturalization of Eugenio Alverto, a former sailor in the US navy with one Spanish and three Filipino grandparents. His petition for naturalization was rejected on the grounds that he did not have pure white blood because "ethnologically speaking" he was "one-fourth of the white or Caucasian race and three-fourth of the brown or Malay race" (qtd. in Baldoz 77). Such a doctrine long survived in

cases about aliens' racial identity in courts. As late as 1934, discussing the Japanese's complexion in a controversy concerning property rights, Justice Benjamin Cardozo still argued that "men are not white if the strain of colored blood in them is a half or a quarter, or, not improbably, even less" (Morrison v. California 86).

However, the one-drop rule was not always applied in deciding about eligibility for naturalization when it affected people of alleged Asian roots outside this region. In 1908 John Svan, an immigrant from Finland who had settled in Minnesota, was denied naturalization on the grounds that Finns had Mongolic blood because, at the time of their maximum expansion, the Mongols had allegedly occupied Finland and crossbred with the local population. Svan appealed the decision and the federal district court for Minnesota granted him US citizenship. The judge, William A. Cant, agreed that Finns were of Mongolian extraction. But he also added that the region's frigid temperatures and the subsequent settlement of Teutons had whitened the Finns to the effect that, by the early twentieth century, they had placed themselves "among the whitest people in Europe" (qtd. in Kivisto and Leinonen 12), which entitled them to naturalization. To Cant, color, rather than race, was the paramount issue to be considered: "Finns with a yellow or brown or yellow-brown skin or with black eyes or black hair would be an unusual sight. They are almost universal of light skin, blue or gray eyes, and light hair"; Finns could have been "yellow" a few centuries earlier, but the matter was no longer relevant in 1908: "The question is not whether a person had or had not such an ancestry, but whether he is now a 'white person' within the meaning of that term as generally understood" (qtd. in Cameron 19).

Reverting to a phenotypic classification of applicants for US citizenship in United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind, Justice Sutherland reiterated an established principle of jurisprudence that he had only temporarily waived in Ozawa v. United States. A few years later, the Supreme Court further restated the primacy of color over race to define the identity of the people from Asian background in a controversy concerning school segregation. In 1924 the Board of Education in Bolivar County, Mississippi, barred Martha Lum from the Rosedale Consolidated High School on account of her Chinese extraction. Her father, Jeu Gong Lum, took legal action.

Contrary to what Adrienne Berard has maintained in a recent but rather sensationalistic study overrating the implications of the case, he did not dispute racial segregation in Southern public education. He confined himself to contending that the school authorities had failed to realize his daughter's Chinese ancestry and had, therefore, incorrectly classified her as a "colored" student. In 1927 Chief Justice William Howard Taft argued in favor of state rights, holding that Martha Lum could not be admitted to a school for white students and, *obiter dictum*, that the Chinese were "yellow" (Gong Lum v. Rice 81-82).

The Color of Religion

The Ozawa v. United States verdict was not the only exception to the identification of color as the main feature to determine the eligibility of Asian people to naturalization. These deviations regarded primarily immigrants from the Near East, a region at the crossroad of southern Europe, Asia, and Africa that made it even more complex to ascertain the newcomers' qualification for the bestowal of US citizenship.

In 1942, a US district court in Michigan rejected the petition for naturalization by Muslim Yemenite immigrant Ahmed Hassan. The applicant contended that "the Arabs are remote descendants of and therefore members of the Caucasian or white race," but the judge disagreed, and remarked that the "petitioner's skin is of somewhat darker complexion than that of many Arabs" and stated that, in any case, "Arabs as a class are not white." He also made a point of adding a further criterion that disqualified Hassan: religion. In his view, the immigrant's Islamic faith prevented the petitioner from complying with the efforts to offer an extensive interpretation for the meaning of "white." Assuming that the adjective was an equivalent of "European," the latter adjective's semantic and geographical fields could not be broadened to such an extent as to include the inhabitants of the Arabic peninsula, too. As the judge put it, apart "from the dark skin of the Arabs, it is well known that they are a part of the Mohammedan world and that a wide gulf separates their culture from that of the predominately Christian peoples of Europe" (In Re Ahmed

Hassan 845). Since the late nineteenth century, US jurisprudence had construed Islam as antagonistic and aggressive toward Christianity. For example, in 1891 the Supreme Court stressed that the "intense hostility of the people of Moslem faith to all other sects, and particularly to Christians, affected all their intercourse" (Ross v. McIntyre 465). In the view of the combination of the immigrants' required characteristics for naturalization as an implicit filter by which the assimilable foreign born could be set apart from unwelcome foreigners, such a perception of Islam was clearly a disincentive for the federal courts to acknowledge Muslim newcomers' eligibility for US citizenship.

Religion, therefore, was not unrelated to defining the color of Near Eastern immigrants in naturalization procedures. Such a criterion turned out to be an advantage for some of these newcomers. Unlike Muslim Arabs, Christian Syrians faced fewer difficulties in gaining US citizenship. Their main asset, as Sarah M.A. Gualtieri has pointed out, was not "any special phenotype," but "an emphasis on the Syrian connection to the Holy Land and Christianity" (Gualtieri 57).

George Shishim's experience demonstrated that religion had become a relevant argument when it came to Near Easterners' eligibility for US citizenship. A native of the Mount Lebanon region of the Ottoman empire, Shishim was both an Arab and a Christian Maronite. Addressing Judge George H. Hutton of the Los Angeles Superior Court in his own plea for naturalization in 1906, he cried out that "if I am Mongolian, so was Jesus, because we came from the same land" (qtd. in Kayyali 49). The remark, which drew on his Christian faith, won him the day. As the *Los Angeles Time* commented that the verdict had "made every feature of his dark, swarthy countenance radiate with pleasure and hope" by emphasizing that Shishim was not and did not look white, the newspaper implicitly acknowledged that religion had bleached Near Easterners. For them, therefore, Christianity offered a shortcut to whiteness ("Syrians Admitted" 18).

In an effort to demonstrate the existence of an Orientalist bias conflating Arab and Muslim characteristics in the eyes of the Federal courts in naturalization proceedings, Khaled A. Beydoun has contended that the association of Christianity with whiteness was not without challenge after the case of Shishim. He refers to the rejection of George Dow's quest for

citizenship in 1914 on the alleged grounds that, although the applicant was a Christian Maronite like Shishim, the judge concluded that "the petitioner's Arabic fluency was prima facie evidence of Muslim identity" (Beydoun 57). This interpretation is, however, misleading. The judge, Henry A.M. Smith, never "wanted to know whether George Dow [...] was a 'real' Christian," contrary to Beydoun's statement (57). Indeed, the verdict read that "the language spoken [...] is not by any means conclusive," and Dow was not naturalized because he looked "darker than the usual person of white European descent" (Ex Parte Dow 488, 486-87, 488). In any case, in 1915, the Fourth Court of Appeal reversed the decision and ruled that Syrians were "so closely related to their neighbors on the European side of the Mediterranean that they should be classed as white" (Dow v. United States 147). Religion, though, resurfaced as an issue in Dow's appeal, too. In order to confute Smith's assessment that Dow had "a sallow appearance" (Ex Parte Dow 487), the Syrian American Association proclaimed that "if Syrians were Chinese then Jesus who was born in Syria was Chinese" (qtd. in Blum and Harvey 149).

The concept of Christianity as a route to whiteness and, consequently, to naturalization that made it possible for Shishim to become a US national worked for Armenians, too. When Judges Charles E. Wolverton of the Oregon federal district court concluded in 1925 that Tatos O. Cartozian was eligible for citizenship, he listed among the applicant's qualifications the fact that Armenians "very early, about the fourth century, espoused the Christian religion" and, thereby, "have always held themselves aloof from the Turks, the Kurds, and allied peoples, principally, it might be said, on account of their religion, though color may have had something to do with it" (United States v. Cartozian 920). The closing passage of the verdict clearly reveals that in this case religion also prevailed over complexion to determine the immigrant's eligibility. The outcome was hardly surprising. If qualifications for naturalization were the equivalent of the required characteristics for acceptable newcomers in US society, Christianity well deserved a waiver against the backdrop of Armenians' vague racial status. Indeed, a few years earlier, in 1909, when another federal judge – Francis C. Lowell of Boston's Circuit Court – had bestowed citizenship on four of them, he had also remarked that his decision could not be regarded as definitive because

> Western Asiatics have become so mixed with Europeans during the past twenty-five centuries that it is impossible to tell whether they are white or should come under the statues excluding the inhabitants of that part of the world and applied usually to the yellow race. ("Citizenship for Armenians" 3)

With its reference to Armenians' hybridity, the verdict also made a further departure from the one-drop rule, following in the footsteps of the Svan case ruling of the previous year.

Yet, besides taking faith into account, the categorization of Near Eastern immigrants also resided in the contingency of politics. Examining Dow's plight in courts, Beydoun has suggested that the 1915 reversal of the previous denial of his petition for naturalization was in part related to the dynamics of World War I. In his opinion,

> Dow v. United States can be understood as a judicial declaration that called for the rescue of Christian minorities in the Arab World at a time when the Ottoman Empire – the primary political manifestation of Islam in 1915 – was at war with the European allied powers in World War I. (Beydoun 58)

However, in view of both US neutrality in that year and the fact that Washington never declared war on the Ottoman Empire even after joining the military conflict against Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1917, Beydoun's case seems to be built on flimsy and circumstantial evidence.

Conversely, US foreign policy was more influential in reshaping the preconditions for naturalization during World War II. The informal prerequisite of religion, which had barred Hassan from citizenship in 1942, was dropped two years later. In 1944 the Massachusetts district court naturalized another Muslim immigrant from Saudi Arabia, Mohamed Mohriez. In granting his petition, Judge Charles E. Wyzanski stated that "we as a country have learned that policies of rigid exclusion are not only false to our professions of democratic liberalism but repugnant to our vital interests as a world power" (Ex Parte Mohirez 943). It can be assumed that the consolidation of the US-Saudi relationships during World War

II and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's efforts to court King Bin Saud to gain access to Saudi oilfields discouraged further discrimination of Arab immigrants (see Hinds). After all, as Chinese President Chiang Kai Shek was another statesperson Washington intended to cultivate in wartime, at the end of the previous year the Magnusson Act repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, although it granted China only a symbolic number of immigration visas per year, and let only the Chinese who had settled in the United States before the 1882 apply for American citizenship (Lowe 19-20). As Roosevelt remarked in a message to Congress, such a piece of legislation was "important in the cause of winning the war [...]. China is our ally" (Roosevelt 427).

The international context contributed to redefining the image of the Chinese people in the eyes of US public opinion. A China "mystique," namely a romanticized and progressive perception of this country, emerged in response to Japan's mounting expansionism in the interwar years and came to a climax after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor (Leong 164-66). The ensuing emphasis on the similarities between the United States and its Asian ally in the war against Japan scaled down the notion that Chinese individuals were inassimilable. It, therefore, allowed for some openings in the legislation concerning their immigration and naturalization. If such people belonged to "a proud nation with a five-thousand-year civilization" (qtd. in Oyen 33), as the Citizens' Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion was quick to argue, excluding them from the bestowal of American citizenship was no longer feasible.

Conclusion

The pattern of discriminatory naturalization on color grounds came to a definitive end with the enforcement of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. The measure swept away the privileges that both white and black immigrants had enjoyed in their trajectory toward the achievement of US citizenship since 1790 (the former) and 1870 (the latter). Harry Takagi, a World War II veteran and the past president of the Seattle chapter of the JACL, commented that the measure "gave the Japanese equality with all

other immigrants" (qtd. in Takaki 400). However, as the main nationality groups that the naturalization legislation had theretofore continued to disqualify were the Japanese and the Koreans, it can be easily suggested that Washington's alliance with Tokyo and Seoul within the framework of its Cold War strategy was not alien to the repeal of the "aliens ineligible for citizenship" provision. With Japan and South Korea as the pillars of US foreign policy in Asia, the inclusion of their nationals within American society by means of naturalization was no longer inconvenient (Sang-Hee Lee 176). In any case, this achievement did not proceed from court litigation, but it resulted from the legislative pressures of the JACL (Takahashi 126-27). Such an outcome, however, offered evidence for the extent by which legislation about the bestowal of American citizenship was "dictated by the titanic showdown between the United States and the Soviet Union" (Spickard 328). The Cold War impacted more admission rules than naturalization policies (Daniels 335-37). Still, in those decades, Washington endeavored to ingratiate itself with foreign governments by making the latter's expatriates feel welcome in terms of the conferral of US citizenship, too. In addition, the dismantling of restrictions to newcomers' naturalization was instrumental in strengthening Washington's claim to the leadership of the so-called free world in the struggle against communism on the grounds of the inclusiveness of the American model of society (Ueda, "An Immigration Country" 46-47).

This article has emphasized the relevance of American jurisprudence in the cultural construction of races in the United States, resorting to the experience of the Orientals' quest for naturalization as a case study. In particular, it has highlighted the courts' continuous reshaping of the notion of "Asian" in the face of the calls for US citizenship on the part of immigrants from that part of the world. Legislative lobbyism drawing upon the international situation also played a role in redefining the criteria for granting naturalization and, therefore, establishing the conditions for the immigrants' fully-fledged accommodation within the adoptive US society.

The Asians' plight was not the only instance of shifting racial categorization for newcomers in the United States. Frey Matthew Jacobson has pointed to the fluidity of European immigrants' racial classification. In

his view, their whiteness had different shades that had changed over time since the beginning of the mass arrival of the single ethnic groups. Such hues implied diverse standings in US society, albeit subject to transformations, and could even mean discrimination for darker complexions. But, as Thomas A. Guglielmo has pointed out for Italian immigrants, their color itself was never legally challenged and, therefore, other-than-Anglo-Saxon European newcomers never faced restrictions in terms of property rights and, primarily, access to US citizenship. Italian expatriates' inclusion within the Caucasian group was particularly smooth in California, where the white/Asian polarity shaped the racial divide and the immigrants from Italy could easily distance themselves from the Chinese and the Japanese (see Cinotto 14-16, 134-45, 193; and Caiazza), as opposed to what happened in other parts of the country, where the white/black divide sometimes blurred the Italian newcomers' standing on the grounds of the olive complexion of many people from their motherland's southern regions (see Guglielmo and Salerno). Actually, it was the very implicit equation between entitlement to naturalization and whiteness which eventually enabled ethnic whites who had initially held an intermediate position between the Caucasian and the other-than-Caucasian peoples to become "white" (Roediger 182). This was definitely not the case for Asians. Their gradations of color legally mattered in terms of access to both naturalization and the ensuing rights. For instance, California's 1913 Alien Land Act, notoriously replete with anti-Japanese sentiments, prohibited foreigners ineligible for citizenship from owning agricultural estates. As John Tehranian has remarked about Asian immigrants, "[j]udicial declarations of whiteness affected economic and social freedoms" (Tehranian 61). To the plight of Asian immigrants, therefore, one can aptly apply the words James Baldwin used to describe the lot of African Americans as opposed to that of ethnic Europeans: "The Irish middle passage [...] was as foul as my own, and as dishonorable on the part of those responsible for it. But the Irish became white when they got here and began rising in the world, whereas I became black and began sinking" (Baldwin xx).

Notes

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[2] A prominent exception was Canadian-born Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa, then a lecturer at the University of Chicago and a future US Senator from California. He argued that "to secure the rights to naturalization of Issei at the cost of all the questionable and illiberal features of the McCarran-Walter Bill appears to be an act of unpardonable shortsightedness or cynical opportunism" (qtd. in Robinson 2012, 97-98).

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Alice Balestrino

Post-9/11 Rhetoric and The Split of Safety in Amy Waldman's *The Submission*

For memory is not only a renegotiation
between past and present, it is also an
ongoing negotiation among all the groups
of people whose lives were affected.
(James Young, "The Stages of Memory at Ground Zero")

"Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

A couple of days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush addressed the nation at a Joint Session of Congress and the American People and, on this occasion, he elaborated on the historical and political significance of 9/11 as a national tragedy, thus officially inaugurating his post-9/11 discourse. In this speech, Bush introduced a number of concepts that would become hallmarks of the post-9/11 rhetoric he indulged in and re-enforced in the following months and years. By employing terms belonging to the same semantic domain but revealing different shades of meaning, such as "American," "citizen" and "patriot," Bush outlined an ideal spectrum of social and political identity; "American" may be considered an adjective that could loosely refer both to people and things, while "citizen" and "patriot" have a more precise connotation: though close, the former defines the legal status of a subject, while the latter hints at a subject's convinced loyalty to and support of his or her country. Each term refers to a degree of inclusion in the post-9/11 US national identity, attributed to an individual.

This essay intends to investigate the significance of these terms in the post-9/11 socio-political discourse. In particular, I will assume Bush's rhetoric as the political genesis of the subsequent, ideological construction of 9/11 that would eventually go mainstream and turn into a cultural presupposition,[1] and I will subsequently focus my attention on the post-9/11 positionality of Americans, citizens and patriots across a wide social spectrum, spanning from the inclusion within the formula of "our people" to the exclusion from it. I argue that Amy Waldman's 2011 novel *The Submission* justifiably questions the downright discrimination between the three groups that has increased in the aftermath of September 11, by depicting a fictional backdrop against which US social cohesion – nominally encouraged but, in fact, undermined by the post-9/11 rhetoric of "us vs. them" and "the media hype, an d the subsequent media patriotism" (Jameson 55) – is torn apart, leading to a split in the comprehension of the notion of safety itself.

The argumentative structure of the speech Bush delivered on 20 September 2001 relies on the repetition of the phrase: "Americans are asking," followed by a question, such as: "Americans are asking: 'Why do they hate us?'" or "Americans are asking: 'What is expected of us?'" Addressing the latter issue, Bush shifts his focus from "Americans" to "citizens":

> I ask you to live your lives and hug your children. I know many citizens have fears tonight, and I ask you to be calm and resolute, even in the face of a continuing threat.
>
> I ask you to uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here. (Bush n. pag.)

In his speech, Bush seems to equate "Americans" and "citizens," thus circumscribing the identity of his addressees on the basis of their legal status and, as a consequence, potentially excluding undocumented immigrants living in the US from his understanding of "our nation […], our people and our future" (Bush n. pag.). This statement seems to be especially problematic when applied to US demographics; according to the Migration Policy Institute, approximately 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants live in the United States (as of November 2018): of them,

sixty-two percent had lived in the country for at least ten years, and as many as twenty-one percent for twenty years or more (Gelatt and Zong 3). About eight million form part of the labor force, accounting for about five percent of all American workers, as a Pew Research Center report has shown (see Krogstad, Passel and Cohn), and thus contribute economically to American society by paying taxes (see Yee, Davis and Patel).

Unauthorized immigration has always been a source of political debate over issues such as legal status and social benefits and in August 2001 (only a couple of weeks before Bush's address) the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced in the Senate as a prospective solution to finally come to terms with the problem and provide a legal path to permanent residency. In 2011, this socio-political and economic issue made the headlines when Jose Antonio Vargas, a *New York Times* journalist, wrote an essay in *The New York Times Magazine* revealing himself to be an undocumented American, a status that he later defined in these terms: "I'm an American, I just don't have the right papers" (Berenstein Rojas n. pag.).[2] The peculiar condition of self-identifying as American but lacking the legal qualification for being an American citizen has since been explicitly addressed by Vargas, who founded Define American, a non-profit organization aiming at helping to "humanize the conversation around immigrants, citizenship and identity" (*Define American* n. pag.).

In the light of the political urgency of the issue of undocumented immigration, Bush's controversial equation Americans=citizens raises important questions, for example when he refers to "defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans" (Bush n. pag.). Who does he consider worthy of protection? Who are the Americans he is speaking to? Who is he including and excluding when he employs the deictic "us"? Indeed, for the pronoun "us" to be relevant there must be a "them" to counterbalance it, and the antagonism between these two potentially all-encompassing and vague terms seems to ground and define the "War on Terror" and its oratorical translation in Bush's speeches. Terrorists are the most obvious referral to "them"; however, the deictic nature of the pronouns "us" and "them" in themselves does not allow for a more extensive and

unstable sense: "us" is also counterposed by those who do not share the same position or condition (be it social or political).

As the address unfolds, in one of the most climatic moments Bush announces the creation of the Office of Homeland Security: "And tonight, I also announce a distinguished American to lead this effort, to strengthen American security; a military veteran, an effective governor, a true patriot, a trusted friend, Pennsylvania's Tom Ridge" (Bush n. pag.). The head of the Office of Homeland Security is not only an American, but also a "distinguished" one as a "true patriot," a subject whose authority and fitness for the position are related to his absolute devotion to the national cause. Significantly, the Act of the US Congress that was passed on 26 October 2001 in order to strengthen US national security, the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001, became infamous under the acronym "PATRIOT Act." In other words, being American (no matter the comprehension of the term, be it strictly referred to citizens or more broadly to the population who has been living in the US without papers but taking an active part in society) is not sufficient to be taken in charge of homeland security; it takes a more biased adhesion to the national cause that determines yet another split between those who are "true patriots," i.e. "us," and those who are not, i.e. "them," and should be henceforth considered as threats to national safety. Although "Enhancing Domestic Security against Terrorism" is the first point of the Patriot Act, this very notion is at stake when policies alienating a part of the American people are enforced, thus transposing security itself into its opposite. In the light of the official narrative of the War on Terror as "us vs. them" and its policies, what does President Bush mean when he states: "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists"? (Bush n. pag.). What does being "with us" as opposed to being "with the terrorists" imply?

The split of safety

The discourse that allows "one to *comprehend* and to explain precisely something like 'September 11'" is, according to Jacques Derrida,

"legitimated by the prevailing system (a combination of public opinion, the media, the rhetoric of politicians and the presumed authority of all those who, through various mechanisms, speak or are allowed to speak in the public sphere)" (Derrida 93). In the aftermath of 9/11, those who are allowed to speak adopt and reiterate the logic of the (un)securitization politics[3] to the extent that the adversative voices are restrained and dismissed as un-patriotic, in a political and cultural environment that calls for "a transcendent ethical perspective" (Rothstein, "Defining Evil" n. pag.). The frictions intrinsic to the post-9/11 grand narrative of "us vs. them" lie at the core of Waldman's 9/11 novel and engender from it a profound reflection on the notion of safety in a time when, in order to warrant public assent for national security measures, dissenting individuals or, more generally, those who do not belong in the official narrative are defined as outsiders: people who, being out of the standardized representation, are also excluded from the construct of safety that it legitimates. "Us" is hence fractured into "Americans" who are neither "citizens" nor "patriots" – those who do not benefit from citizenship rights, be it because they have always been undocumented aliens, or because they have been stripped of their citizenship privileges in the wake of the Patriot Act.

As a result, some Americans will eventually be alienated from the "us" group, becoming part of "them." While during his address to the nation on 20 September 2001 Bush proclaimed that no one "should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith," in 2003 he issued a federal ban on racial profiling containing some exceptions: "The racial profiling guidance, therefore, recognizes that race and ethnicity may be used in terrorist identification, but only to the extent permitted by the nation's laws and the Constitution" (US Department of Justice n. pag.). This schizophrenic perspective on racial and ethnic profiling serves as a paradigm for the alienation of a number of citizens, considered by policy makers and enforcers as "exceptions."

The split in the notion of safety portrayed in *The Submission* is a chasm that is already present in the auto-antonymic nature of the adjective "safe" that, according to the *Oxford Living Dictionary,* means on the one hand "[p]rotected from or not exposed to danger or risk; not likely to be harmed or lost,"[4] and, on the other, "[n]ot likely to cause or lead to harm or injury;

not involving danger or risk." The novel, set in New York, portrays the fictional controversy ignited by the accidental selection of a Muslim American architect in the anonymous competition for the design of the 9/11 Memorial – a plot device that serves as the indicator of public sentiment on matters such as national security, civil rights and racial profiling in the wake of 9/11. Within this framework, the dynamics of inclusion in and exclusion from "safety" shape the existence of the characters who become outsiders every time they try to state their individuality as opposed to the identity they are assigned by the normative discourse. The narrative unfolds as the dispute over this unexpected and thorny selection becomes more and more intense and violent, eventually leading to the project being thrown out.

Waldman's novel implies that post-9/11 America, in order to become safe in the first, passive sense of not being in danger, has renounced to be safe in the second, active sense of not being dangerous, by means of targeting and denying some civil liberties not only to racially and ethnically profiled subjects (i.e. Muslim and Arab Americans), but also to the counter-voices which dispute its grand narrative. In other words, those who have been discriminated in the name of "safety" have come to live in a secluded, unsafe state parallel to the securitized one. This oxymoronic condition is depicted in *The Submission* as a continuum whose ends are the *safety of inclusion* of those who conform to the national rhetoric, and the *safety of exclusion* of those who, borrowing John Fiske's words, "have been othered into 'abnormal'" by norms that exercise the power to "define what is in or out of place" (Fiske 81).

The multi-perspective narrative adopted by Waldman allows for the depiction of different positions on the safety continuum, and I will dwell on the three main characters whose actions exemplify the abortive attempts to establish a counter-narrative to the official one. Each of these counter-narratives[5] will be eventually silenced by "the dominant power" seeking cultural uniformity and political consent – a mechanism that spurs the reader to reason on what, in a securitized nation, is the role of remembrance, of art, and of civil resistance. These three protagonists are all Americans, in the sense that they all participate in American society (they all live in New York, even though one of them is undocumented); however, failing to

behave as "patriots" and resisting the dicta of post-9/11 rhetoric, they get degraded from citizens to aliens, from human beings to live threats.

The first character, Claire Burwell, the wealthy widow of a broker who died in the 9/11 attacks, voices the *counter-narrative of remembrance*. She is a member of the jury appointed to select the design for the 9/11 memorial, and at the beginning she supports the Muslim architect's project, thus upholding her belief that remembrance cannot be a political battlefield. This stand will cause her temporary estrangement from inclusive safety and will expose her to concrete dangers until her eventual dismissal of the memorial design she previously backed. In this way she returns, as in the parable of the lost sheep, into the realm of safety.

Placed further down on the safety continuum, and thus closer to the safety of exclusion, is Mohammad "Mo" Khan, the Muslim American architect whose project, simply named "The Garden," is selected for the memorial. His is the *counter-narrative of art* that rejects clear-cut definitions, assertive interpretations and rhetorical appropriations. When urged to discuss his memorial design in order to dispel lingering doubts and opposition, he refuses to do so because, as an artist, he believes that he cannot clarify his intentions and give grounding for the most politically appropriate reading of his work. His refusal of any arbitrary view on himself or his art prevents him from playing a definite part in the totalizing narrative, and this will condemn him to be not just an outsider (as in Claire's case), but an exiled citizen as well.

The pole of the safety of exclusion is embodied by Asma Anwar, a Bangladeshi immigrant without papers whose husband got killed in the attacks on the World Trade Center, where he worked illegally. She expresses the *counter-narrative of civil resistance,* representing those who cannot get excluded from the official discourse because, due to their status as aliens – from the Latin *alius*, meaning "other"– unlike citizens, they have never been included in this type of safety even though they are, at least in practice, Americans. When, by taking a political stance, Asma tries to challenge her condition of invisibility and hence to force the boundaries of the inclusive safety in order to be let in, she is fiercely silenced by a system for which she will remain forever outside of the inclusion of safety. She will eventually be denied not only the status of citizen, but also that of human being.

The counter-narrative of remembrance

The novel begins with Claire's counter-narrative. By choosing Mo Khan's design – The Garden, "a walled, rectangular garden guided by rigorous geometry" with a pavilion for contemplation at the center, "two broad, perpendicular canals," a white perimeter wall with the victims' names listed on its interior (Waldman 10) – she triggers the whole controversy at the core of the novel. From her very first statements, she represents the spokesperson for remembrance, determined to clear the ground of memorialization from any political statement and advocating the right of remembrance to weave its own narrative, independent of the standards established by national rhetoric. She expresses this counter-narrative on two levels: the public and the private one.

At the beginning she supports Mohammad Khan's design and defends his project in front of the other, more dubious, jurors, who make a series of objections:

> "I'm not sure I want it with the name Mohammad attached to it. […] They'll feel like they've won."
>
> "If this guy is Muslim, it's going to be much, much more sensitive."
>
> "This Mohammad hasn't technically won the competition yet. I mean, there are safeguards built in, right, against criminals. Or terrorists."
>
> "If Charles Manson submitted a design from prison, we would [not] let him build it."
>
> "To some it might be [comparable to Charles Manson]."
>
> (40-42)

To them Claire assertively replies: "'Tolerance isn't stupid […] Prejudice is" (40). When the news of a Muslim architect selected for the 9/11 Memorial is leaked by the media, Claire supports his rightful victory against the loud protests over his religion, voiced by a consistent part of public opinion. At a public hearing, confronting an angry crowd demanding the rejection of The Garden, she states: "I know almost nothing about the designer […]. What I do know is the beauty, the power of this design, the way it evokes all of our loved ones, and the buildings, too, so I hope you'll keep an open mind" (127).

Despite her initial, social position being firmly rooted in the safety of inclusion, her stance against the presumption according to which Muslim and Arab Americans are terrorists will push her towards the realm of unsafety, and she will be singled out by the media. A newspaper column reads: "If, metaphorically speaking, she's sleeping with the enemy, whose side is she on?" (240) – a statement clearly reminiscent of Bush's rhetoric that exemplifies the subsequent threats she will receive for having exercised her right to speak her mind. And the reader may wonder: is it really securitization that is pursued when people are denied their right to speak their mind? Is not insecurity what is really achieved instead?

In the middle of the memorial controversy, in a passage signaling the transition from the public to the private sphere, Claire takes her children to build cairns around the city to commemorate their father's death. As she herself explains, a cairn is "a heap of stones piled up as a memorial or a landmark" (118), and in the novel it symbolizes the resilience of remembrance to the totalizing rhetoric that managed to appropriate the official memorial, despite Claire's resistance. While the 9/11 Memorial comes to represent "a national symbol, an historic signifier" (11-12), the cairns, micro-memorializing narratives opposing the macro-memorial statement, seem to point the way to particular and personal expressions of memory, emancipated from the political agenda. Their smallness and fragility are the antithesis of the grandeur and solidity of the canonized forms of national memorialization that, with their stone blocks, are intended to block out the passage of time and to square off external, alien interventions. On the contrary, in the spontaneity of the cairns lies their remembrance value: "the hapless pile did not look meager – disappointing – against the city's vertical thrust. So did the three of them, for that matter, in making these tiny, easily missed interventions in the city" (120). However, this dissident act will be subdued too. During a violent protest in front of Claire's house, a man accusing her of betraying the 9/11 victims by supporting a Muslim design destroys the cairn that her children built by the doorway. When the protesters drive off, Claire goes outside to rebuild the cairn, but she finds out this is impossible because "the stones were gone" (159).

These scenes represent the apex of Claire's trajectory towards the safety

of exclusion, and in the narrative economy of the novel they function as turning points in the evolution of her character: frightened by the threats to her and her children's safety, she will turn from being Khan's first supporter into the person responsible for his final retreat. Media play a crucial role in Claire's shift from safety to un-safety and then back to safety again, and these dynamics seem to echo, especially but not exclusively, the real socio-political atmosphere of post-9/11 US society where – as noted by Frederic Jameson – "media orchestration and amplification [...] interpose a stereotype between ourselves and our thoughts and feelings; or, if you prefer [...] what we feel are no longer our own feelings anymore but someone else's, and indeed, if we are to believe the media, everybody else's" (Jameson 56). Claire adopts the media perspective on Mohammad Khan as hers – an almost unconscious mechanism that dialogically refers to a reflection on which Claire dwelled in the first pages of the novel:

> she also had been scavenging her memory for tidbits from law school: the science of juries. The Asch experiments, what did Asch show? How easily people were influenced by other people's perceptions. Conformity. Group polarization. Normative pressures. Reputational cascades: how the desire for social approval influences the way people think and act. (Waldman 20)

Interestingly, she eventually succumbs to the very conformity and normative pressures she was aware of. Like in an Asch experiment, she aligns her decision to that of the majority – where for majority, thanks to the media amplification, a much wider group than that of the jurors is intended: American society at large. It is as if the media made everyone a juror.

The counter-narrative of art

The filter of the stereotype intervenes in the media, and consequently in the people, as a vision of reality that shapes the events prompting the vicissitudes of the second counter-narrative as well. It starts off against the background of Mo's (that is, the artist's) discrimination because of

his religion and ethnic background: after the selection of his design, his cultural identity becomes "a national security issue" (54), and almost every branch of "the dominant power" tries to normalize him by framing his individuality, perceived as potentially dangerous, within reassuring definitions. Mo is an American citizen, born and raised in Virginia, educated at the Yale School of Art and Architecture and based in New York. However, Mo is also an artist and, as such, refuses to explain his art, to formalize his choices, to provide a definite interpretation of his style, even though this resolution makes him "unsuitable by definition" (30) for the polarized rhetoric of the "us vs. them" and, hence, ineligible for the safety of inclusion. He values the sovereignty of art higher than his own interest in having his design selected for the 9/11 Memorial: "he would not give in to pressure to withdraw, nor would he reassure anyone that he was 'moderate,' or 'safe' or Sufi, whatever adjective would allow Americans to sleep without worrying that he had placed a bomb under their pillow" (111). He is an artist; he does not "traffic in labels" (91).

This artistic stance that denies any definite and partial reading of the works of art resonates with Umberto Eco's ruminations on art as "open work." Indeed, in *Opera aperta* (1962) Eco defines artworks as open works, in the sense that their essence is a fundamentally ambiguous message, characterized by a plurality of meanings that coexist in the same signifier. As Clare has it when she selects Mo's project: "the Garden was an allegory" (Waldman 20). This ambiguity is not only one of the explicit objectives of the work of art, a quality to be fulfilled, but it is the very core, the significance of art itself (Eco 16). When one of the jurors in the novel says that the Garden "is too soft. Designed to please the same Americans who love Impressionism" (Waldman 13), the narrator seems to project on to the Garden the same fluctuant shades, indistinct forms and indeed ambiguous – in the sense of not immediately recognizable – figures as those of Impressionist paintings. These traits are also praised by Eco, who sees in Impressionism a sign that becomes imprecise and ambiguous, thus disputing the boundaries, the rigid distinctions between forms, forms and light, forms and the background (Eco 154-55). The crucial question which Mo firmly refuses to answer regards the supposed meaning of his design:

"So what were you quoting? Gardens you saw in Afghanistan?"

"I did see a garden there, yes."

"And what was it for – what's its purpose? I mean – Afghanistan must be full of martyrs." Clumsily, but she had to know.

"So that's why we're here," he said. He looked strangely sad.

"You've never answered that question," she said, "about whether it's a martyrs' paradise, or a paradise at all. Since the question was raised by the *Times.* You've never said." […]

"It's now been raised. And left hanging out there."

"Where it will hang forever," he said.

"What?"

"Why should I be responsible for assuaging fears I didn't create? […] your questions – the suspicions they contain – make [the terrorists] count more. You assume we all must think like them unless we prove otherwise."

(Waldman 584-85)

In the above exchange with Claire, Mo defends his right not to categorize his creation because, he maintains, the significance ("the purpose") lies in the eyes of those who interpret the artwork, not in the artwork itself. The dialogue continues:

He drew two intersecting lines and asked, "What's this?"

Claire studied it. "A cross?"

He turned it diagonally. "And this?"

"An X."

He drew a square around the cross and turned it back to her. "And now?"

"Not sure – a window maybe?"

More lines. "A checkerboard?" she said. "Or maybe Manhattan – it looks like a grid."

"It's all of those things, or maybe none of them. It's lines on a plane, just like the Garden."

(585)

Other characters share Mo's view and support his stance. One explains to Claire: "a garden's just a garden until *you* decide to plant suspicion there" (441; italics in the original). Another clarifies: "You, with this rhetoric, you're putting up walls of suspicion" (454).

The preservation of the ambiguous nature of art is what grounds Mo's refusal of labels and the consequent split of safety in his story; by eluding characterizations, the only role he can play in the official narrative is that of the outsider not only in social but also in geographical terms: after his forced withdrawal – following riots and aggressive assaults – he leaves the United States forever. It is impossible for him to be admitted again into the sphere of inclusive safety because, unlike Claire's, his beliefs cannot be negotiated and thus the split he creates is radical and definite; his citizenship privileges are forever lost because of the prejudices against his identity. When his life is endangered, his citizen status denied, his memorial dismissed, his counter-narrative silenced, his character can only make sense and function away from the securitized state.

The escape of the artist triggers a reflection on post-9/11 art: is it really "barbaric" (after Theodor Adorno's famous statement) to write poetry after a traumatic event and, by extension, in the wake of 9/11? Is it as profane as what the narrator describes, in the first pages of the novel, as "the gingerbread reconstruction of the vanished towers" (11)? And – more to the point – should post-9/11 societies consider art unsafe because of its intrinsic ambiguity, that cannot be restrained? Or, conversely, are "beauty and safety not incompatible" (62), as Mo claims?

The counter-narrative of civil resistance

With the final counter-narrative, that of the Bangladeshi immigrant, the ideal trajectory towards the safety of exclusion reaches its apex. The story of Asma Anwar (widowed, like Claire, by the terrorist attacks) stages the narrative occasion for a compelling meditation on the significance of the split of safety for those who are not just excluded, but ignored by inclusive safety, because they are not citizens, but illegal aliens. Asma's American experience is typified by alienation, invisibility, and denied rights, but she does not allow this condition to blur her individuality. On the contrary, she is determined to state her and her family's Americanness against the prejudices of the post-9/11 discourse and, in this light, she demands the safety and justice promised to the American people. Her condition is

doubly in jeopardy: not only she is undocumented, but she is also Muslim; this double alienation from the safety of inclusion construes her person as an "exception to the human condition" (Pease 176), and this will in turn produce a dramatic short circuit between her media representation and her life, when she gets killed by a crowd protesting her illegal status. At a public gathering with the families of the 9/11 victims, she decides to speak up, her words translated into English by a male relative, in order to voice her frustrations and challenge her family's representation, in the national rhetoric and the media, as a threat:

> "My husband was from Bangladesh. I am from Bangladesh. My son […], he is two years old, born three weeks after the attack. He is one hundred percent American. […] My husband was a man of peace because he was a Muslim. That is our tradition. […] You have mixed up these bad Muslims, these bad people, and Islam. […] You talk about paradise as a place for bad people. But that is not what we believe. That is not what the garden is for. The gardens of paradise are for men like my husband, who never hurt anyone." (Waldman 502)

Hers is the counter-narrative of civil resistance because, despite her weak political status and her limited means, she questions the "dominant power" by trying to get recognition for her community and to get it accepted into the boundaries of safety, understood also as secured rights. She is fully aware of the radical denial of her condition as a human being (apart from the denial of her status as a citizen), as it is made clear when she reflects upon her husband's fate: "How could you be dead if you did not exist?" (99). And a few pages later, the narrator states: "The prospect of her husband's exclusion [from the memorial] gnawed at [her]. It would be the final repudiation of his existence – as if he had lived only in her imagination. He had to be named, for in that name was a life [even though] history had only narrowly made room for him" (109-110). In this sense, Asma's husband's condition of invisibility may be assimilated to that of Jorge Antonio Vargas and all the other illegal immigrants identifying themselves as undocumented Americans but whom America does not consider "as one of its own" (Vargas n. pag.).

However, her fervor and her rhetorical fluency will not help her to attain her goal but will, in fact, expose her to the radicalization of her un-safety.

By speaking out, she is targeted by the media that found out about her illegal status, and is killed in a riot organized by picketers who gathered outside her house to insult her the day she was supposed to be deported. Asma's tragic epilogue casts more than one shadow on the effective safety of a securitized state and decidedly validates the understanding of its deployment as a split, because her murder is the total negation of an existence that was struggling for political recognition. Considering this episode, is a nation that places national safety on a higher plane than civil liberties (cf. Patriot Act) really safe? And if so, for whom? What does Asma's murder mean and imply for such a society? A question, undermining the very idea of American democracy, is raised by Asma herself: "I want to know, my son – he is Muslim, but he is also American. Or isn't he? You tell me: What should I tell my son?" (Waldman 504).

Conclusion

In a society where intellectual and moral conformism are advocated in the name of safety, what is the place for counter-narratives that, with their plurality of perspectives, aim to challenge the master narrative? The analysis of this issue, as depicted in *The Submission* reveals that in post-9/11 US subversive voices are censored in order to eradicate any dissent, and othered into the "them" of those excluded from the very safety which is predicated. The counter-narratives of remembrance, art and civil resistance are all recounted by Americans who fail to behave like patriots and, in so doing, are alienated from their status as citizens or even as human beings. Hence, the safety of exclusion prevails over that of inclusion, at once generating and generated by a dichotomic logic of "us vs. them." In her novel, Waldman challenges this rhetorical strategy by adopting a more complex, multi-layered narrative that effectively exposes the perverse mechanisms of the totalizing, post-9/11 discourse and deconstructs the "us vs. them" interpretation of the aftermath. When Claire is confronted by the angry brother of another 9/11 victim, she reaffirms the relevance and the urgency of her own position. However, her being in the middle, on both

sides, not with "us" and not with "them," is what eventually condemns her to alienation.

> "Step aside, Claire. Let people who know their own minds fight this out."
> "No, people like me, who can see both sides, are needed. It's called empathy." Her tone had turned patronizing, superior.
> "Cowardice is what it's called! You can see all the sides you want, but you can only be on one. One! You have to choose, Claire. Choose!"
> (510)

"Us vs. them," empathy versus cowardice, picking a side versus comprehending both. What Claire would like to do – but eventually is unable to – is rejecting the necessity of the opposition itself, a total negation of the *raison d'être* of post-9/11 rhetorical claims. In conclusion, this seems to be the aim of all the three counter-narratives. Furthermore, the split of safety that separates Americans, citizens and patriots seems to be the ultimate opposition that radicalizes the debate over these notions in the wake of the terrorist attacks, causing an "autoimmune"[6] reaction in the US political and social system.

Notes

[1] Some of the most prominent examples of newspaper articles voicing Bush's post-9/11rhetoric are Julia Keller's "After the Attack, Postmodernism Loses Its Grip," Roger Rosenblatt's "The Age of Irony Comes to an End," and Edward Rothstein's "Attacks on US Challenge Postmodern True Believers."

[2] In his piece, Vargas claims: "I grew up here. This is my home. Yet even though I think of myself as an American and consider America my country, my country doesn't think of me as one of its own" (Vargas n. pag.).

[3] Here I adopt the term "securitization" as employed in Security Studies, a field in which it has been translated from its original meaning into a formulation referring to security as "a speech act […] not wholly self-referential." As Thierry Balzacq notices indeed, "securitization is a pragmatic act, i.e. a sustained argumentative practice aimed at convincing a target audience to accept, *based on what it knows about the world,* the claim that a specific development is threatening enough to deserve an immediate policy to curb it" (Balzacq 59-60; emphasis in the original).

[4] "Safe." First Definition. *Oxford Living Dictionary*. <http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/safe>.

[5] I employ the operative category of counter-narrative in order to situate the three subplots I have identified as narratives that "counter unquestioned narratives or 'official stories' […] or unquestioned conventional wisdom – that state 'truths' about people, situations, or places"; in particular, "an example of a contemporary official narrative is that which conflates Islam with extremism and terrorism, and [in] this second form counter-narrative highlights the 'little stories' of groups and/or individuals that are produced at the margins of the telling of 'official stories'" (Mutua 132).

6 The term "autoimmune" is borrowed from Derrida's reflections on post-9/11 US, where he defines the governmental and political logic of America in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks as "autoimmunity." "An autoimmunitary process is that strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-*suicidal* fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its 'own' immunity" (Derrida 94).

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Ayman Al Sharafat

Attitudes of the United States' Presidents Towards Immigration: George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump

Introduction

There is no doubt that the issue of immigration all over the world is a paradoxical conundrum. On the one hand, all people have the right to move from their native land in order to find a better job, education, or access to public goods. No nation has the right to forbid residents from leaving the country in which they were born. The United Nations Charter proclaims this fundamental human right. At the same time, it is an obvious right and decision of every sovereign country, including federal ones such as the United States of America, to manage its borders and to determine who can come in, stay, study, work, and become a citizen. Sovereign nations have the right to decide how their laws should be enforced.

In the United States, immigration has always been managed. Throughout its history, it has never been a nation of open borders. The focus of the immigration laws has been on the skills of the newcomers and on attracting immigrants with northern European Protestant values (see Orchowski). However, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the shock of the 9/11 attacks had unfortunate consequences on immigration processes. Those horrific attacks were committed by criminals who reached the United States by using visitor or student visas. In the aftermath, border control became a core topic of concern.

The famous historian John Higham argues in his significant work on nativism in the United States that xenophobic policies and their consequences are adopted during times of national lack of confidence or discomfort. Little can make a nation as uncomfortable or unconfident as a remarkable rise in

immigration that probably challenges a country's conception of itself. The 2000 Census statistics indicate that there has been a 54% increase in the residents who were born abroad in the United States since the 1980s (see Del Valle). Since 2000 also the number of United States immigrants has increased to reach 13.4% of the last century's immigration proportion (see Melkonian-Hoover and Kellstedt). Aristide R. Zolberg predicted in 1980 either another group of restrictive immigration policies or a serious attempt to appeal to Hispanic voters' growth with immigration reform (Zolberg 448-49). In fact, the years 2000-19 have experienced both types of procedures anticipated by Zolberg. Immigration policy has been shaped by restriction and appeals – in other words, by exclusion and inclusion. Restrictions, such as security clampdowns and deportations, as well as appeals, like immigration reform bills and resolving the status of immigrant children without documents, have both significantly increased. Nevertheless, not much Federal government legislation has been passed. Most remarkable changes have come from executive orders and executive discretion.

In summary, the time since the George W. Bush administration has been characterized by an excess of executive decisions regarding the issue of immigration, along with legislative and judicial stalemate. This is due to increased partisan polarization, party shifts, the growing number of newcomers, and security and economic fears regarding immigrants after the 9/11 attacks.

Over the past 18 years, the Federal government has increased law enforcement targeting immigrants to unprecedented levels. The rate of deportations jumped above 30,000 per year by the end of the Bush administration, and this number climbed again under Obama to reach 40,000 per year (see Orchowski). Ironically, these statistics do not account for immigrants in the custody of the United States Border Patrol, who account for the lion's share of the Federal government's enforcement powers and deportation processes. Some scholars argue that these types of enforcement all over the United States have led to a class of criminalized noncitizens, in a sort of war against non-American citizens (see Golash-Boza).

This study analyzes the attitudes of US Presidents toward immigration in the period from 2001 to 2019 – a period that has started with the George

W. Bush administration and ended with Donald Trump's second year in office. Furthermore, it examines documents of three Presidents in the target period. It seeks to establish the three Presidents' attitudes and position on immigration through their official documents and addresses. It also highlights their main efforts on the issue of immigration. It tries to answer the question of how immigration and immigrants have been described in the available presidential official documents and what the differences are between the three Presidents in their attitude toward immigration. The paper starts with a background introduction to the topic, then presents its methodology and procedures in section two. Section three deals with the findings and is the core of the study, showing and discussing the available data. The findings section highlights each of the three Presidents' efforts on the topic of immigration. Finally, the conclusion provides the main results of the work.

The corpus and the method of analysis

This study is the first one addressing the attitudes of US Presidents toward immigration by using data obtained from their speeches and documents. The work is a creative one; it uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

In order to examine and analyze the Presidents' explicit and implicit attitudes on the issue of immigration during the period from Bush to Trump, we use data from the searchable "Public Papers" archive of *The American Presidency Project*, maintained by John Woolley and Gerhard Peters. The search strings were "immigra*" or "migra*," and this search matched: immigration, immigrant, immigrants, migration, migrants, migrant and migratory. Due to the large number of documents containing material related to immigration, we chose to limit our investigation to cover only 10 types of presidential documents: executive orders, inaugural addresses, letters, messages, oral addresses, statements, statements of administration policy, vetoes, written messages, and written presidential orders. These 10 kinds of documents usually contain the most tangible policies of United States Presidents.

Our search returned 440 different documents containing one or more of the targeted words (immigration, immigrant, immigrants, migration, migrants, migrant and migratory) during the target period. The empirical research methodology carried out in an article on the immigration attitudes of United States Presidents should be evidence and facts-based. The analysis of immigration policy should follow a well-articulated and clear framework, and it should be rigorous, systematic and results-oriented. Therefore, in order to classify the three Presidents' attitudes towards immigration through the 440 documents produced during their administrations and to examine these data, the research depends primarily on quantitative analysis. After having found all the Presidents' statements in the issue of immigration and after reading them carefully, analyzing the remarks and comments about those statements and finding their purpose, the study allocates each of them to one of the four policy models proposed by James Q. Wilson. Wilson supposes that attitudes and policies have distributional consequences. Costs and benefits can be diffuse or concentrated, resulting in four main attitudes, as follows:

- Concentrated benefits and diffuse costs. Produce client politics, a producer dominant attitude that includes easy and small organized groups to get direct benefits (Wilson 369). This attitude always coincides with low political and social conflict. An instance is the support to permanent residence visas.
- Diffuse costs and diffuse benefits. Produce majoritarian politics: "All or most of society expects to gain; all or most of society expects to pay. Interest groups have little incentive to form around such issues because no small, definable segment of society can expect to capture a disproportionate share of the benefits or avoid a disproportionate share of the burdens" (367). This attitude usually coincides with low political and social conflict. An instance is the support to non-immigrant visas for purposes other than work (tourism, studying, therapy...).
- Concentrated benefits and concentrated costs. Should produce interest-group politics. Affected groups have serious incentives to act and the general populace do not believe they will be affected one way or another (368). This attitude usually coincides with high political and social

conflict. For instance, banning immigration visas for all but high skilled immigrants, and this entails complex procedures.

- Diffuse benefits and concentrated costs. Engender entrepreneurial politics when a policy "will confer general (though perhaps small) benefits at a cost to be borne chiefly by a small segment of society" (370). This attitude always coincides with high political and social conflict. For instance, taking into account only asylum seekers, rather than immigrants.

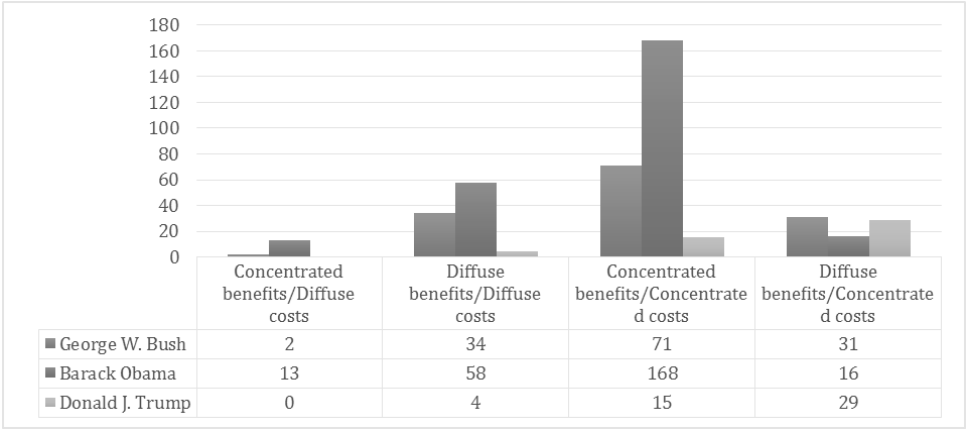
Results and analysis

As explained above, our focus in this work is on the Presidents' attitudes, which include their stated opinions and how they value immigration. The nature of the United States political system fragments power between legislature, courts, presidency, states, and local government. However, there is a clear evidence that Presidents of the United States can influence public opinion, giving them another source of power in addition to their role in policy making as head of the executive branch of the government. There are many definitions of "attitude" as a concept, but we use here the definition given by the *Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*, of attitude as "a settled opinion" and a "behavior reflecting this" (44). Many studies find that elites including Presidents can affect public attitudes toward all issues (see Nicholson). Presidents employ symbols, images and metaphors to evoke and mobilize public, Congressional and Supreme Court opinions about immigration. When these symbols and attitudes connect with Congress and people's actions, punitive policies targeting particular subgroups can result, as for instance with immigration (see Sears).

Since the turn of the twenty-first century and the September 11 attacks, the discourse of US Presidents on immigration has become dramatically more negative. Immigration has appeared often in their communication, and new topics have been mentioned in order to manage immigration issues, such as the role of the Homeland Security Office within the White House in restricting immigration, the process of expanding enforcement powers all over the country, visa security, and border control (see Rosenblum).

Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump during his two years in office mentioned immigration in 440 documents in their executive orders, inaugural addresses, letters, messages, oral addresses, statements, statements of administration policy, vetoes, written messages or written presidential orders (see Chart 1). All three Presidents mentioned immigration during their inauguration address as one of their priorities. Bush spoke about immigration in his first inauguration and Obama in his second.

Chart 1: Attitudes of Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump (during his two years in office) toward immigration according to Wilson's schema of policy models.



	Concentrated benefits/Diffuse costs	Diffuse benefits/Diffuse costs	Concentrated benefits/Concentrated costs	Diffuse benefits/Concentrated costs
George W. Bush	2	34	71	31
Barack Obama	13	58	168	16
Donald J. Trump	0	4	15	29

George W. Bush

President Bush started his presidency in 2000 with an immigration reform program as a stated priority (see Orchowski). He mentioned immigration issues in 138 documents, as chart 1 indicates; this number is far from President Obama's, who mentioned immigration issues in 254

documents during his administrations. President Bush often concentrated on immigration benefits and costs in his addresses, but less than Obama. Also, Bush mentioned immigration diffusing its cost and its benefits in 34 documents. For example, during a statement on February 16, 2001, he stated:

> Migration is one of the major ties that bind our societies. It is important that our policies reflect our values and needs, and that we achieve progress in dealing with this phenomenon. We believe that Mexico should make the most of the skills and productivity of their workers at home, and we agree there should be an orderly framework for migration which ensures humane treatment, legal security, and dignified labor conditions. (Bush, "Joint Statement" n. pag.)

From his first days in the presidency, Bush engaged in a series of discussions on immigration with President Fox of Mexico. He expressed hope for more cooperation on the issue between the two countries. The two Presidents met on five occasions during the first nine months of 2001 and established a bilateral Cooperation Group on immigration. Believing that immigration is an important resource to the United States economy, Bush called for a full temporary worker program (see Rosenblum).

However, after the shock of the 9/11 attacks, everything changed. New waves of restrictive immigration policies arose, and serious comprehensive immigration reform was thwarted (see Zolberg). Most proposals, attitudes and addresses regarding immigration issues addressed security concerns, and Bush strongly supported these immigration efforts. For example, the Patriot Act of 2001 allowed the United States to deny any visa admission to suspected terrorists, and the Homeland Security Act of 2002 established a new department for homeland security (see "Major US Immigration Laws"). In a message to the Congress asking for legislation to Create the Department of Homeland Security on 18 June 2002, President Bush wrote: "The Secretary of Homeland Security would have the authority to administer and enforce all immigration and nationality laws, including the visa issuance functions of consular officers" (Bush, "Message to the Congress" n. pag.).

Consequently, in 2003 immigration policies shifted from the Department of Justice to the Department of Homeland Security,

indicating that the issue of immigration had become a security priority. In December 2005, as Bush had demanded, the House of Representatives passed the Sensenbrenner Bill, which concerned only borders and security enforcement. Many security measures were put in place in order to tighten borders. But the Sensenbrenner Bill could not pass the Senate. Later, in May 2006, Senate passed the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act. The House immediately responded by passing the Secure Fence Act with Bush's support. The Secure Fence Act passed Senate as well, and in October 2006 was signed by President Bush (see Melkonian-Hoover and Kellstedt).

In fact, this was because Bush aimed at placating angry Americans, particularly conservatives, who had mobilized on the immigration issue. With the victory of the Democratic Party in the midterm election of 2006, Bush could not progress further in the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act even with Senate maneuvers (see Bush, "The Debate Over Immigration Reform"). Undoubtedly, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act was for Bush the most important bill regarding immigration, and he struggled to persuade Congress to pass it. The bill included a complicated visa procedure, border security, and a program for guest workers and undocumented residents. After long debates, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act did not get enough support to pass the Congress, to President Bush's disappointment (see Rosenblum).

As a consequence of 9/11, Bush was concerned about the security of the country, even though he appreciated the benefits of immigration for his country and its contribution to the prosperity of the United States throughout its history and for its future. As Chart 1 indicates, Bush concentrated the benefits and costs of immigration in 71 out of the 138 documents about the immigration issue.

Obama

Immigration is a more salient factor in Barack Obama's worldview than in Bush's. Obama has a much broader attitude about immigration issues. He has a long experience with immigration, having had a Kenyan father and an Indonesian stepfather. He lived in Indonesia and attended school there

for five years. He also has multilingual, multinational and non-English speaking relatives who migrated to the United States. Although President Obama did not make comprehensive immigration reform a top priority, he emphasized both the concentrated costs and benefits of immigration. For example, in the 28 November 2012 statement on administration policy, he announced: "The Administration values reforms to attract the next generation of highly-skilled immigrants, including legislation to attract and retain foreign students who graduate with advanced science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees" (Obama, "Statement of Administration Policy: H.R. 6429" n. pag.).

However, Obama was the subject of overlapping racialization discourses of anti-blackness, xenophobia and Islamophobia. In the words of Ta-Nehisi Coates, "[t]he irony of Barack Obama is this: he has become the most successful black politician in American history by avoiding the radioactive racial issues of yesteryear, by being 'clean,' and yet his indelible blackness irradiates everything he touches" (qtd. in Volpp 402). The contribution of the Hispanic population to Barack Obama's first election created expectations that he would propose immigration reform. But like President Bush, during his eight years in the office Obama did not succeed in promoting major immigration legislation. His executive actions filled the legislative void (see Golash-Boza). However, Obama was not uninterested in passing immigration legislation. On 16 April 2009, he met with President Felipe Calderön in Mexico and confirmed his pledge to pass an amnesty act (see *President Obama's Record*), but failed to provide and defend any comprehensive immigration legislation. The Economic Opportunity, Immigration Modernization Act and Border Security did not make it through the Congress (see Reich).

Executive action offered a good resource to Obama in asserting control over immigration. In June 2012, as the DREAM Act was languishing in Congress, he established the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program (see Orchowski). This program allowed unauthorized immigrants who were brought to the United States before the age of 16 to apply for resident permits. DACA covered some 1.7 million migrants. Also, in November 2014, Obama announced the creation of the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents program (DAPA).

This program deferred the deportation of undocumented immigrants who were the parents of either US citizens or legal permanent residents (see Volpp). Obama resorted to these many forceful executive actions because of his failure to push Congress into legislative action. In a climate of partisan division, the makeshift nature of immigration policy via executive action became clear. The Obama administration was characterized by congressional inaction, and in his executive actions and statements on immigration Obama initially focused on deportation (see Melkonian-Hoover and Kellstedt). For example, in the 8 December 2010 statement, he said:

> The young people who would be eligible for relief under the DREAM Act are prime examples of the need for comprehensive immigration reform that is based on requiring accountability and responsibility from all – the government, employers, and those who have entered the country illegally. The present system is broken and the Administration continues to call on the Congress to pass comprehensive reform. While the broader immigration debate continues, the Administration urges the House to take this important step and pass the DREAM Act. (Obama, "Statement of Administration Policy: House Amendment" n. pag.)

Indeed, Bush and Obama displayed similar attitudes towards immigration, even though Obama deported more immigrants than Bush, and they came from different parties with different ideologies. It is probable that President Obama was forced to adopt a more conservative attitude towards immigration, which further restricted his ability to do as much as he wanted for immigrants. Since he was the first President with a non-American, non-white father, he was rhetorically branded as a disloyal terrorist sympathizer if he appeared to support immigrants equally or more than US citizens.

Trump

President Donald Trump has a long history of making racially charged public statements, such as his racist accusation that President Barack Obama was not born in the United States and should not be its President

(see Flores). He has referred to immigration in 48 documents since his inauguration till 31 December 31. Trump has been the only President in recent United States history to publicly take a hard-line position on immigration. His statements are considered by many scholars to have sent a shockwave through global public opinion on immigration (see Reich). According to our results in chart 1, Trump downplays immigration benefits all over the United States throughout its history and concentrates on the costs. This attitude is repeated in 29 documents out of 48. For example, in his inaugural address on 20 January 2017, he stated:

> Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families. We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength. I will fight for you with every breath in my body, and I will never, ever let you down. (Trump, "Inaugural Address" n. pag.)

Trump's attitude towards immigration is distinct from that of his two predecessors, and is marked by a negative framing of the issue. Since his inauguration, Trump has signed more than nine executive orders on immigration, which included hiring 15,000 extra enforcement officers, building a wall, and eliminating "sanctuary cities." He also introduced three orders attempting to ban visas for immigrants, visitors, and refugees from many Muslim countries. Despite not being able to carry out as much policy change as he had promised, Trump succeeded in enforcing the law against non-citizens all over the country. Between 20 January and 30 September 2017, the Trump administration removed 61,000 immigrants from the United States, a 37% increase on what had been done in 2016 (see Sacchetti). His administration also arrested about 110,000 immigrants, a 42% increase compared to 2016. Ironically, during 2017, 38,000 of the arrested immigrants were without any criminal convictions. This number was 15,000 in 2016 (see Pierce, Bolter, Selee).

Overall, Trump's removals were fewer than Obama's, probably because a lower number of immigrants tried to enter the country during Trump's first year as President. Trump removed 226,000 immigrants in 2017, while Barack Obama's removals averaged 344,000 per year. However, President

Trump has also made remarkable reductions in the number of accepted refugees. In the first nine months of 2018, the Trump administration admitted only 16,000 refugees (see "Admissions and Arrivals"). Furthermore, Trump has made many changes that have increased the complications of the vetting procedure for future immigrants and have significantly slowed down legal admissions. He has increased the number of steps applicants must go through prior to being eligible to travel to the United States (see Pierce, Bolter, Selee), and at the time of writing this text (early 2019), President Trump has shut down the government budget for three weeks, calling for $5.7 billion to build up construction a steel barrier along the Southwest border. Trump said that he might enforce border wall funding by declaring a national emergency.

No President in United States history has placed such a high priority on immigration or had such a focus on restricting immigration as President Trump. For example, in the 5 September 2017 statement, he said:

> We must remember that young Americans have dreams too. Being in government means setting priorities. Our first and highest priority in advancing immigration reform must be to improve jobs, wages, and security for American workers and their families. It is now time for Congress to act. (Trump, "Statement on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Policy" n. pag.)

He has reduced refugee admissions, slowed visa processing, expanded enforcement of immigration laws, and promoted a strongly negative public discourse against immigration. Many people consider Trump's attitude toward immigration as a turning point in shaping American immigration (see Pierce, Bolter, Selee).

President Donald Trump's attitude on immigration is very far from his two predecessors'. He diffuses immigration benefits and concentrates on immigration costs. Trump is spearheading a multifaceted campaign against immigration. He is trying to influence public opinion by describing immigrants as the hardest problem jeopardizing the American Dream. This is what has happened during his first two years in office, but what about the next two years? And will he be re-elected for another term with this anti-immigration attitude or not? The result will definitely determine the future role of immigrants in the United States.

Conclusion

Attitudes towards immigration are complicated, dynamic, and emotional. This study sheds light on how US Presidents' attitudes towards immigration have changed over the last two decades. The overwhelming majority of results points to the fact that until 2001 presidents adopted stances on immigration which were conducive to increasing the number of immigrants coming to the United States. Since the turn of the twenty-first century and the 9/11 attacks, the Presidents' discourse regarding immigration has taken a dramatic turn to the negative. Immigration has featured often in their speeches, and new actions have been taken in order to manage immigration issues, such as the role of the Department of Homeland Security within the White House in restricting immigration, the process of expanding enforcement powers all over the country, visa security, and border controls.

President Bush was concerned about the security of the country, but also appreciated the benefits of immigration, its contribution to the prosperity of the United States throughout its history and into its future. Bush concentrated on the benefits and costs of immigration. Bush and Obama presented a similar attitude towards immigration, despite the fact that Obama deported more immigrants than Bush did, and even though they came from different parties with different ideologies.

President Donald Trump's attitude towards immigration is different from that of the previous two administrations, in his negative framing of immigration. During his 2016 campaign Donald Trump repeatedly promised to change many things, and particularly focused on immigration reform. Multitudes over the world see a remarkable relationship between the change of the United States presidency and the fortunes of their countries. In the first two years of Trump as the United States President, no fundamental change has come about on the issue of immigrants, but a lot of animosity has been engendered against them – and in the last months a growing number of measures against immigration have been taken. No President in United States history has placed such a high priority on immigration or had such a focus on restricting it as Trump.

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Lindsey N. Kingston

Healing the Scars of Forced Migration: An Italian-American Story

There's an expression for wishing someone "good luck" in Italian – *in bocca al lupo* – that literally translates to "in the mouth of the wolf." I imagine my grandfather's friends saying this to him as he left his Sicilian village, Grotte, in 1938. The expression would have certainly been fitting for the 17-year-old; the intimidating journey looming before him must have felt like staring down the jaws of a predator. He traveled to America several years after his father and two older brothers, who had saved money and made the necessary arrangements to bring the rest of the family over. Grandpa was not particularly eager to leave Sicily, but his mother and siblings were going with or without him; the decision he faced was between family and homeland. He first went to Naples, where he was awe-struck by the endless rows of ships in port. He had never been to a city before, even to nearby Agrigento to see its famed Greek temples. Yet he had already survived extreme poverty and hunger when he boarded his ship, the SS Roma (where he felt every seasickness-inspiring roll of the ocean, and where he likely spent his eighteenth birthday), so he had endured harder things than the long voyage to New York. He arrived in the United States with one suitcase and the remnants of a handmade guitar that was crushed along the way. He had no real job prospects, no education to speak of, and initially no English skills whatsoever. Unlike the stereotypical American immigrant story, my grandfather also had no false expectations; he was not in pursuit of the American Dream as much as he was fleeing from famine and fascism. As a boy, he had hunted pigeons and foraged stray fruit to supply his family with dinner. As young men, he and his brothers figured they would rather risk dying for the Americans than for Benito Mussolini.

Grandpa quickly joined family members in Metro Detroit, where he first delivered ice and coal and later set up a shoe repair shop. He met

and married my grandmother, had three children, and bought the modest house in a post-war, cookie-cutter suburb where my widowed grandmother still lives. (The bathroom has carnation pink tiles and even a pink toilet; my grandmother thought this was the prettiest bathroom she had ever seen.) When the kids got older and a two-bedroom house was not big enough, my grandfather finished the attic so the boys could move upstairs. It was sweltering in the summertime without air conditioning, but the cool Michigan basement was a good retreat for playing board games, reading, and perhaps sleeping on a couch during springtime tornado warnings or August heat waves. Photos from my mother's middle-class childhood are almost startling in their American-ness, as if they were drawn out of a Norman Rockwell painting or clipped from a Coca-Cola advertisement. From the outside, at least, only a few charming traces of "otherness" remained – eating pasta instead of turkey at Thanksgiving, or keeping a small altar to the Virgin Mary in the house. You would have to really squint to see the scars left by forced migration, which my grandfather tried so desperately to hide.

I doubt that my grandfather spent much time thinking about the adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) after the war ended, but he certainly held firm opinions about equality and dignity. He remained deeply saddened about what he viewed as the forced abandonment of his homeland, even after he became a naturalized American citizen in 1957. He never felt completely at ease in his new country; he said that the people, much like the Michigan weather, were often too cold for him. In the early days, people told him that Italians were not "Whites" and that "wops"[1] were stealing jobs from the "real" Americans. Strangers threw bricks at my great-grandmother while screaming racial slurs. People heard my grandfather's accent and charged him higher prices. ("Just because I talk with an accent, that doesn't mean I think with one," he often said.) Nervous about his job prospects and his family's safety, my grandfather changed his name from Giuseppe to Joe, nicknaming my grandmother Lucia "Joanne" and only speaking English with his three children. As time went by, he talked muscle cars, danced to Frank Sinatra, and ate at the Olive Garden. He became the (Italian) American that others expected him to be. Yet even as he outwardly assimilated into American society, he quietly shared Sicilian words and bittersweet stories of "home" with his

grandchildren – including his eldest granddaughter, affectionately called *strega* by his wife. (It was only years later, during a college Italian course, that I realized my childhood nickname was *witch*).

I was sitting in a café in Siracusa, Sicily, in 2016 – almost 80 years after my grandfather arrived in the United States – when I overheard a couple discussing *il problema con i profughi* ("the problem with refugees") as they cast sidelong glances at a group of young African men walking past. My back stiffened at the disdainful tone of their hushed voices, my brain translating their conversation even as I wished I could ignore it. The previous year, more than one million people made the voyage across the Mediterranean Sea and toward the European Union – but an estimated 3,735 people drowned in the process (see Clayton and Holland). In 2018, 141,500 refugees and migrants arrived in EU countries such as Italy, Spain, Greece, and Cyprus via three Mediterranean routes, with an additional estimated 2,277 people dead – mostly along the route from North Africa to Italy (see "Refugee and Migrant Arrivals to Europe in 2018"). Those who survive the voyage face pervasive racism and anti-refugee sentiments, as well as challenges such as unemployment, poverty, precarious legal status, limited educational opportunities, and inadequate resources to secure shelter and health care (especially related to mental health). Yet despite these risks, thousands of would-be asylum seekers continue taking their chances, paying human smugglers and traffickers to help facilitate their treks from war-torn countries such as Syria and Iraq, as well as impoverished nations throughout West and Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of those desperate people may eventually end up resettled to third countries, including the United States. (My current hometown of Saint Louis, Missouri, is a hub of refugee resettlement.) The young men who had passed my table in Siracusa – the ones who represented a "problem" for some casual onlookers – had likely survived thirst and starvation, armed conflict, and/or physical, mental, and sexual abuse (see "Harmful Borders"). Situated in Sicily, where so many Italians had left because of war and crushing poverty, I realized that I could not possibly understand the forces that drove these men from their homes – but my grandfather, and so many other Italians and Italian Americans, might understand more than they readily admit.

By this time, of course, my family's situation has changed dramatically – and so had the way Americans thought about Italians, the hyphenated sort or otherwise. I had earned a PhD and just received tenure as a university professor, while my younger brother held a graduate degree from an Ivy League institution. We were well educated, financially secure, and politically privileged – and no one ever questioned whether we were "real" Americans. Already benefited by *jus soli* citizenship laws that provided us with legal nationality simply because we were born on US soil – the winners of what Ayelet Shachar calls "the birthright lottery" – we both also became Italian citizens in 2004, thanks to nationality laws providing hereditary, birthright citizenship. I felt welcomed in Italy (even though locals could easily peg me as foreign-born thanks to my accent and frustrating inability to master Italian verb conjugation); I also felt protected by my dual nationalities, in Italy and around the world. What's more, my olive complexion certainly counted as "White," particularly when contrasted to the dark skin of recent migrants arriving from Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. My family's migration story had reached the point where we could once again be publicly proud of our heritage, rather than fearfully hiding it away. Indeed, my generation of Italian Americans now signs up for Italian language classes and hires private tutors; wades through piles of paperwork in hopes of securing Italian citizenship; and even mails our saliva samples – yes, we put our spit in envelopes – so that ancestry companies can locate our long-lost *cugini* (cousins) via the Internet.

The current situation of Italian Americans within broader US society stands in sharp contrast to the America my grandfather arrived in during the late 1930s, and it is certainly worlds away from what immigrants faced in the late 1800s and early twentieth century. Italians were racialized as the "Chinese of Europe" during political conversations about exclusion policies aimed at certain nationalities, for instance. In 1909 Detroit, an Italian-American editor wrote that "Italians are maltreated, mocked, scorned, disdained, and abused in every way. The inferiority of the Italians is believed to be almost that of the Asiatics" (Roediger 46), while a leading German-language newspaper in Chicago hoped that Chinese exclusion would be a model for immigration laws against Italians. In the American South, Italians who showed "friendly, first name familiarity" with Black[2]

Americans or "learned Jim Crow tardily" had their businesses destroyed (for instance, for serving Black customers in Mississippi) or were lynched for fraternizing with Black neighbors[3] (as was the case in Louisiana in 1896, when so many Black community members showed up to mourn that local Whites worried about interracial revenge). Indeed, in certain regions of the Jim Crow South, Italians "occupied a racial middle ground within the otherwise unforgiving, binary caste system of white-over-black. Politically Italians were white enough for naturalization and for the ballot, but socially they represented a problem population at best" (Roediger 96).

Southern Italians fared worse in this racial hierarchy that rewarded perceived Whiteness; the idea that Europe "ends at Naples" and "all the rest belongs to Africa" dates back to at least 1806 (Roediger 112). Booker T. Washington remarked after visiting Italy: "The Negro is not the man farthest down. The condition of the coloured farmer in the most backward parts of the Southern States in America, even where he has the least education and the least encouragement, is incomparably better than the condition and opportunities of the agricultural population in Sicily" (Ferraro xv). After Italian unification (*Risorgimento*) established the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 and eventually moved the capital to Rome in 1871, government policies that benefited northern Italians – including new tax structures, army draft laws, tariff systems to promote industrialization, and public works programs – led to a failed Socialist rebellion in 1892-94 (*Fasci siciliani*) and mass emigration. Eighty percent of Italian immigrants to the United States at the turn of the century were from the South, called the *Mezzogiorno* (see Ferraro xiv-xv, 75). Asked in 1972 why Sicilians had left for America, the mayor of Racalmuto – the neighboring town to my grandfather's village – replied: "You want to know why people left? Hunger, that's why… They were dying of hunger" (79). Racial divisions between northern and southern Italians endured in United States, among census takers and immigration officers as well as within immigrant communities themselves. In 1901, a northern Italian living in "The Hill" neighborhood of Saint Louis bragged that his neighborhood had remained White, while "them little black fellows" (Sicilians) lived downtown; other Saint Louisans from northern Italy emphasized that they did not come from the South, and were therefore of lighter complexion and advanced

intelligence (Roediger 113-114). (This helps explain, in my own family history, why my Sicilian grandfather and Milanese grandmother felt the need to elope to Ohio rather than attempting a family wedding in Detroit.)

Most Italian immigrants – including my own grandfather – quickly realized that Americanization went hand-in-hand with "becoming" White. Those who arrived between 1840 and 1924, in particular, entered a political space where race was the "prevailing idiom for discussing citizenship and the relative merits of a given people" (Jacobson 8-9). Indeed, "the legal equation of whiteness with fitness for citizenship shaped the process by which race was made in the United States" (Roediger 62). The Immigration Action of 1924 (also known as the Johnson-Reed Act) was "founded upon a racial logic borrowed from biology and eugenics" (Jacobson 8; see also Ngai), for instance, setting quotas on the number of immigrants from certain countries while funding a general ban on non-White immigrants – primarily southern Europeans, and especially Italians. In this environment, Italians realized – if they did not consider themselves White before arriving in the United States – that there were "clear advantages" of being White as quickly as possible (Roediger 119). Italians were initially assigned to racial categories that excluded them from full-fledged US citizenship; they were racialized because they were "unruly" and "not one of us" (Sheth 9). Much like the Irish, they slowly "became" White and entered the mainstream workforce, thus functioning outside of segregated markets. This transition meant that immigrants "were citizens of a democratic republic, with the right to elect and be elected, to be tried by a jury of their peers, to live wherever they could afford, and to spend, without racially imposed restrictions, whatever money they managed to acquire" (Ignatiev 3). This ability to become White – a process that non-European immigrants could not emulate – was an important asset for eventually pursuing the American Dream.[4] "It was their *whiteness*, not any kind of New World magnanimity, that opened the Golden Door" (Jacobson 8).

For those who remained in Italy, their country was one of emigration for generations. That trend has reversed in recent decades, however; it now has one of the highest volumes of migrants in Europe. This presents a difficult challenge for Italians, whose country does not have a modern history of immigration or multiculturalism despite official assurances

that the State respects cultural diversity. Italy's most visible minority group, the Roma, continues to face pervasive discrimination even though most Romani qualify for Italian citizenship. (Indeed, the situation is so troubling that Nando Sigona categorizes the experiences of the Roma in Italy as "everyday statelessness.") Far-right Italian minister Matteo Salvini saw a jump in his approval ratings after vowing to expel thousands of Roma from state territory in June 2018 (see Kirchgaessner), for instance, while the United Nations calls the Roma one of Europe's "most excluded groups" ("United Nations Regional Working Group on Roma" n. pag.) and warns of pervasive human rights abuses. The State's treatment of the Roma shows its "avowed commitment to guaranteeing all ethnic groups equal treatment failed to champion the presence of this vulnerable minority and its unique culture" (Armillei 137). At the same time, the government treats immigration as a socioeconomic "emergency" rather than considering its cultural and economic advantages; migrants are expected to assimilate and conform to the dominant Italian culture. "Interculturalism is still predominantly theoretical in character and not supported officially, in the sense of being incorporated into the nation's history," writes Riccardo Armillei. "Furthermore, a major issue in Italy has been the absence of a coherent social inclusion policy across the board. The prevailing trend is merely to devise policies that promote a balance between the preservation of national identity and a vague idea of social integration" (137).

Images of my grandfather watch over me as I write this essay. He is a 17-year-old with a stern, forward-looking stare on his application for an immigration visa, which was filed at the American Consulate in Naples. He was thin and poor, but he still had his hair slicked back and wore a suit jacket and tie. He has a half-smile on his face for the photo affixed to his "Declaration of Intention" form, filed with the US Department of Labor in Detroit in 1940 to signal his intent to become an American citizen. On his petition for naturalization in 1957, he declared that he had never been a member of the Communist party and signed his name in English – Joseph, not Giuseppe. Under his signature, scrawled in my grandfather's handwriting, are the words "I can go to work." I am struck by his measured, careful dignity in this paperwork; he is desperate, but his eyes are sharp

and his chin is up. I remember him as a homebody, not the adventuring sort – yet he somehow mustered up the courage to leave everything behind and start anew in a country where he was misunderstood, disliked, and almost entirely on his own. At that time, on the eve of World War II, my grandfather's most valuable "possession" was his ability to move.

During the peak of Italian immigration, newcomers enjoyed "mobility citizenship" that not only allowed them to be mobile (that is, to cross borders legally), but also to stay – and to become naturalized citizens with time: "This distinction is associated with the well-entrenched differentiation between the visitor and the immigrant. The first primarily relates to short-term mobility, whereas the latter relates to long-term stays and rights of residence" (Mau 340). Fears about the threatened "ideal" of US homogeneity led to increasingly restrictive migration policies, however. In 1917, the government implemented a literacy test for immigrants over 16 years old that required basic reading comprehension in any language, as well as increased arrival taxes and gave immigration officials more discretion in deciding whom to exclude. These measures eventually led to the Immigration Act of 1924, which provided visas to only two percent of the total number of people from each nationality in the United States (as of the 1890 national census) and completely excluded immigrants from Asia (see "The Immigration Act of 1924"). My grandfather and his relatives maneuvered around restrictions imposed by the 1924 Act, thankfully. (My grandfather's visa application suggests that my great-grandfather Antonio had acquired naturalized US citizenship years earlier, thus allowing Grandpa and other relatives into America as "nonquota" immigrants.) Mobility for Italians was therefore still possible by that point, but it had been significantly reduced since the turn of the century. The global depression of the 1930s and the outbreak of World War II curtailed immigration even further, yet the postwar creation of the United Nations and its 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) led to new legal provisions for asylum seekers and refugees throughout the international system. (Notably, the Convention protects people who have a "well-founded fear of being persecuted" in their home country – usually associated with armed conflict and specific forms of discriminatory violence. It provides little cover for migrants fleeing severe

poverty, however. While Syrians fleeing to Greece can easily claim refugee status under the Convention, the masses of African migrants arriving on Italy's shores are far less likely to successfully claim asylum.)

Frequently (and unfairly)[5] characterized as financial burdens to their new communities, migrants' futures are increasingly affected by market forces – rather than norms related to human rights – and their contributions are devalued. In her work on neoliberalism, Aihwa Ong argues that the elements commonly associated with citizenship – rights, entitlements, territoriality, and nation – "are becoming disarticulated and rearticulated with forces set in motion by market forces" (Ong 6). People who possess human capital or expertise are highly valued in the global economy, making them more mobile. They can exercise "citizenship-like claims" in locations around the world, claiming entitlements and benefits outside the state of their legal nationality, while others who lack these competencies are devalued and subject to exclusion (7). Elizabeth F. Cohen illustrates this dynamic in her work on "immigrant time," which analyzes the inequalities of US naturalization policies. For much of US history, continuous time-in-residence plus good moral character and civic knowledge eventually equaled naturalization. Yet increasingly, this equation no longer applies; those who lack human capital and expertise find that their time-in-residence is valued as politically valueless. "Because time and work and other variables are proxies for demonstrating people's capacities for citizenship, the denial of citizenship expresses the belief that these individuals are *incapable* of citizenship," Cohen writes (Cohen, "The Political Economy of Immigrant Time" 349). Indeed, she views delayed naturalization as a sort of theft of political time; the devaluation of such time "is a structural obstacle to equality" that not only devalues a person's actual life and lifespan, but also serves as a "thoroughgoing means to disenfranchise someone" and "imposes hierarchy and exclusion upon people who ought to be considered equal members" (Cohen, *The Political Value of Time* 5, 142-43). Undocumented immigrants may spend extremely long periods in residence within the United States (the most striking example is of the "Dreamers," or people who were brought to the US illegally as children and grew up in the country) but may never achieve naturalization. Cohen writes that this "non-recognition" yields "permanent disadvantage" (147).

While the process of "coming to America" has changed significantly since my grandfather and his fellow *italiani* immigrated, it remains surprisingly similar in various ways. Medical "fitness" remains a prerequisite for entry, for instance, thus making physical and mental health key indicators of one's worthiness of political membership and legal status. During the peak of immigration, steerage passengers were herded into compartments at Ellis Island's "Registry Room," then brought into "Judgement Hall" for medical inspections. Conditions such as trachoma, "sickness of the eye," could lead to deportation; about 50 percent of people were set aside for further examinations to determine whether conditions were serious enough to deny entry. Chalk marks on migrants' clothing signified back problems ("B"), hernias ("K"), lameness ("L") and suspected mental deficiencies ("X"), among other things. Fear of family separation was so strong that Ellis Island became known to Italian immigrants as "The Island of Tears" (Mangione and Morreale 111-12). Officers with the United States Public Health Service (PHS) often interpreted their job broadly; in their eyes, the goal was to prevent "the entrance of undesirable people" unworthy of citizenship; by 1903, the PHS had created two major categories: "Class A" loathsome or dangerous contagious diseases (including "insanity" and epilepsy), and "Class B" conditions that would make someone "likely to become a public charge" (Bateman-House and Fairchild n. pag). Today, medical clearance is still a basic requirement for immigrants seeking visas, lawful permanent residency (green cards), and eventually naturalized citizenship. Immigrant visa applicants must complete a medical examination by an authorized physician before their visa interview, for example. Although waivers are available in some cases, medical exams identify and often exclude people with communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, those with physical or mental disorders that may cause harm to themselves or others, people with histories of drug abuse and addiction, and those without required vaccinations (see "Medical Examination"). Medical clearance continues to play a central role immigration procedures into the United States, frequently marking those with physical or mental illnesses unfit for entry and citizenship – sometimes forcing families to make difficult decisions about where to go and who to leave behind in the process.

Armed conflict, terrorism, and ongoing fears of foreigners as enemies of the State also continue to color perceptions of worthiness for citizenship.

For those like my grandfather, whose migration story occurred after laws such as the 1924 Immigration Act stemmed the flow of Italians to the US, the journey was complicated by a hostile political climate that meant limited opportunities to secure passage and visas. Italians who settled on US soil were viewed as national security threats with the rise of Mussolini and the outbreak of World War II. While the incarceration of Japanese Americans with Executive Order 9066 is remembered as a dark chapter in American history, few recall that EO 9066 also led to the compulsory relocation of more than 10,000 Italian Americans (naturalized citizens living in Californian coastal communities) and restricted the movement of more than 600,000 Italian citizens nationwide (see Taylor, Brooke). (People of Italian descent were not placed *en masse* in detention campus like Japanese Americans were. However, Italian citizens deemed "potentially dangerous enemy aliens" could, and were, detained by the FBI and other US law enforcement; see National Archives.) Security fears play a prevalent role in US migration policies today, as well. In 2017, US President Donald Trump ordered a travel ban (which was upheld by the Supreme Court in June 2018) that indefinitely suspended the issuance of immigrant and nonimmigrant visas to people from Muslim-majority countries – Libya, Iran, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen, as well as North Korea and Venezuela. More than 135 million people fell under that ban; while exceptions can be granted, evidence suggests that only a small fraction of applicants successfully gain waivers (see Gladstone and Sugiyama). Trump and other immigration foes also point toward the US-Mexico border as a source of gang violence and criminal activity. Indeed, Trump's campaign platform included the promise to build a border wall and he repeatedly equated Mexicans with rapists during speeches. The Trump administration continues to insist that refugees and many immigrants represent threats to national security, while undocumented migration causes rising crime rates. (Existing scholarship suggests otherwise, however. For instance, a slew of recent research shows that undocumented immigrants do not drive up violent or nonviolent crime rates; in fact, they tend to engage in far less criminal activity than legal immigrants or US-born citizens; see Burnett.)

Many of these concerns are mirrored in Italy, where an influx of migrants tests Italian norms of hospitality and welcome. Migration to Europe is

constructed (by both the media and politicians) as a "crisis" that threatens State security, legitimizing an erosion of refugee protection and asylum-seeking rights (see Colombo). In response, Italy and other European states increasingly (and controversially) seek to close and tightly control borders. An agreement between Italy and Libya, for instance, tasked the Libyans with preventing migration across the Mediterranean. By partnering with Libyan militias, critics contend that Italy is basically "paying smugglers to act as coastguards or redirecting development aid to corrupt African regimes in return for trapping Africans on the move" (Howden n. pag). Salvini, the populist League leader, constructed an electoral campaign promising to expel masses of migrants; the fact that this was impractical and illegal did not stop him from obtaining 17 percent of the vote in 2018 elections (in the 2019 European elections, the League doubled this percentage). Before his nomination as Minister of the Interior, he said: "Italy and Sicily can't be the refugee camp of Europe. Our house will be our priority" (Perrier 26). Trump echoed similar sentiments in the United States shortly thereafter. These tensions came to a head in the summer of 2018, when hundreds of migrants on several humanitarian ships were blocked from Italian ports. The ordeal began with the Aquarius – a search-and-rescue vessel operated by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders) and European NGO SOS Méditerranée – when it was turned away from Italy on June 10. Its 629 migrants (including 123 unaccompanied minors and seven pregnant women) were at the center of a Mediterranean standoff until Spain's government finally offered its port in Valencia. Salvini, who had complained that other European states did not take adequate responsibility for accepting asylum seekers and migrants, declared victory – while others viewed the event (and indeed, the similar situations to follow that summer) a "symptom of a sick Europe" (Baker n. pag.). Meanwhile, the hashtag #chiudiamoiporti (#closetheports) became popular amongst Salvini's supporters on social media.

Migration was a frequent topic of conversation in my Italian course for foreigners at the University of Milan (Università degli Studi di Milano, otherwise known as La Statale) during the spring of 2018. We were a diverse group; a few American English speakers, like me, along with migrants from Eastern Europe and Russia, the Middle East, and West

Africa. Always a good classroom learner, I struggled in this particular course. It was hard to hear in the large, crowded room, and I had a difficult time understanding spoken Italian through such a wide range of accents. The professor's teaching style was Italian but my brain had been hardwired to the American system, so I became frustrated with the way the lessons hopped from topic-to-topic. I could not find my (expensive) textbook at any of the local bookstores, and I had fallen behind in my homework by the time it finally arrived via Amazon. These challenges exasperated me; I left the classroom feeling (as I told my loved ones on Skype) like a total idiot. These frustrations and my busy schedule led me – a valedictorian, Dean's List student, PhD recipient, Fulbright Scholar, and tenured professor – to quit my B2-level Italian class in a pouty huff. Honestly, it is easy to quit when you have little on the line aside from your own pride and personal interest; quitting is perhaps humbling, but not particularly difficult. That is not the case for those desperate to achieve the minimum proficiency required by the Italian state for citizenship, or for those who need enough Italian to get a low-paying job to survive. (Similarly, that is not the case for resettled refugees in the United States who need English to support themselves after their initial government funds run out shortly – often 90 days – after arrival. Nor for the immigrants, legal and undocumented, who rely on English for work, education, and even the most basic of social integration).

Language proficiency often plays a pivotal role in the social integration of immigrants and refugees. Just as my grandfather struggled to learn English quickly so that he could work in the United States, newcomers to both the US and Italy realize that language skills are necessary for basic survival. (Indeed, the Italian government's National Integration Plan stresses: "Learning of the Italian language represents a right *but also a duty*, since it constitutes an essential prerequisite for a concrete path towards social integration, fundamental for the interaction with the local community, for access to the labour market and public services"; "National Integration Plan" 23.) In Italy, language courses and vocational training are often provided in asylum reception centers organized within the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati, or SPRAR). Created by Law No 189/2002 and comprised of a network of organizations, SPRAR's

core identity focuses on "integrated reception" interventions that stress "socioeconomic inclusion and integration" ("SPRAR" n. pag.). Similarly, in the United States English instruction is frequently provided by non-profit agencies or local community colleges. In Saint Louis, for instance, the International Institute offers language classes, while the Immigrant & Refugee Women's Program teaches refugee women basic English and practical living skills in their own homes (thus also reducing isolation and building social networks). Yet despite best intentions, there are frequently shortages of qualified language instructors, overcrowded classes, and course schedules that don't accommodate student schedules. Resettled refugees living in Central New York State note in research interviews that older students often give up their seats in language classes to make space for younger relatives, which helps the family earn overall income but also serves to isolate older family members. Language courses also tend to focus on lower-level language acquisition, to the frustration of migrants hoping to achieve higher education (see Kingston and Stam).

Debates about integration – including criticisms that newcomers do not learn the language quickly enough or leave the cultural enclaves of refugee communities – usually fail to account for the serious, long-lasting effects of forced migration. Asylum seekers and refugees often face challenges associated with the horrors they left behind, for instance, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and physical consequences of war. Some had little formal education because of severe poverty or armed conflict back home, while others had their studies interrupted by violence. Asylum seekers and refugees also tend to have fewer support networks and survival strategies in place, compared to economic immigrants; there is no time for planning and strategizing when you have to leave in a hurry. Yet expectations in both the US and Italy stress self-sufficiency after arrival, with little attention paid to the unique challenges stemming from forced migration. In Italy, an emphasis on "tough but effective" self-help and empowerment means that forced migrants receive minimal support and, as a result, experience greater difficulties than any other group in finding a job – any job – that will cover their basic living expenses (see Ortensi). For families who do "make it," ongoing structural inequities continue to negatively impact migrants and their families. It is notable that students of

foreign origin are regularly directed toward vocational school tracks within the Italian school system, rather than encouraged by their teachers to pursue a university education. Such biases serve to segregate migrant children into the lower tracks of the Italian system (see Bonizzoni, Romito, and Cavallo). In the United States, the "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" perspective on work ethic leaves limited space for anything perceived as "welfare" or special assistance for migrants. (Opponents to immigration and refugee resettlement use this to their advantage, creating social media memes falsely purporting that "illegal" refugees receive almost $4,000 per month from the US government while the average Social Security payment is less than half of that sum. Similar memes attack the Resettlement Assistance Program in Canada.) Even in cases such as US higher education, where global student populations have become the norm, the specific challenges associated with forced displacement are rarely addressed. In a recent research interview, a resettled refugee student studying in the US told me: "Even at university, they put 'international students' in the same box as 'refugee students.' They aren't the same thing. [Immigrant students] might have an accent, but they understand [English and course materials] more, they have different experiences."

It is important to stress that accepting refugees and other migrants into our communities is not entirely a humanitarian, altruistic act. In Italy, advocates argue that because small towns and farms are being abandoned as the population shrinks and young people move to urban centers, a network of small "welcome" communities could benefit citizens and migrants alike. Angelo Moretti writes that welfare systems are unsustainable, but that a system of welcome could be the answer – if Italians recognized the potential contributions of migrants, while simultaneously encouraging newcomers to give small towns a chance. (He contends that migrants look to big cities because that is how Europe is represented to them: "the images of Europe they receive via the Internet are ones of London, Paris, Rome, Milan, Oslo, Madrid, Berlin, Monaco, Brussels. All of Europe comes synthesized on postcards of ten cities"; Moretti 19.) Hints at such cooperation have appeared in emergencies – for instance, when an October 2015 storm devastated a refugee community and prompted a burst of media attention and grassroots organizing in Italy. (That emergency

led to a larger project of welcome organized by the non-profit Catholic agency Caritas, identified on social media with #FamigliaCARITAS, in May 2016; see Giorgione 111.) In the United States, cities such as Saint Louis, Missouri, have benefited immensely from infusions of resettled refugees. During the 1990s, thousands of Bosnian Muslims fleeing civil war were resettled in Saint Louis' struggling, poor areas – and are credited with breathing new life into entire communities, including the Bevo Mill neighborhood. "We were losing population and people more than almost any city in America before the Bosnians came," explains Saint Louis Mayor Francis Slay. "They've helped us revitalize this city"; indeed, mayors from many "Rust Belt" American cities have decried Trump's efforts to curtail migration: "in St. Louis and the rest of the region's dilapidated, post-industrial cities, [Trump's anti-immigrant message] is anathema. Immigrants represent rebirth: they've stabilized neighborhoods, cushioned city coffers and, in the process, supported credit ratings and bond sales" (Jamrisko and Bloomberg n. pag.).

Despite the positive impacts of migration on some host communities, misinformation and stereotypes continue to stymie positive solution-seeking and integration. At the height of the Aquarius crisis during the summer of 2018, for instance, five myths were prevalent throughout Europe – thus shaping policy decisions and public opinion: the beliefs that the crisis is over, that we cannot separate refugees from economic migrants, that telling "human stories" is enough to change minds, that the crisis threatens European values, and that history is repeating itself and there is nothing to do about it (see Trilling). These myths reflect not only the tendencies for the media to essentialize complex stories and for viewers to lose interest in ongoing humanitarian issues, but also highlight how perceived threats to economic and cultural dominance lead to gross disregard for human rights norms. Frequently, prevalent narratives about migration fuel our perceptions of who "ought" to claim asylum and who is "worthy" of protection. In her study of refugee centers in Sicily, for example, Noemi Casati highlights how "deservingness" for aid is socially constructed. Refugees' gratitude and trust as expressions of moral recognition, clothing and attitudes toward work as ways to place oneself on a "scale of suffering," and reliance on welfare as a sign of laziness and

immorality were all identified as vital themes in relationships between newcomers and citizens. Casati writes that "people's grids of evaluation are much more complex than simple oppositions between white and black, local and foreigner, citizen and refugee. Embedded 'everyday categorisations' are constructed and negotiated on both sides in each interaction" (Casati 805). In the United States, constructions of deservingness help explain why Mexican and Central American migrants are often viewed as undocumented immigrants instead of legitimate asylum seekers – even for those fleeing persecution stemming from vast government corruption and gang violence in their countries of origin. (Indeed, Human Rights Watch and other advocacy groups argue that the United States government turns away asylum seekers at the Mexican border – thus denying them their legal right to claim asylum; see Garcia Bochenek.)

Perhaps the most interesting (and frustrating) forms of anti-migrant sentiment come from people who were once newcomers themselves, or are the children or grandchildren of migrants. Indeed, immigrant communities often reflect a "last one through the door" mentality that simultaneously celebrates their contributions to the host country while attempting to prevent new groups from joining the polity. These discussions often focus on legality, stressing that newcomers should "come here legally" even if the legal avenues for migration that benefited their own families have been closed or seriously constrained. (In my family, my uncle defends his support for Trump's restrictive migration policies by arguing that newcomers will "steal American jobs." This argument, of course, was the same one used to discriminate against his father, grandfather, and uncles decades ago.) In the United States, Thomas J. Ferraro argues that Italian Americans in the outer belts of inner cities (such as Metro Detroit, where my family lives) began to feel abandoned by the 1970s. In old Italian neighborhoods, growing desperation led many Italian Americans to latch on to "the combination of territorial pride *and* white righteousness at work in certain strands of the new ethnic consciousness" (Ferraro 164). Again, perceptions of deservingness stress the positive impacts of migrants who arrived before – but often leave little space for those attempting the voyage today. This happens to a lesser-but-still-notable degree in Italy, where the country's first Black senator – Toni Iwobi, an immigrant from Nigeria – campaigned

under the League party slogan "stop the invasion." (He shared election success with party colleague Attilio Fontana, who was elected governor of Lombardy in March 2018 and who argues that an influx of migrants will wipe out "our white race.") Iwobi contends that his election proves that his party is not against "legal" migration, but instead seek policies that "bring peace and order to the nation" (Giuffrida n. pag.). League party goals include making it easier to deport migrants, refusing to accept the undocumented arriving on humanitarian rescue ships, and developing EU-wide aid projects in countries of origin to stop people from migrating.

My first visit to Grotte was prompted by my grandfather's struggle with Alzheimer's disease, which had robbed him of short-term memory but had mercifully left him with joyful memories of Sicily. During the summer of 2004 (the same summer I was granted my Italian citizenship), I took the overnight ferry from Naples to Palermo, then the train to Agrigento, and then an even slower train to Grotte. I wandered into City Hall asking about my grandfather's birthplace and suddenly acquired a town full of cousins. People fed me in their homes, took me to the beach, brought me to concerts – someone even gave me a tour of the countryside on the back of a police motorcycle. In a town where almost everyone had either my grandfather's last name or my great-grandmother's maiden name, the assumption was that we were all related *somehow.* It was a homecoming I did not expect, but will be forever grateful for. I sought out photos of sites my grandfather would remember from his childhood, since his memory was too far gone to process new information; I snapped photographs of the caves outside of town (*grotte* means "caves" in Italian), of the staircase used for the cross procession on Good Friday, of the town's historic central piazza. Back in Michigan, I sat with Grandpa in his living room – his expression a little dreamy, not quite sure who exactly I was – and handed him the pile of photos. Recognition dawned on his face and he began excitedly naming the places in the photographs, telling stories as if he had been there only yesterday. He cried, I cried – everybody cried. And I felt such an immense relief that after all those years, through the fog of Alzheimer's and before death came for him, he had the chance to return home.

My grandfather's enduring love for his hometown – and the connection

to Italy he passed down to his granddaughter – is a powerful reminder that migration is not an easy undertaking. It comes with consequences, good and bad, and represents the loss of home as much as the gaining of a new one. Perhaps by telling these stories from our own families, and by recognizing the complicated and sometimes ugly histories from countries such as the United States and Italy, we can begin to re-humanize migrants in our political discussions. Just as skin color or national origin do not determine who is a "legitimate" claimant of asylum, neither does the "achievement" of arriving somewhere first. I exist as an American citizen because my great-grandfather Antonio found a way around a discriminatory system in order to grant my grandfather nonquota immigrant status; so many more Americans only "made it in" because their ancestors arrived before the State enacted rules to stop them. And in Italy, where far too many citizens vehemently protest the integration of refugees, the suffering of war and poverty still resides within living memory. Those shared human experiences ought to reaffirm our commitment to human rights norms, including the right to asylum, and give us the courage to fight against exclusionary rhetoric. Because the scars of forced migration still show in my own family, I recognize that the newcomers – those arriving on boats, walking across deserts, sitting in detention, crying as they are separated from their children – share an experience that my grandfather would have partly understood. The privileges in my own life are a direct result of the struggles he endured – and with that privilege, I advocate for the rights of migrants who seek human security and dignity. I hope that others will reflect upon their own migration stories and find the strength to declare, clearly and with determination: *Benvenuto.* Welcome.

Notes

[1] An ethnic slur directed against Italians, the origins of "wop" remain unclear. Alan Dundes associates this term with migration in the 1920s. Italians who had entered the US illegally and who were awaiting deportation had their documents labeled "WOP" by US officials, which stood for "Without Papers" (Dundes 192). Recently, after New York Governor Andrew Cuomo associated his Italian-American family with the term, Ben Zimmer recalled in *The Atlantic* how etymological research has long demonstrated that "wop" actually comes from a southern Italian dialectal word, *guappo* or *guappu,* meaning "dandy" or "swaggerer." Regardless of its origins, the term "wop" – much like the racial slurs "dago" and "white nigger" – were used to verbally attack Italians and Italian Americans and mark them as separate, and inferior to, "white" (Anglo) Americans (Zimmer n. pag.).

[2] The terms *Black* and *African American* are often used interchangeably but stem from different historical perspectives. For the purposes of this essay, I have opted to use the term *Black* (except when other terms are used in direct quotes) because it is the identifier embraced by activists within the "Black Lives Matter" movement. (I capitalize *Black* and *White* unless they are un-capitalized within direct quotes; again, both styles are widely used.) I acknowledge the power and value of the term *African American*, however, and I regret the inadequacies of language in this instance.

[3] This observation is certainly not meant to equate violence against Italian Americans with the suffering experienced by Black Americans. As noted by Roediger, "no European immigrant group suffered anything like the terror that afflicted people of color" (Roediger 106).

[4] Of course, Italian Americans still face stereotypes; *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos* portray us in the public imagination as mafia gangsters (see Messina), while TV shows such as *Jersey Shore* have hardly done us any favors. (In 2010, my elderly grandmother demanded that I explain "what in the heck" a Snooki was.) Yet the harm stemming from these stereotypes cannot be equated with the suffering caused by racism against Black Americans and other people of color. Despite the discrimination outlined in this essay, Italian Americans have nevertheless benefited from White privilege; their ability to "become" White has helped secure their political, economic, and social privileges within US society.

[5] In 2017, for instance, Trump administration officials rejected a study by the Department of Health and Human Services that found refugees brought in $63 billion more in government revenues over the past decade than they cost. Such data contrasted claims from the White House, which emphasized the "financial burden" narrative and sought to reduce the number of refugees allowed into the country (see Davis and Sengupta).

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Lin Ling

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf: Diasporic Muslim Identities in Literary Representation

This study explores the representation of diasporic Muslim identities in a coming-of-age narrative: the novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* by the Syrian American woman writer Mojha Kahf, published in 2006. It examines how the religious diasporic hybrid identity is mobilized within the female protagonist, Khadra Shamy, including how she struggles to negotiate her identity across different cultural terrains and gendered, racialised, intergenerational configurations. It attempts to show how these literary representations construct – and help conceptualize – the ways we understand diasporic Muslims in the US.

Mohja Kahf was born in Damascus, Syria, to a family of practicing Muslims, and migrated to the United States in 1971 at the age of four. Brought up in Indianapolis, Kahf experienced "some of the worst years of her life" (Koon 14). These were the hard times for many of the immigrants experiencing backlashes to the post-1965 immigration tide and growing racial tension. Such experience, however, has also led Kahf to finding a voice in her writing. This semi-autographical novel is a coming-of-age story of a Syrian immigrant girl, Khadra Shamy, who grows up in a devoutly observant Muslim family in 1970s Indiana. The East-West cultural clashes, along with her encounters with practicing and secular Muslim individuals within the community, with varying interpretations of Islamic codes, compel her to continually explore the faultlines between "Muslims" and "Americans." She goes through stages of teenage militancy, of uncertainty as her vision broadens, and a short disastrous marriage to Juma, her overbearing Kuwaiti husband. Khadra then makes a trip to her homeland, Syria, where she begins her healing process and recovers her

faith. On returning to America, she takes care to stay away from Indiana, where past traumatic experiences still haunt her. Later, her job sends her back to Indiana to cover a national Islamic conference, whereby she finds signs of changes on the familiar ground and a bond with her old community.

The novel is not written as a sociological treatise intending to represent American Islam. Kahf, however, pulls us into a compelling story of the individual experience of a Muslim American girl as a member of a triple minority in American society. As Ae-Ryung Kim argues, "by collecting dispersed experiences and constructing them into a story, the experiences can be located as a signified unit in this society and history" (Kim 53). As such, Kahf's story provides insights into the complexity of wider issues in the lives of the Muslim American community: cultural clashes between Islamic and American social mores and norms, inter-generational conflicts between first-generation Muslim immigrants and subsequent generations, race relations among Muslims with differing cultural origins and theoretical allegiances, and the varying interpretations of Islamic codes within the community.

Islam, once thought to be primarily a faith alien to the Judeo-Christian tradition of American society, has grown to be one of the most prominent and rapidly growing religious movements in America since the 1960s, and the political and cultural life of American Muslims as a religious minority has received much scholarly attention. While a wide range of socio-political studies have revealed social contexts and statistical information about the community, textual analysis of Muslim-authored literary works will provide a research paradigm that may help to explore the individual Muslims' emotional responses to the diaspora experience.

The individual experiences narrated in the novel illuminate a series of essential socio-political issues facing the community as a religious minority in a secular context. How can they reconcile their Muslim identity with the host culture in their integration into American society? How can the basic ethics and theology of Islam be made relevant to their current conditions? What are the fears, hopes and aspirations for their social life? This study addresses these questions through the representation of cultural hybridity in literary narrative within the framework of postcolonial theory. It focuses on three constructs of the novel central to the conceptualization of the

female protagonist's hybrid identity: firstly, the mirror images and moral panics that generate cultural clashes in the East-West encounter; secondly, the predicament of of the protagonist's ambivalent existence as a diasporic individual; and thirdly, the ways she forges her hybrid identity as a New Woman within the diasporic context.

East-West Encounter: Mirror Images and Moral Panics

Like many diasporic writings, the novel begins with the protagonist embarking on a journey, thus establishing immediately its preoccupation with place and displacement. The journey in this narrative is used to explore a sense of individual identity, where voyages over geographical space become a metaphor for the journey into the self. The narrative begins with Khadra Shamy going back to Indiana on a work assignment. The onset of the narrative presents the image of the protagonist as a secluded woman with an anxiety of displacement, and her journey back enacts the retrieval of the past.

As Khadra recalls growing up Muslim in Indiana as an immigrant, the narrative revolves around the journey of her family into settlement. The scenes surrounding the cultural clashes between the Shamys and their white neighbours following their arrival, however, problematize an idealized vision of America which promises the successful realization of cultural diversity. The culture clashes range from taunts of "raghead" by the white boy Brian, and the white neighbor Vaughn throwing glasses at their doorsteps, to the shouts from Vaughn's father – "go back where you came from" (Kahf 6-7). At times, the conflict takes the form of organized social activism, as the anti-Islamic group American Protectors of the Environs of Simmonsville asserts that the Muslim community "will destroy the character of our town," and denounces to the Immigration and Naturalization authorities that the Dawah Center of Khadra's community harbors illegal immigrants (42-43). Anti-Islamism and racism become interspersed as part of everyday reality and culminate in the Ku Klux Klan violence that murders Khadra's friend Zuhura, as well as vandalism of the Islamic Dawah Center during the Iranian Hostage Crisis. Through the lens

of the Muslim immigrants, the novel charts the larger anti-assimilationist trend that gripped America in the 1970s.

The novel concurrently details the culture shock and lurking dangers felt by the Shamys as new Muslim immigrants to America. Fears arises when they discover that "pork was everywhere," and it is not "merely a matter of avoiding the meat of the pig"; soon their eyes are opened to the fact that "pig meat came under other names and guises in this strange country" (12). Little Khadra's horror is described in detail when she finds that the candy corn her kindergarten teacher has given her to eat contains "pig," as "pig" invariably implied filthiness and even a health hazard in her Islamic upbringing. And there is also Khadra's fear felt in her middle school when the bullies tear off her head scarf repeatedly, and her teachers pretend not to notice.

The contrast between Islamic codes and American cultural norms is at the heart of East-West encounter narratives within the novel. This not only defines flashpoints of cultural clashes but generates a mirror image whereby Khadra's parents as devout Muslims see themselves as morally superior to Americans. As mission-minded Muslims, Khada's parents are devoted to their work for the local Dawah Center, aspiring to spread the word of the Prophet and to help fellow Muslims to perfect their practice of Islam. They transported the "home space" with them when they settled in the US. Like many similar emigrants, they seek to re-create nostalgically and reflectively the cultural and emotional particularities of locations and connections left behind. It does not matter to them if the practice of their religious rituals is incongruous with common practices of American society. In fact, the practices of Muslim families are portrayed as the models of a good society, which claim to represent the true essence of humanistic behavior through a collective culture with a sense of cleanliness and morality. Khadra's mother, Ebtehaj, provides in this sense as a model of womanhood that of a devout first-generation Muslim immigrant. Her sense of moral superiority and resistance to American culture is manifest in her intolerance of dogs and beers, which are treated as "impurities" in Islamic codes, and her constant efforts to ensure that her kids "didn't turn into lazy American children" (21). She keeps on ranting when the children are found to be dirty and wet after playing outside: "'Do you think we are Americans? Do you think we

have no limits? Do you think we leave our children wandering the streets?' Then she sobbed, her face twisted in grief: 'We are not Americans!'" (67). In this context the voices of the Muslim community are constructed so as to make them as distinct from the host culture as possible. The Islamic codes as observed by Khadra's parents thus essentially serve as a marker of difference, to set boundaries between "good" Muslims and "impure" Americans. These differences are celebrated as characteristics of the "other," and the American indigenous culture is devalued as "shallow, wasteful and materialistic," while "Islam could solve many of their social ills, if they but knew" (68). This construction of binary oppositions derived from mirror images of the "other" further unfolds in the moral panic felt by Ebtehaj in her perception of the Americans as "a crashing sea of unbelief in which the Dawah Center bobbed, a brave boat" (67). Years later, one of the aunties in the community explained to Khadra what it was like for her parents to attempt to build a safe Islamic haven in America as a strange land. She says: "We were scared, afraid of losing something precious... of being swallowed up by this land, reduced to nothing" (405). This fear of "being swallowed up" by a strange host culture epitomizes Khadra's parents' totalizing view of "Americans," who are homogenized into negative stereotypes while the cultural differences are essentialized at the expense of commonalities and parallels, thus constructing an image of "us" vs. "them" on opposite poles.

Cultural Hybridity: A Place of Ambivalent Existence

Against the backdrop of culture clashes in a world divided between "us" and "them," a self-image conceived by the protagonist as defender of her religious faith is revealed in the narrative:

> she'd been through at school, defending her identity against the jeering kids who vaunted America's superiority as the clincher put-down to everything she said, everything she was. Wasn't she supposed to be an Islamic warrior woman, a Nusayba, a Sumaya, an Um Slamah in exile, by the waters dark, of Babylon? (141)

Khadra's doubts and anger reached new heights when her family go to court for US citizenship, and to her "taking citizenship felt like giving up, giving in" (141), much in the sense of betraying her Islamic identity. To Khadra's parents, however, the decision is anything but a sharp turn. Khadra's father, for his support of the Islamic movement that sought to overthrow the Syrian dictator, is hunted as a political convict by the Syrian government and the family's "dream of return" to homeland is thwarted outright by the political upheaval and massacre back there. In a flashback, the novel recounts the emotional turmoil Khadra went through:

> eleven years away from the girl who cried into her pillow at the defeat the day the US citizenship papers came, caught between homesick parents and a land that didn't want her. Not just didn't want her, but actively hated her, spit her, made her defiant in her difference, yet at the same time made her unfit to live anywhere else. (391)

For Khadra, it was a moment of crisis to become conscious, more than ever, of being caught in a place of ambivalent belonging and existence – a place of origin on the one hand and a place of displacement on the other. A hyphenated Arabian-American Muslim identity forces its way in to dismantle her self-image as an Arabian Muslim brought to America for the cause of Dawah.

While going through the emotional turmoil of identity crisis, Khadra poses as a rebellious young woman seeking radical action. She "donned black headscarves with a surge of righteous austerity that startled her parents," as they thought a young girl "should be wearing lighter colors" (149); she hangs out with her Shia friends, "on purpose choosing to identify with the sect opposite her Sunni background" (153); and she grows "impatient with traditional Islamic scholarship, with its tedious, plodding chapters" on rituals, scorning the "moderate Islamic revival movement" of her parents and the Dawah people, "for it did not go far enough down the revolutionary path" (150). In these narratives the conflicting values of her religious radicalism become entwined at the site of her individual consciousness, only under the disguise of her black-scarf defiance. As Hussain argues, "in order for hybridity to merge two cultures, a narcissistic sense of inclusion (contentment with identity) and a transgressive sense of

extension (adapting to surroundings) are prerequisite conditions" (Hussain 12). Khadra, however, finds herself trapped in a predicament where she can no longer feel at ease with her Islamic upbringing or the sense of inclusion with her community while concurrently reacting against the host culture.

Within the novel, Khadra's feeling of being suspended in-between cultures is further captured in her experience in the German Islamic studies professor's class, which makes her aware that the belief system of her parents and their circle, including the Dawah Center, is "just one point on a whole spectrum of Islamic faith" and "just one little corner of it" (Kahf 232). It is "terrifying" for her, however, to find herself being caught in a flux between two conflicting sets of Islamic teachings, "the view of Islam she'd grown up knowing" and the one that "she was catching glimpses of" in her college class; she feels "as if she were standing atop two earth plates grinding as they moved in different directions" (234). As Homi Bhabha discusses in *The Location of Culture*, this is indicative of the pain and awkwardness of a diasporic individual being "continually positioned in space between a range of contradictory places that coexist" (Bhabha 47).

Much of the female protagonist's story of being torn between Islamic and American social constructions of gendered identity revolves around the *hijab*, the emblem of Islamic womanhood. The novel exposes how the veil is fetishized and politicized in dominant Western discourses as a sign of disempowerment and oppression of Muslim women. The hijab, as a stark marker of Islamic womanhood, tends to create binary positions – the veiled position and the feminist position, each of which exposes sharply contrasted views on both sides of the debate. In this debate, there is no power of ambiguity or hybridity for the *hijab*: the veiled woman is either "virtuous" subscribing to Islamic values or "oppressed" in colonial discourse. And it is not the veil per se that is oppressive, but the way it is portrayed and reinforced in people's imagination. One of the growing-up experiences in America that Khadra continues to recall is when she was repeatedly harassed and mocked at school for veiling. These narratives represent the dominant cultural gaze that constructs in dichotomous terms the gendered identity of the protagonist as a veiled woman.

Juxtaposed with the scenes of East-West culture clashes is the encounter between Khadra and her Iranian-American roommate, Bitsy, who freaks

out when she sees Khadra wearing her veil and asks her: "You're not one of those fanatics, are you?" (Kahf 363). Later it becomes clear to Khadra that Bitsy's parents were both killed in the Iranian Islamic Revolution and the very thought of being surrounded by Muslim women in *hijabs* with "Islamic phrases ringing out all around" her is embedded in little Bitsy's memory as "the scariest time" of her life (375). This account conveys the message that Islamophobia is in fact rooted in a homogenized image of the Muslim community, which invariably revitalizes the politicized, monolithic stereotype of veiled Muslim women.

The Muslim veil has almost invariably become a defining feature of Muslim female subjectivity, despite the fact that it is not the only distinctive emblem of Muslim identity, nor do the majority of Muslim women wear the veil (Scott 4). Many Americans view the Islamic headcovering as the hallmark of a controversial and repressive religion (Chan-Malik 112). In the dichotomous terms of neo-orientalist discourse, Muslim women are "othered" through the fabricated images of the veil as a sign of disempowerment and oppression. On the other hand, there is a view among practising Muslims that Muslim women are valued only if they observe Muslim female dress codes. In these binary conceptions, mandatory acts of veiling and unveiling have become representations of the irreconcilable values of the old world versus the modern. Kahf works towards the unsettling of these binary constructions within the novel. Kahf challenges such neo-orientalist discourse by exploring a new narrative that "includes veiling as a particular expression of Muslim Americanesss, rather than foreignness" (Addurraqib 63) A defining moment for the protagonist occurs during her journey to Syria, when she decides to exercise autonomy over veiling, as she realizes that:

> The covered and the uncovered, each mode of being had its moment. She embraced them both. Going out without *hijab* meant she would have to manifest the quality of modesty in her behavior, she realized one day, with a jolt. It's in how I act, how I move, what I choose, every minute. (Kahf 312)

In this narrative, acts of veiling and unveiling represent different stages in the maturation of the protagonist as a Muslim woman, and the veil is no longer associated with the sign of a "moral badge" (Ahmad 100).

As Ahmad points out, the problem with the veil as an emblem of moral distinction is its exclusion of unveiled Muslims, no matter how devout they might be. Freeing herself from the routine commitment of veiling, however, heightens Khadra's emotional attachment to the *hijab* as a sign of Islamic heritage whereby she would claim her religious identity and pride in the American land:

> She wanted them to know at Customs, at the reentry checkpoint, she wanted them to know at O'Hare, that she was coming in under one of the many signs of the heritage. And she wanted her heart to remember, in the dappled ruffle and rustle of veiling and unveiling, How precious is the heritage! A treasure fire cannot eat. (Kahf 313)

When Khadra comes to the realization that "veiling and unveiling are part of the same process, the same cycle… both are necessary" (309), she is no longer trapped in the gulf between veiling and unveiling as binary oppositions. Rather, she finds herself in an in-between space where the true spirit of religion exists and is more at peace with her inner self. This space of ambivalent existence has afforded her the emancipating power to forge hybridity – she becomes "new" by using the power of ambivalence to create an identity that is intercultural, fluid, and potentially empowering: "The sunlight on her head was a gift from God. Gratitude filled her…Here was an exposure, her soul an unmarked sheet shadowing into distinct shapes under the fluids. Fresh film. Her self, developing" (309). The veil, in this sense, functions as "an impetus for self-definition within a framework that allows women to be both Muslim and independent" (Droogsma 296). The protagonist, as a young woman living in a nexus between two cultures and as a member of a minority faith in the American society, is carving out a space for the development of an autonomous self with the use of this potent religious symbol. As Rhys Williams and Gira Vashi point out, "*Hijab* carves out a cultural space for young Muslim women to live lives their mothers could barely have imagined [...] and still to be publicly Muslim. [...] These young women are active agents and are able, to some degree, to create their own lives" (Williams and Vashi 283) For Khadra, the

act of veiling and unveiling works as a sign of autonomy and marks a step towards her maturity as an independent woman.

The Diasporic New Woman

The feminist ideal of the "New Woman" emerged in the late 19th Century and constituted a cultural and literary weapon for twentieth-century American feminist activism. The term "New Woman" in literary textual configuration depicted the changing image of women from the established and accepted role-model to a more radical figure. It referred to women "who exercised control over their own lives be it personal, social, or economic" (Bordin 2). Often positioned in a late 19th- and early 20th-century context, the term "New Woman" is also applicable to the reading of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. The protagonist Khadra becomes a "New Woman" as she recognizes herself as an individual and chooses a strategy to overcome the pressure to conform to the role others want to see her enact. The strategy used by the protagonist as a "New Woman" involves a journey into herself, within both a psychological and a geographical context, questioning convention and tradition (Hussain 60). As a diasporic religious individual, moreover, Khadra's quest for self-identity entails negotiating differences across cultures and an exploration of her religious faith in the changing cultural contexts.

The protagonist's idealized vision of Islamic practices gradually comes under scrutiny as she grows older. The important encounter occurs during Khadra's pilgrimage to Mecca with her family. The idealization of the religion, experienced and sustained by the immigrants in the diaspora, is much exposed in this context where the Islam of the Dawah Center comes into conflict to an encounter with the Islam of Haj, and of Saudi Arabia more specifically. Khadra awakens one morning to the Adhan to a dawn prayer in a Mosque "as if to the call of love" (Kahf 166); however, she is restricted by the guards from entering the mosque because only men are allowed to pray there and women must worship at home. For Khadra, "the *Hajj* morphs from a spiritual journey into a cultural journey: she has visited the true homeland for Muslims, and she has found that she is an unwanted

stranger." (Lashley 53). What further increases her sense of alienation and estrangement is the joy ride experience with her cousin's Saudi friends. They pull off her *hijab*, harass her and throw taunts on her: "What is it – what is the big *deal* – we're not doing anything you have to worry about... you grew up in *America* – don't tell me you never do stuff like this in America" (Khaf 177). As a girl brought up in America, she is thus "othered" with "internalized negative stereotypes concerning American women," with "the assumption that she is American and therefore immoral and sexually permissive" (Lashley 54) These encounters in the land of Haj bring Khadra to an awareness of the vulnerability of her idyllic world: "And even though she was in a Muslim country at this moment, and not just any Muslim country but the Muslim country where Islam started, she had never felt so far from home. There was a nip in the air all of a sudden" (Kahf 177).

As Khadra becomes aware that the wider practice of Islam is in fact divorced from her idealized vision, she begins her quest for an equilibrium that allows her to hold on to her faith while acknowledging the limitations and the contradictions at the heart of its many practices. The novel further captures the ambivalence of her cultural hybridity that has come to the fore during her pilgrimage. For Khadra, changes in her Islamic conciousness necessarily entail realigning her conception of American identity. As she recalls later, "going overseas was what enabled her to see that she was irrevocably American," as the way she was labeled by her Saudi counterparts would constantly remind her of her American identity, although it is what "in some way she couldn't pin down" (391).

The novel presents heterogeneous images of the Muslim women of differing cultural origins by exposing the protagonist to a variety of lifestyles of practicing and secular Muslim individuals. Black Muslim convert Aunt Khadija who came to Orthordox Islam by way of Nation of Islam,[1] for instance, contests little Khadra's idea that "You have to *practice* Islam to be a real Muslim," and holds that when *Shahadah*, Declaration of Faith and Belief in Oneness of God, "enters your heart and you surrender to it, you are a Muslim" (24). There is Tayiba, a hybrid of white American convert and black Muslim, who works as a volunteer for a Mosque and half a dozen Dawah committees, while appearing to be a "mod" or modernist looking Muslim girl in Khadra's eyes. And Hanifa, Khadra's neighbor, as

the first Muslim woman in Indiannapolis to be a professional driver in a car race, represents an alternative image that challenges Khadra's notion of Islamic womanhood. Among Khadra's friends, Maryam, an independent and successful assistant public defender, "mapped Muslim space in a way new to Khadra"; in Maryam's conviction, "service to the poor is service to God, that's the *Sunna*" and she does not have to be working only with Muslim issues: she believes that she is "manifesting Muslim values" in her life "by representing impoverished defendants" (307). She contends what her father embraces as the separatist "Do for self" philosophy of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, standing up for an integration of black Muslims into American life. These models of Islamic womanhood are set within the novel as reference groups for the protagonist, and add to her knowledge of varying paths to Muslim life in America, opening up spaces for her to explore, beyond the confines of her Islamic upbringing and her own interpretation of Islamic codes in the American context.

The protagonist's quest for an individual self as a diasporic New Woman is best manifested in the account of her marriage, where she finds her life torn between the patriarchal outlook on Muslim womanhood and her own definition of gender roles in family. This dichotomy of difference constitutes the basis for the turmoil in her marriage. The reader is witness to the awakening of a strong ego in her as she reflects on her family life:

> Where was it, this will of hers, this misshapen self? She needs to know it… It was not vain-glorious to have a self. It was not the same as selfish individualism, no. You have to have a self to even start on a journey to God… She had not taken even a baby step in that direction. Her self was a meager thing, scuttling behind a toilet, what she hadn't given over of it to Mama, to Juma. Too much, she has given away too much. She will not give the last inches of her body, will not let them fill her up with a life she does not want. (248)

The conflict between individualism and communalism, however, builds on Khadra's resistance to the assigned gender role. She finds herself positioned against her Muslim community by initiating a divorce with Juma after choosing abortion, as she is convinced that she cannot "stay with Juma without changing who I am. Who I essentially deep-down am" (243). The whole community seems to have turned its back on her for her

defiance as she senses "their whispers feather around her" that the "Dawah Center poster girl had fallen" (251), which leaves her feeling "in a free fall, unmoored, safety net gone, and nothing nothing to anchor" her (265).

As Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan argues, for a diasporic individual the feeling of being impoverished and abandoned in the host country will inevitably evoke in him or her a homing desire, a dream of return to home (Radhakrishnan 208). When Khadra feels that the first part of her life "is coming to an end," and she does not know "what is yet unborn inside" (Kahf 265), she embarks on a journey to Syria, the ancestral mystical home in her memories, so distant from what she imagined in her childhood as the place "where the sky touches the ground" (16). A gradual metamorphosis occurs in Khadra during her journey to the shelter of her cultural roots. There Khadra comes to learn about her mother Ebtehaj from Teta and her great aunt in Syria, who reveals stories unknown to her. Ebtehaj's secular stepmother had been harsh on her for the veil because during those times, as Teta recalls, "[t]he city was against it, the tide was against it" (275). Teta narrates that "she tried everything – she'd yank it right off her head. I heard she put it in the pot and shat on it," and she was so embarrassed to be seen in public with her veiled stepdaughter that she made Ebtehaj walk on the other side of the street; she did not allow Ebtehaj to continue with her Quran circle and tried to force her into marrying a man "who drank and whored, just to make her misery lifelong" (276). The revealing of the past brings Khadra to a better appreciation of her mother, who has gone through such agonies to hold on to the veil and her faith no matter what the trend was at the time. To Khadra, the veil loaded with stories of the past goes beyond a mere marker of Muslim womanhood to incarnate a heritage of Islam, "a treasure fire cannot eat" (313).

Khaf's attachment to her homeland and its cultural heritage is exemplified in Khadra's conception of the veil. As Regina Lee emphasizes, diasporic people, whose exile can be voluntary or forced, can display two types of consciousness in their writings. The first type is "homeland idealism," a strong attachment to their country of origin. The second type is the diasporic subjects' consciousness of being "exotic" or "other." Given the minority status of the diasporic people, they may "sometimes play up the fact of their differences, highlighting their visibility" as a means to gain

social acceptance and cultural identification (Lee 54). Khaf's narrative is characterized by this double consciousness as she takes pride in the cultural heritage of her homeland while expressing her difference as a strategy for acceptance. *Hijab* is inserted into this complex relationship between home, diaspora and identity to personify the problem of negotiating Muslim immigrant identity in an American context. During her journey, Khadra comes to a strong bond with Teta, whose past experience sheds a new perspective on her life. Teta had been a telephone operator among "the very first wave of working women" in Syria, resisting the public discourse of the time that "a telephone girl's job was a bad thing, a thing for floozies," and she joins her fellow workers in solidarity asserting their aspirations "to be the New Woman," one of the "women who cherish themselves, women who are cherished" (Kahf 271-272). Teta reveals to Khadra how she defied her parents' disapproval of her marriage with a non-Arab immigrant and how she witnessed the upheaval in Syria during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, when she lost her husband. Teta's narration of history makes Khadra aware of the virtue of fraternity and human bonding as paths to God. In this context, the journey to the protagonist's country of origin is constructed as a means of self-discovery, not only through re-entry into a collective historical experience, but also an exploration of self. This journey allows Khadra to finally begin her healing process in soul-searching and leads her to find an association with God, humanity, and self, which would be embodied in her ideal of building "a Teta-mosque" in which:

> You'd pray, then you'd listen to music and poetry and wisdom from all over the world. You'd go walking arm in arm with your counterpart in every other religion and just relate as humans under the sun. Everyone would be beautiful – there'd be a special sort of lamplight that made you beautiful. (328)

This idealistic picture of worship and revelation that builds on inter-faith dialogues and human bonds, however, is juxtaposed with Khadra's haunting memories of anti-Islamism and racism that culminated in the murder of Zuhura in the Klan violence of the 1970s. The narratives of Khadra wailing aloud on the very site of murder years later on her way back to Bloomington incorporate images of dark night, broken moon and muddy creek bank with night crawlers into a scene of horror and shadowy

misery. This wailing scene becomes a metaphor for Khadra's mourning over "all of the hate and hardness" that lead to culture clashes as she comes to the understanding that "there is no Oneness" of God "in all that hard separation" (429) between cultures.

Awakening to this inner light, Khadra sheds the negative feeling of being caught in the flux between cultures and moves towards an appreciation of both. With the historical setting of the narrative evolving into the 1990s, Khadra sees that there have been signs of change towards multiculturalism in American society in the new decade as school teachers are "into this new multiculturalism curriculum" and "words like 'celebrating diversity' and 'tolerance' tripped off their tongues" (378). On the other hand, there is also a move within her old community towards social integration; besides, with the second-generation Muslim immigrants' coming of age, inter-faith communication and ties have been strengthened, which are symbolized by Khadra's younger brother Jihad's inter-faith band The Clash of Civilizations, with a mix of Mormons and Muslims. She is also well aware, however, that there has always been resistance to such changes, just as "every Middle Eastern crisis dredges up more American hate" (424). This reference is particularly revealing of the impact of 9/11 on the American Muslim community. In an America traumatized by 9/11, "Muslim women who wore the *hijab* bore the consequences of blatant stereotyping" (Haddad, 263). Despite the backlashes on the Muslim community, in the post-9/11 context, many Muslim women adopted the practice in an effort to represent Islam, to assume a public Islamic identity, or to define what it means to be a Muslim living in a pluralistic society (Westfall 772). In fact, as anti-Muslim rhetoric and incidents have increased since 9/11, American Muslim women have increasingly been wearing the hijab (Smith 108). During those hard times, the protagonist does not let go her *hijab* as "it was the outer sign of an inner quality she wants to be reminded of" (Kahf 425). She realizes that it takes time for cultural boundaries to be tested before cultures and faiths are able to coexist in mutual respect. She emerges as a strong New Woman defining her true self as she acknowledges the importance of both East and West in forging her identity.

Notes

[1] Nation of Islam was established in the 1930s as a semi-religious black nationalist organization with its members known as "Black Muslims." Since the early 1970s, under the new leadership of Wallace Muhammad, Nation of Islam has evolved from its original radical separatist stance to Orthordox Islam and integrationist Americanism, with its name changed into "the American Mission."

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Forum
New Perspectives on the Italian American Diaspora

Matteo Pretelli

Introduction

Diaspora is a concept that has been applied only recently to migration studies. Indeed, until the last few decades, the term referred almost exclusively to the traumatic forced mobilities of people, and most notably to the exile of the Jews from their homeland and to the masses of enslaved Africans transported in chains to the Americas. Deprived of a legal national status until 1948, Jews in particular represented the most classic example of the diaspora phenomenon, because of their capacity to create a cohesive ethno-religious community that aspired to a return to their original space. More recently, scholars have been working to extend the meaning of diaspora by applying it to a multitude of groups, including voluntary migrants interested in maintaining their identity boundaries, community solidarity, and connections to the native land. In the 1990s, political scientist William Safran defined diaspora in terms of minorities' spatial dispersion, the persistence of their collective memory relating to an idealized homeland to which they wish to return, as well as the obstacles they face integrating into the host society. Afterwards, social scientist Robin Cohen enriched this model by identifying diasporic communities on the move due to labor, trade and imperialism, as well as those shaped around cultural commonalities. Migrants would even strive to maintain affinities based on empathy or solidarity with co-ethnic fellows settled in other countries (for a literary framework see Dufoix 4-34, Mellino 75-98, Tirabassi).

These studies followed in the wave of globalization and the new conceptualization of transnationalism, an early 1990s anthropologist-coined term used to examine migrants as living and maintaining their ethnic identity in between the host and native country by keeping connections (e.g. phone calls, gifts, return trips) to the homeland (see the 2014 *RSAJournal* forum on transnationalism edited by Ferdinando

Fasce and Marco Mariano). Hence, by pointing out the circular quality of migration and the migrants' de-territorialized identities, diaspora and transnationalism would challenge the functionality of the traditional nation-state in ruling and controlling mobilities. These concepts also follow a redefinition of straight-line assimilation theories, which until the 1970s had traditionally reiterated America's alleged "exceptional" capacity to assimilate and Americanize all foreigners regardless of their ethnicity. The growth of an American multicultural society debunked the assimilative myth of the American melting pot and encouraged a revaluation of ethnic identities, even though some were warning about a potential "Balkanization" of American society. Within this scenario, many discovered a brand new interest in the places of departure, previously overlooked by a focus on the host society. Against this backdrop, today scholars of different backgrounds increasingly study countries of departure as migrant sending states interested in maintaining political, cultural, and economic ties to their "diasporas" abroad (see Gamlen).

Nonetheless, diaspora is still a highly debated concept, to the point that there is a wide degree of flexibility in its definition and many different approaches as to its practical application. German sociologist Thomas Faist differentiates between old and new theories of diaspora: while the former viewed diasporic groups as inherently aspiring to the homeland and preserving a distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society, the latter were more inclined to sustain "continuous linkages across borders" (Faist 12) and strive for cultural hybridism with the host society. Nonetheless, some see diaspora in terms of political impact. Sociologist Rogers Brubaker thinks of it as being "an idiom, a stance, a claim;" consequently, Brubaker envisions diaspora as a "category of practice" (Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora" 12-13) aimed at mobilizing loyalties, yet inevitably touching only a very small minority of the larger diasporic group. Still, Thomas Faist asserts that, aside from the academic discussion, states or nationalist-oriented groups may be interested in co-nationals scattered abroad in terms of nation-building or long-distance nationalism.

In the case of the Italian communities throughout the world, in the mid-1990s scholars Gianfausto Rosoli (304-22) and Rudolph Vecoli (114-22) applied the term diaspora with no theoretical insights. Generally, the

concept has been widely utilized to refer to any sort of mobility of people from Italy, including some very specific cases such as the Neapolitan musicians leaving their native city (see Luconi, "The Pitfalls of the 'Italian Diaspora'" 152-53). Historian Guido Tintori (126-52) spoke about Italy's diasporic politics with regard to the historically characterized political practice of the Italian nation-state holding tight to her communities abroad. Theoretically speaking, given the difficulty in finding a strong national identity among Italians throughout the world, migration historian Donna R. Gabaccia proposed the term "Italy's many diasporas" to describe the very different local (village-oriented) and political-oriented identities (socialist, anarchist, fascist, etc.) that migrants preserved in foreign societies (see Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*). Conversely, Stefano Luconi (see "The Pitfalls of the 'Italian Diaspora'" and "Italians' Global Migration") provided the most critical voice in the application of the term to Italians. While the political-oriented groups were small minorities in the ethnic communities, he argued that Italians as a whole did not conform to diasporic requirements. The fact is that the majority of Italians left voluntarily, rather than due to a traumatic event; lacked a strong national or group identity across generations; lost connections to the homeland in the long term; and tended to assimilate into the host societies.

Nonetheless, today the term continues to hold popularity, as evidenced by the annual Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar, a workshop in Italy organized by the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute in New York, one of main cultural centers promoting the study of the Italian presence and culture outside of Italy, in collaboration with Italian universities. Overall, cultural exchanges between scholars settled in Italy and the United States are constantly enriching and fruitful (see De Angelis 219-28; Izzo 9-28; Vellucci and Francellini, in particular the keynote addresses by Mary Jo Bona, Fred L. Gardaphe, and Anthony Julian Tamburri).

All scholars invited to this forum are Americans or Italians working in the United States with different backgrounds and expertise. They bring their own intellectual reflection and educational practice to the application of the concept diaspora as related to Italian migrants scattered throughout the world, especially Italians and their descendants in the United States.

LAURA E. RUBERTO

"Cultural Studies and the Intermittence of Ethnicity in Italian Diaspora Studies"

In being asked by the editors of *RSAJournal* to consider the concept *diaspora* as applied to the field of Cultural Studies, I have taken the opportunity to reflect more broadly on the term within both Diaspora Studies generally, and the related fields of Italian Migration Studies, Italian Studies, and Italian American Studies specifically. My doctoral training in the 1990s in the interdisciplinary Department of Literature at the University of California San Diego emphasizing critical theory, comparative transnationalism, and an anti-nationalist, de-colonizing perspective, coupled with my by now over twenty years of teaching in various trans-disciplinary programs and departments, has greatly shaped my association with and research use of the concept *diaspora*.

As I reflect here, a transnational and diasporic model of thinking about the movement of people (and things) generally and specifically the rhetorical use of the concept of *diaspora* as well as *transnationalism* has been part of the backbone of so much of my work in Cultural Studies, for me defined through my research in cinema, media, oral history, and material culture within specific Italian and Italian American contexts. By adopting such a discourse, I have always found an importance in connecting the Italian case study to other examples of border crossings and ethnic articulations in culture and politics. Connecting historical Italian emigration to contemporary immigration to Italy is the most obvious way, and what I mostly took on in my *Gramsci, Migration, and the Representation of Women's Work in Italy and the US* (2007), where I proposed what others have also argued, that "Italy's own history of emigration and expansive diasporic communities, coupled with the rhetorical history of the peninsula as both a romantic, historical tourist attraction and, simultaneously, not quite a First World nation marks it as unique" (Ruberto, *Gramsci* 3). This thinking

also informed my ethnographic study stemming from my 2006 Fulbright Scholar award to Italy, where I compared returning Italian migrants' experiences with new immigrants to Italy in the southern Italian rural area of Irpinia through the concept of a dislocation that all migrant women experience, even those who are returning home (see Ruberto, "Always Italian").

The fluctuating, unfixed term *Italian diaspora* allows analyses of more standard migration patterns (i.e., Italian immigrants to Argentina, Australia, or the United States) alongside those itinerant communities not captured within conventional migration narratives (i.e., Italian colonial subjects in Africa, Italian prisoners of war during World War II). It also allows for an important dialogue with other diasporic groups – from the new immigrants and refugees to Italy who form their own diasporic communities to the many diasporas found globally. Placing such topics within a Diaspora Studies model allows us to look for what I propose here are the *edges of ethnicity*, the borders where ethnic identities sometimes lie. These expressions of identities, not always easily visible, potentially offer us complex renderings of what might otherwise be static, stereotypical formations. Moreover, such edges can be seen as useful links between varying diasporic communities, cultures, and experiences.

My use of the term *edge* evokes Roland Barthes. In his *The Pleasure of the Text* he notes: "is not the most erotic portion of the body where *the garment gapes?*... the intermittence of skin flashing…" (Barthes 9=10, emphasis in the original). The most provocative cultural expressions and texts are often those less obvious, not so apparent, or even somewhat invisible. The most challenging created texts or expressions are often those that may seem undervalued or exist in an otherwise alternative presence within that which may seem obvious or conventional. I thus seek to find such cultural gapes with respect to Italian ethnic mobilities – where the intermittence of ethnicity exists and ethnicity recurs as an edge or border, to evoke Barthes's words again: "Culture thus recurs as an edge: in no matter what form" (7).

By looking for such edges or intermittences of ethnicity we might, for instance, recuperate cultural expressions not always recognized as Italian ethnic. For instance, we might consider Italian Californian vernacular sites and thus map an unrecognized constructed Italian Californian ethnic

imaginary, which could take us from Sabato Rodia's Watts Towers in Los Angeles, all the way north to Romano Gabriel's Wooden Sculpture Garden in Eureka, passing Emanuele "Litto" Damonte's Hubcap Ranch in Pope Valley and Forestiere Baldassare's Underground Garden near Fresno, as well as the no longer extant sites of John Giudici's Capidro in San Mateo or Theodore Santoro's wooden animal displays in Oakland along the way (see Del Giudice; Ruberto "Al di là di Sabato Rodia").

Seeking such intermittent ethnic edges can also reimagine consumer and popular images by recognizing the fluid nature and marginalized aspects of an ethnic identity as well as considering how ethnic identity works within mainstream modes of production as it allows us to recognize that alternative or undervalued stories or practices may be present even in the most dominant ideological articulations. Film and television are particularly ripe for this kind of analysis. What does it mean, for instance, to have typical *festa* decorative illuminations in the opening wedding scene of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*? Why have Johnny Boy and Charlie, played so effortlessly by Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel, gingerly taken out white handkerchiefs to sit on tombstones in St. Patrick's Old Cathedral cemetery in *Mean Streets?* How is Italian ethnicity coded or recognizable in such fictional characters as Johnny Staccato from the 1959 NBC series, *Johnny Staccato*, or Jimmy Pesto, Sr. from the Fox series *Bob's Burgers* (2011-)? These examples might variously demonstrate a subtle sense of style, an eloquent expression of community identity, or a witty commentary on the changing ways the material culture of ethnic migrant communities shifts over time.

Others who work within Italian Diaspora Studies have likewise taken on the concept of the *edge* in related ways, suggesting that the term's malleability is a convenient one for interdisciplinary fields such as Cultural Studies. Ilaria Vanni Accarigi, working in Australia, has considered "transculture edges" by thinking about the term with respect to ecology and landscaping. In the United States, John Gennari has used the term to refer to that space between different communities, especially Italian Americans and African Americans, suggesting an overlap, a blending, as well as a rawness that collides and shapes culture/identity in dynamic and sometimes volatile ways.

I would like to propose the concept of edges as a worthwhile Cultural Studies approach to discussions of Italian migrations, transnationalism, and mobilities. Doing Italian Diaspora Studies through associations with edges, borders, and intermittences, means scholarship which not only keeps the destination countries and political landscapes in mind but also the home countries, by recognizing mobility as ongoing and multidirectional and recognizing ethnic/migrant culture as dynamic and non-static. I recognize the borderless borders implied by such edges. The contemporary moment with its fraught political shifts, economic realignments, and digital innovations is often associated with borderlessness, a world of unstable edges. I wish to capture this instability with the provocation of the edge; the idea that along these fractures and fissures we find new roadmaps for understanding how cultural identity is formed, embattled, negotiated, and emerges within and against political regimes of value.

An Italian Diaspora edges approach can help us link cultural Italian borders, those not fixed to Italy as a geo-political state, and thus can be particularly useful for a deeper understanding of unexpected encounters. For example, what happens to identity and culture as more migrants to Italy (or their Italian-born children) participate in a second (or third migration) out of Italy and on to other places with a strong presence of a pre-established Italian diaspora? Considering mobility in this way makes author Amara Lakhous, now living in the United States, an example of a new Italian American in fact, so that the standard model of what Italian American culture means (built out of the history of an early twentieth-century immigrant generation) also needs to be rethought (see Ruberto and Sciorra). Similarly, the developing presence of other kinds of new Italian migrants can also be captured through the concept of the edge – for instance, the Bangladeshi Italian community in England and the ways this diasporic group defines itself through cultural and historical connections to both Bengal and Italy (see Della Puppa and King).

I am not suggesting that all scholarly work needs to be comparative or needs to involve multiple sites. Rather, by self-consciously placing more nation-focused research within a larger field that recognizes that migratory directions and ethnic markers are not universal can be beneficial. Such an intersectional approach to Italian mobilities would further complicate our collective work. Theories of transnationalism and diasporas applied to

cultural expressions and products help uncover alternative voices, redirect hegemonic practices, and move to new perspectives and narratives.

A Cultural Studies/ethnic edge approach to the study of the Italian diaspora makes our research and writing more fluidly connected to our teaching and classroom work as well as our extra-academic contacts. Let me thus conclude with a brief anecdote that helps move my perspective into broader spaces of critical discourse. In the June 2018 Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar at Roma Tre University (in collaboration with the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, CUNY) I taught a course called "Mapping the Theories and Approaches to Italian Diaspora Studies – a meta-critical course where we reviewed and mapped out aspects of the field. At a certain point in the term a fellow in the seminar asked "How do we make Italian Diaspora Studies relevant?" Our group discussion led us to expanding and clarifying the question: "How do we make it relevant in the age of Black Lives Matter, the #metoo movement, Confederate statues debate, and overwhelming anti-immigrant prejudice and legislation? Where are Italian Americans in these debates and what role does studying Italian immigrant history and culture have in explicitly political work?" These questions open up so many other questions. For one, it assumes that Italian Diaspora Studies or Italian migration history is not relevant. What then constitutes relevancy? Does a group have to be in crisis for scholarship to be relevant?

I know that my colleagues and I work constantly to make our scholarship relevant – to academic and non-academic audiences, to our students, our deans, our colleagues in other fields, and even to the communities themselves that some of us study. We do this, for instance, when we as teachers, writers, and scholars explicitly connect the historical prejudices against Italian immigrants with contemporary prejudices against minority groups. We do this when we seek to unpack the ways some groups, like Italian Americans or non-minority Italian nationals in Italy, have at times been complicit in xenophobic and racist politics, in part because they have forgotten or mythologized what they characterized as unique in their community's own past. But I also think the question of relevance is an important one to pose to each other, to push each other in our work. And so I end with this provocation. How can we use a Cultural Studies approach to Italian Diaspora Studies to do relevant work as we move further into this new millennium?

Teresa Fiore

Teaching and Researching Italian Migrations to the US: From the National and Diasporic Space to the Transnational Dimension

The traditional description of Italian migrations as relocations from point A to point B, or of dispersion from one to several points, has always been enriched and challenged by studies aimed at highlighting the circularity of movements, the combination of push and pull factors with additional elements determining the migration of individuals and groups in distinctive ways, as well as the experience of seasonal migration, permanent return, and relocation linked to colonial factors. Equally important, studies about the plural nature of forms of identity in the countries of arrival, and those about the inter-ethnic relationships these countries foster have broadened the reductive view that migrants simply bring a model from home and try to adapt it to a local one. This article intends to assess the impact and legacy of these approaches and to connect them to today's transnational reading of old and new forms of mobility from/to Italy, in particular. It also highlights the importance of interweaving social sciences and the humanities in this reading, in order to make the subject more relevant in our contemporary global scenario.

Moreover, to build on the relational point, in the contemporary US teaching and research context, the pluri-lingual and pluri-cultural composition of the student body and the redefinition of the university under economic and social pressures have designed an audience and a learning environment where traditional definitions and distinctions are in part fading. So, whom do we teach migrations to and in what political context? As our research is re-shaped by these shifts, in what (inter-) departmental space(s) can it continue to be relevant? Mostly, what can the "Italian case" bring to the discussion in order to enrich, and hopefully

enlighten, the current socio-political debates about migrants across the globe? As I argue, the peculiarities of the Italian case suggest that the multi-directionality of its migrations in the past and in the present, as well as the mobility prompted by its colonial phase, design a trans-national theoretical dimension that better serves the current scenario, especially if it is able to leverage previous scholarly contributions. My 2017 book *Pre-Occupied Spaces: Remapping Italy's Transnational Migrations and Colonial Legacies* has developed a theoretical and methodological framework for this vision that I hope can be of direct application to teaching and research environments.[1]

The National Approach

The teaching of migrations from Italy has historically been characterized by a national model, a paradoxical approach since migrations by definition question and rethink national paradigms. The nation of departure and/or the nation of arrival have defined the space of reference to explore and systematize data and information regarding migrants either as leaving home or landing someplace else to find a new one. The exemplary source related to this phase is the canonical double volume *Partenze* and *Arrivi*, published by Donzelli in 2000, as the assemblage of decades of outstanding work on the two different "shores," or sides of the border, of the migratory path. The contributors to this work have been active scholars in their own countries and/or fields, providing important interventions for decades, yet often without a recognizable institutional home for their subject. While aware of the complex trajectories of migrants and intent on creating bi-directional dialogues, this approach contributed to making Italians "less Italian" at home and ethnic subjects in the new environments of the countries of arrival, thus "marginalizing" them to a degree in the public and academic discourse on both sides. In the Italy-US case Italian migrations were not taught in Italian Studies, and remained largely secondary in American Studies. As many founders of Italian American centers/institutes and holders of Endowed Chairs have for long remarked, the discourse of ethnicity has only partially allowed Italian Americans to have a presence in the complex

galaxy of "minorities" in American Studies. Whether in History, the Social Sciences or the Humanities, the hyphenated Italians have not been automatically considered as a struggling group with a political claim like Latinos, for instance, but rather as an eventually successfully integrated group invested on heritage preservation, despite its complex trajectory of discrimination and stereotyping, interestingly combined with tangible cultural contributions and economic achievements. Essentially, despite the story it told, the national approach did not prove able to bring enough attention to the subject to create a structured presence in the academic world. Undoubtedly, the body of work it generated still constitutes the backbone of any type of research or teaching endeavors, given its attentive exploration of single outbound flows from distinct disciplinary vantage points ranging from history to sociology, economy, literature, and film. Yet, precisely because of its inherent geographical and field separations, this approach reveals its limitations in today's academia where a porous view of the overlappings of Italian migration experiences and the cross-pollinations between the humanities and social sciences can prove to be more effective in uncovering overarching narratives.[2]

A Diasporic Take

Right around the same time, a whole different methodological take was introduced by Donna Gabaccia's work, whose focus on the Italian diaspora simultaneously incorporated and bypassed national references, while still highlighting the role of regional ties. In organizing information and interpretations around the notion of labor-driven dispersion, Gabaccia proposed a vision linked to a term that had been previously adopted to read the Jewish and African experiences. While her take proved controversial (for the absence of "forced" relocation according to traditional diaspora scholars), it still sparked a new way of perceiving and narrating Italian migrations along a historical axis that preceded the formation of the Italian nation and that also incorporated the supranational framework of the European Union. The title of her work, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (2000), even gestured towards the multiplicity of dispersion in her use of the plural

form, thus attempting to dislodge the discourse out of an ethnic silo. In US academia, the silo had guaranteed some space to Italian American Studies, albeit in fragile ways, thanks to decade-long initiatives in publishing and conference organization, while simultaneously "ghettoizing" them. The diasporic model offered the possibility of overcoming the national space of reference for the study of Italian mobilities, and inspired a new generation of scholars to adopt this broader view (see Clò and Fiore 437). Whether directly or indirectly, Gabaccia's intervention made Italian Studies more diasporic, i.e. responsive to a long-ignored chapter of the nation's history. In the past decade, classes on the Italian American experience in English, especially in film, are now much more common in degree programs. However, for the most part, these classes continue to appear to be grafted onto the traditional curriculum rather than functioning as mechanisms for redesign. Indeed, the diasporic approach has not been successful in dislodging the ethnic container of either the traditional Italian American courses in American Studies or the new ones in Italian Studies. Recent comprehensive works such as *The Routledge History of Italian Americans* anthology continue to serve this ethnic model, albeit with a rich and solid palette of topics and with a finely curated balance between being academic and broadly accessible compared to previous efforts.

The Transnational Model

Despite the persistence of the "national" and "ethnic" models, the type of flexibility provided by the diasporic notion has strongly influenced the general conceptualization of the subject by allowing for a more fluid perception of the co-existence of different disciplinary approaches and different points of reference on the map of Italian world migrations. The transnational model that has emerged from this reconceptualization is best able to address the crucial questions of our current moment. For instance, in what specific ways can a country that has gone from being an emblem of mass emigration to practically all continents around the world to being one of the European Union countries with one of the fastest growing immigrant populations in terms of size and diversity in the past four decades contribute to the debate on migration? What stories

can its coterminous experience of migration and colonialism tell us that complicate current notions of post-colonialism?

A recent transdisciplinary project developed in the UK through a major government grant has formalized this type of approach.[3] *Transnational Modern Languages* (TML) embraces a wide of array of languages and cultures and its Italian component, *Transnational Italian Studies*, which interestingly worked as the trailblazer in this multi-language endeavour, is not only featuring work on emigration from and immigration to Italy in terms of colonial and post-colonial imbrications, but is also "transnationalizing" canonical literature, on the one hand, and emphasizing the role of translation, on the other, in this redesigned version of Italian Studies.

My own work can perhaps be seen as a precursor of this approach.[4] Its larger goal has been to re-map Italy abroad while incorporating this "abroad" into Italy as part of circulatory routes and intersecting histories. Within the tripartite framework (the foci are on voyages, housing, and work) of *Pre-Occupied Spaces* the relocation of Italians to the US is explored right next to that of Italians to Argentina in terms of residential patterns (tenements and *conventillos*), and that of Italian construction workers to France alongside that of domestic workers to Egypt in terms of labor specialization. While the peculiarities of the countries of arrival are attentively illustrated, along with the distinctive contexts of departure, it is the dispersion of Italians in multi-directional ways that prevails as a whole. Additionally, the environments in which Italians arrived are recognized as being ethnically and culturally mixed. In the process of moving to and working in France, Italians came in touch with people from France's former colonies in the same way in which Italians in Egypt stepped into a cosmopolitan milieu of expats and immigrants.

This multi-layered diasporic vision is further enriched by another set of only apparently unlikely connections, i.e. those of immigrants to Italy: the map encompasses immigrants from many different continents living in an abandoned pasta factory or a so-called ethnic neighbourhood in Rome, which are as mixed today as once were the tenements of New York or the *conventillos* of Buenos Aires. By constantly shuttling between the emigrant experience and the immigrant one, and regularly keeping in mind the colonial implications of immigration to Italy (primarily but not exclusively from colonies under other European regimes), the resulting transnational

map is strongly characterized by stratifications and nodes, which challenge linear notions of relocation from point A to point B.

From a methodological point of view, my approach relies on the notion of pre-occupied space, i.e., a space that is currently associated with immigration, and yet is occupied by stories of Italian emigration and colonialism, while also being replete with preoccupation about the "others," seen as invaders, and with the locals' sense of national identity. Space, in other words, hosts time in my definition of pre-occupied spaces (boats, residences, workplaces), which are concrete as much as they are metaphorical, forgotten, recuperated, or (re)invented realities. This focus on space reflects an early intuition on the part of Foucault that "the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space," and his belief that "the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time" (Foucault 22-23).

Still, my analysis of pre-occupied spaces emphasizes their potential to dispel preoccupation. The current obsession with policing the Mediterranean has turned a liquid bridge into a solid wall, if not a fluid cemetery, in the (vain) attempt to stop and deter immigrants from entering Fortress Europe and defend a (supra-)national identity seen as distinct and worth protecting from the so-called invasion of others. Yet, those very waters were the ones traversed by Italians on ships heading to the US as part of voyages rife with dangers and dreams of comparable proportions. This pre-occupation becomes apparent through the combined use of historical sources, professional journalists' pieces, sociological studies, literary texts and films in order to collapse time in space, and make spaces differently meaningful in our preoccupied times.

Applying the Transnational Model

Teaching immigration to the US in a US classroom where Italian and English can be used interchangeably becomes especially effective with the inclusion of heterogeneous sources such as the ones referenced above. In particular, when cultural texts that actively link Italian historical immigration to the US with immigration to Italy – for instance films such as Amelio's *Lamerica* and Marra's *Sailing Home* – play a central role

in the syllabus, they make pressing contemporary issues, such as labor exploitation and economically forced migrations linked to post-colonial as well as neo-imperialist mechanisms, come to the surface.[5] As classes in the US, and in particular at State institutions, host an increasing number of students with a direct experience of immigration, or whose parents are immigrants from so-called developing countries, addressing migration in broader terms allows students to forge closer connections with the subject despite apparent distances. In other words, "the Italian case," when presented within this trans-national framework, fosters reverberations and creates the conditions for unexpected connections on the part of the students that a traditional ethnic Italian American model may not trigger. This type of link is made even stronger when students become aware of the recent/current immigration of Italians to the US. One realization is that the Italian American experience is not the object of a historical study distant from their reality but, to a degree, a parallel phenomenon to their experiences, especially when they learn about undocumented Italians in the US or young people who wait tables in Manhattan as they search for jobs (see Fiore, "Immigration from Italy Since 1990" and "Migration Italian Style").

Paradoxically, while students may be largely comfortable in traversing historical periods and geographical locations, non-trivial institutional challenges lie in the disciplinary space of this theoretical and methodological shift. Housing courses about Trans-national Italy in Italian Studies risks the fate of reduced visibility, and including them in American Ethnic Studies is not an automatic operation, especially in light of the current contraction of these disciplines. Migration Studies containers (certificates, minors, majors) will likely prove more congenial, in order to also include the Italian case in the broader conversation about migrations, to which it still belongs only infrequently.[6] Cross-listed and co-taught courses, as well as courses that invite the use of different languages to access the materials of study are the most desirable space for the Italian experience to the US, and abroad, by extension. This will require much work, both at the level of curriculum development and administration, but appears to represent the most concrete path to "emancipate" ethnic experiences and make them relevant to the present and across migratory experiences.

JAMES PASTO

Who Are Our *Paesani*? On Remembering Randolph Bourne and Forgetting About Diaspora

I find it easy to say that I grew up in a small Italian village on the east coast of the United States. When I was born in 1958, Boston's North End was home to 11,174 people, of which 5,146 (41%) were born in Italy and 2,254 were the children or grandchildren of Italians, meaning that 81% of the population were "Italian." The remaining 2,026 were a mixed multitude, mainly descendants of Portuguese, Spanish, Irish, German, Polish, and Syrian immigrants who had been long settled in the neighborhood and had assimilated to its Italian-American ethos, i.e., its *Italianità* (a word, incidentally, we never used or heard). In 1970, while the total population of the North End had declined to 10,134, the number of Italian born increased to 6,414, 63%, a result of renewed Italian immigration to the United States and the North End (see Pasto, "Immigrants and Ethnics"). Their presence mattered. W.A. Marianne Boelen described her first visit to the North End (Cornerville) in 1970 as follows:

> [I had] the impression of being back in one of the villages in the Abruzzi not only because of its physical appearance but mainly because of its social structure. The delicatessen stores, called *salumeria,* carried the famous Italian sausages and cheeses. In Italian tradition, the butcher store had the skins of lambs, with the head still attached, hanging on both sides of the door. The pastry stores had their ceilings covered with large chocolate Easter eggs wrapped in shiny, colored foil paper. The cafes sold cups of coffee in numerous varieties but no sandwiches or donuts. Finally, the typical Italian restaurants displayed the famous Italian menus. The only [foreign] language I heard around me was Italian. Cornerville street life seemed a replica of the village social structure.

> People were constantly greeting one another, which gave the impression that everyone knew everyone else in the area and revealed an intricate network of social relations encompassing the entire neighborhood. It also shattered any preconceived notion of urban anonymity and cold impersonal relations that one would associate with city life. The rigidly sexual segregation of social gathering places was as valid in Cornerville as in Italian villages: men in the cafes or on street Corners, women chatting in pastry and grocery stores, and young girls, arm in arm, parading up and down the main street, laughing loudly to attract the attention of the men but never looking them in their eyes because that would signify an engagement in Italian culture. The old people were meeting in the square in front of the old church-women on the right, men on the left. (Boelen 23)

I would add to Boelen's account that the North End at that time also had active religious societies, each running summer *feste* with the annual procession of their patron saint, food stands, and music (see Ferraiuolo, Segretario); it had its "racket subculture," (i.e. "Mafia"; see Payne) centered on illegal numbers gambling and other activities; and it had many small family restaurants that served as standard fare food such as tripe, calamari, and cacciatora, alongside meatloaf or hot dogs, a menu duplicated in the homes (see Goode, Curtis and Theophano, and Cinotto). As Boelen notes, Italian, mainly as dialects, was still widely spoken, and even those of us who did not speak the languages of the "old country" spoke an Italian American ethnolect derived from them (see Pasto, "Immigrants and Ethnics"). As a coda, I would add that as this village was an aging urban one, it was undergoing many of the problems affecting urban areas at the time: poverty, unemployment, violence, and rebellion. Even Italian urban villages have their urban problems and traumas (see Pasto, "Streets of Fear").

However, having grown up in such an urban "Italian" village I never saw myself then, nor do I think of it now, as living in an "Italian Diaspora." Being Italian and Italian American in the North End was not based on attachment to the "old country," but on attachment to our new American location. We were Italians and Italian Americans and Americans, but most of all, we were "North Enders." There may be something very southern Italian about this. It was, in a way, a paradoxical transplantation of southern

campanilismo. Our attachment to our new place, to the North End, was a continuity of a tradition of attachment to the local as the primary place of being, if not quite an *axis mundi* then at least an *axis sociali*. Current discourse notwithstanding, post-War Americanization did not preclude ethnic identity, but was on the contrary the ground for that identity to emerge: first as Italian food began to become part of the shared American foodscape, and second, as Italian Americans *dispersed* out of the urban villages to live among and be part of the *Americani*, both, however, still socially marked and marketed as "Italian" (see Cinotto 2013). If there is an "Italian diaspora" at work in this American history then it is from the urban Italian American villages of initial settlement to the American suburbs. This trajectory was not unique to the North End, but occurred in various places, particularly on the East Coast – though it may have occurred later in the North End than it did in other Italian American "urban villages" due to the specific demographic, geographic, and historical factors of its Boston setting (see Pasto, "Immigrants and Ethnics").

Let me pause here to digress to two essays on diaspora, one by Rogers Brubaker and the other by Stefano Luconi, and then return to the North End in order to explain the words of my title.

In a 2005 essay, Rogers Brubaker noted the then-recent proliferation of the term and concept of "diaspora," and focused on what are still two key characteristics of its present use: the stretching of its meaning "to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas in the service of which it has been enlisted," and "the re-essentialization of belonging [the problem of "groupism"][7] that its application entails" (Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora" 1, 12). Continuing in a critical vein Brubaker asked "if, as Homi Bhaba put it [...], 'there is no such whole as the nation, the culture, of even the self,' then why should there be any such whole or Chinese or Jewish or Armenian or Kurdish diaspora" (12). In answer to the question and to overcome the problem of groupism as it related to the emergent term of diaspora, Brubaker suggested that

> we should think of diaspora not in substantialist terms, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim. [...] As a category of practice [diaspora is] used to make claims, articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties. It is often a category with a strong normative change. It

> does not so much *describe* the world as seek to *remake* it. [...] Diaspora is a way of formulating the identities and loyalties of a population. (12)

If Brubaker is right (and I think he is) that "diaspora" is a rhetoric of "formulating identities and loyalties of a population," then along with multiculturalism, it is rhetoric for a reason and in a season – the long standing and intensifying transnationalizaton (diasporization?) of capital and the resulting weakening of national boundaries. In the past, "ethnicity" had the capacity to both recognize the diversity of relocated (migrant, immigrant, refugee, etc.) populations, and this remained within the framework of a national/international system (see Anagnostou, Conzen et. al.). However, something other than ethnicity is needed to formulate identities and loyalties in an increasingly denationalized, and still militarized global system of capital, where population flows across borders are increasing and will continue to increase, precluding, at least soon, the stabilization needed to formulate local ethnic identities incorporated within a shared polity (see Hsu). Diasporic identity fills that need, even more than multicultural identity. Multicultural theory, in its classical formulation, was rooted in the state-based Liberal political tradition (see Laden and Owen).[8] With the decline of the state, multiculturalism is reformulated as diaspora to "normalize" increasing migration, displacement, and trauma as facets of "global" identities. Diaspora is to global diversity what ethnicity was to national diversity, although, to be clear, at this point largely as pedagogic practice and political strategy only (see Ndhlovu).

Shifting focus to Italy and the application of diaspora, Stefano Luconi pointed to the "pitfalls" of the concept of diaspora when applied to Italian migrations. In essence, Luconi views the term diaspora as narrowly defined along the lines set out by Safran and Cohen and whose key features include: a forced exile from a "homeland" regarded as the true home; an active collective memory of that homeland; a myth of return to the homeland; and the continued impact of the homeland and its myth on the group's current identity. Whereas Gabaccia (*Italy's Many Diasporas*) has argued on similar grounds that Italy has "many diasporas," Luconi states that Italian migration "has been less a worldwide diasporic dispersal of people than a continuous inflow and outflow of individuals [...] across the country's

borders" (Luconi, "The Pitfalls of the 'Italian Diaspora'" 164). Moreover, where Italians have settled, their assimilation to the local/national culture has been the normative experience, resulting in a gradual attenuation of an "Italian" identity. In respect to the United States, Luconi adds that racialization as whites further precluded the development of an Italian diasporic consciousness. Luconi's trajectory of Italian American identity in the US follows the now standard "becoming white" formulation (see Roediger). Within such a formulation, whiteness brings with it a necessary and perpetual unmarkedness. And an odd paradox. Thus, when combined with the corresponding view that only non-white minorities have diasporic identities, the linkage of "American" and "white" as a single identity appears to sustain a white-centric, nationalist model of American identity as well as the "forever foreignness" of non-whites. In this racial formation, we can have White citizens but no White Diaspora: we can have Americans abroad; but no American Diaspora.

With these two essays in mind, I want to work back towards the North End, now by way of Randolph Bourne's 1916 essay "Transnational America," a term he used to refer to the ideal amalgamation of evolving American cultural groups. Notably, for Bourne, this precluded "parochial" (diasporic?) attachments to distant homelands by all Americans, foremost among them, "native" Anglo-Saxon Americans. In fact Bourne stated that Anglo-Saxon attachment to England and Englishness inhibited their own ability to form local attachments to the many new and diverse immigrants coming to the United States, and it accounted for their penchant to see amalgamation as a unidirectional Anglo-Conformity. Alternatively, for Bourne, "an American culture" lay in the here and future: the end of product of an amalgamation of native and immigrants that would be a "world federation in miniature [...] the peaceful living side by side, with character substantially preserved, of the most heterogeneous peoples under the sun" (Bourne 122).

While Bourne's essay elides issues of racial segregation and indigeneity,9 it nevertheless speaks to a vision at odds with diaspora as a category of practice. Bourne's transnationalism, we might say, is for a world structured "campanilistically." It is a world that starts from the local, the here and now, and then radiates out from this center. And this campanilistic connection

brings us full circle back to my Italian village on the East Coast, my North End, where I began. This is my roots, my Italian American roots. Not Italy. Growing up, my *paesani* were not Italians in Italy, or in Argentina, or in Germany, or elsewhere. My *paesani* were the North Enders who were my friends and neighbors, many of them but not all of them Italians. My *paesani* were also my fellow Bostonians and fellow Americans, from all places and all ancestries, people I worked with and struggled with and sometimes contended with. These days, my *paesani* are the people who live as neighbors on my street, the people I see every day, the people I share ideas, tools, jokes, and emergencies with. These are the people my fate is most immediately linked to. Am I to abjure them to identify with an Italian Diaspora? With Italians abroad? Abroad like me? Perhaps Luconi is right, and I am lucky that Italian migration was not forced, that assimilation did occur, and that I have a place I think of as home. But I think Brubaker is right too, that diaspora is not so much a condition as a stance, a pedagogy. It is not a good pedagogy, to my mind. A Bourne-based pedagogy is much better. Immigrants even today are not so mobile and not so transitory as rumor has it (see Waldinger and Fitzgerald). Many are here to stay. Pass the word to them and tell everyone. Forget diaspora! Our *paese* is the place where we now live; our neighbors are our *paesani*.

ELIZABETH ZANONI

Making Homes Through Migration and Food

In 1999 Young & Rubicam, an American advertising firm, launched a new marketing campaign for Barilla, the Italian pasta manufacturing company, with the tagline, "Dove c'è Barilla, c'è casa" (Where there is Barilla, there's home). The commercials feature Italians living, working, and traveling abroad at the close of the twentieth century eating Barilla brand pasta to retain their connection to home. In one commercial spot, an older married couple make an impromptu trip to Japan to visit their beloved son; they surprise him by preparing, with the help of their son's Japanese wife, a bowl of steaming spaghetti. In another, filmed on location in the Olympic Village of Munich, Germany, the coach of the Italian youth trampoline diving team lifts the spirits of his homesick gymnasts by serving pasta; by the end of the ad, kids from other countries eagerly join in on the meal ("Campaign: Where There's Barilla There's Home"). "Home" in these commercials serves as a cleverly expansive symbol for the intimate domestic realm of family and the public realm of the Italian nation state. Wherever Italians travel in this modern, integrated world, the ads imply, they remain linked to hearth, family, and nation through Barilla pasta; and this increasingly globalized world is simultaneously transformed through exposure to traditional Italian cuisine and through the positive cultural exchanges that food allows.

Italian proverb popularized over a century earlier to encapsulate the experiences of a more numerous and less privileged group of Italians abroad: "Tutto il mondo è paese" (All the world is a village, or, All the world is one home place). For the over 26 million people who left Italy after 1870 to become part of the global proletariat, "home" or *paese* signified both the villages and families they left behind *and* everywhere they traveled and settled. And while the proverb did not explicitly mention food,

the migrants to which it referred made the world their home in part by recreating cooking traditions from their villages and towns (see Cinotto, Diner).

Both the proverb and the commercial tagline characterize migration from Italy as webs of connections between the international and local, the cosmopolitan and provincial, the public and the private. They also offer a metaphorical launching pad for reflecting on the usefulness of the term diaspora for the study of Italians' historic migrations to the United States as well as the global cuisine their migrations helped foster. For this forum, I draw from my research on Italian food and migration in the US and Argentina to argue for diaspora's continued utility as a framework for exploring Italy's many migrations historically and comparatively. As one of the principal mediums around which migrants formed identities as working-class laborers, ingredients and culinary traditions helped migrants create, reproduce, and imagine many "homes" through food and culinary traditions, homes that remained linked back to Italy *and* to migrant homes in other parts of the world. Furthermore, historians' interest in change over time and causality make them especially well-suited for exploring the historic relationship between diasporic communities and the expanding power of nation states, a topic that diaspora scholars have yet to fully examine (see Gabaccia, "Juggling Jargons").

Since the 1990s, scholars have broadened their definition of diaspora beyond the forced and calamitous scatterings of Africans, Armenians, and Jews. For the involuntary migrations of these victim diasporas, a yearning to return home, a strong sense of solidarity with their co-ethnics in receiving locations, and the persistence of a common diasporic consciousness over time characterized migrants' experiences. As academics began applying the term diaspora to an increasing number of migrants, both voluntary and involuntary, and from a range of sending locations, scholars asked important questions about types, scales, and experiences of mobility, leading to new definitions and concepts. The most critical typology developed for diaspora studies was articulated by migration scholar Robin Cohen in his 1997 *Global Diasporas*. The way in which the experiences of migrants from Italy paralleled and departed from Cohen's typology have been smartly analyzed by historian Donna Gabaccia, whose book *Italy's Many Diasporas*

focused on the temporary, circulatory, changing, and multi-sited networks that migrants maintained between the villages they left behind and the communities they created abroad.[10] With the limited space at my disposal, I will draw from Gabaccia's insights as well as my own research to argue that diaspora continues to hold analytical value for the study of Italy's global migrants, the networks they sustained with homes left behind, and the changing identities and cultures – including food cultures – they constructed abroad.

In keeping with diaspora's focus on the worldwide dispersal of people, the term provides a useful framework for writing global histories of Italy's migrations *and* global histories of the US. Migrant diasporas, while shaped by American nation-building projects, were not vehicles for inducing straight-line assimilation or for making the US an exceptional (and exceptionally successful) melting pot as compared to other nations (see Fasce and Mariano). In their challenge to methodological nationalism, historians employing a diasporic lens echo those who have applied a transnational perspective to study the ways migrants' social relations – political, familial, and cultural – spanned more than one country.[11] Evidence of enduring transatlantic connections between migrants and their home towns abound in the diasporas I study. Italian-language migrant print culture such as newspapers, as well as trade data, show how merchants from Italy linked migrant eaters to their home regions by facilitating the flow of Italian foodstuff, such as cheese, olive oil, canned tomatoes, wine and liquors, pasta, rice, and lemons. In New York and in other diasporic communities, these migrant sellers, buyers, and eaters formed what I called "migrant marketplaces," transnational spaces constituted by material and imagined links between migrants and the traveling foods and culinary experiences that followed them (see Zanoni, *Migrant Marketplaces* and "Migrant Marketplaces"). Homeland foods connected migrants abroad to their pre-migration lives, helping them reproduce and sustain culinary traditions, identities, and family arrangements. Rather than the quick abandonment of homeland ties, these ongoing linkages home – reinforced through foodways and high rates of return – reflected the transnational lives of working-class migrants.

Diasporic perspectives also produce global histories of Italy's migrations and of the US through comparative research that considers migrant

communities in multiple receiving destinations as well as connections among these destinations. Even while diaspora connotes the dissemination of peoples worldwide, peoples united by their migration experiences, a shared sense of identity, and an intense longing for a homeland to which they cannot easily return, most research continues to focus on a diaspora in a single nation, detached from diasporas elsewhere. And yet, a consideration of migrants within only one national context obscures the global and circular quality of Italy's migrations; as one of the most internationally mobile ethnic groups during the age of mass migration, Italians traveled to and settled in a range of receiving countries, countries linked to each other through mobile people as well as by other forces of globalization such as trade, industrialization, and imperialism.

In my own research I followed the lead of historian Samuel Baily by comparing Italian migrants and their foodways in the US and Argentina, the two most popular overseas destinations for Italian migrants and trade goods in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This broader hemispheric perspective allowed me to internationalize histories of US and Argentine migration and foodways, and to uncover similarities and north-south linkages between these two major diasporic nodes. For example, I found that over the course of the twentieth century migrant marketplaces in both New York and Buenos Aires feminized, as World War I, immigration restriction, a growing, more gender-balanced second generation of Italians abroad, and ties between femininity and consumption globally shifted ties between food and identity from single male laborers to female consumers and families. Exploring both diasporic sites as one analytical site also exposed hemispheric connections between migrants in New York and Argentina fostered in large part by the expansion of US companies, including food businesses, into Latin America after World War I.

Comparing diasporas of Italians in more than one nation from a historical perspective also holds the potential to illuminate how diasporas affect and were affected by the rise and consolidation of nation states and national identities, a subject little explored by diaspora scholars. Unlike groups such as Africans, Jews, Armenians, Poles, and Irish who, at various times during their migrations, did not have an independent home to return to, by the late nineteenth century migrants from Italy left a united nation state

(see Jacobson). However, this new country held little sway over and appeal to migrants who instead identified with the traditions and values of their local *paesi*. The politically, culturally, and linguistically diverse migrant communities created, as Gabaccia has argued, multiple diasporas rather than one diaspora rooted firmly in Italy as a unified concept; indeed "trans-local" rather than "trans-national" perhaps best describes the networks that linked one small village in Italy to its villagers abroad (see Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*). And yet, these local identities did not persist over time, and, unlike other marginalized diasporic peoples, Italy's migrants abroad became "Italians" and eventually "Italian Americans" in the US and "Argentines" in Argentina. Comparing migrant marketplaces in New York to those in Buenos Aires allowed me to consider how nation-specific differences in the US and Argentina – migration legislation and methods of incorporation; trade and tariff policies; economic, industrial, social, political terrains; and ethno-racial landscapes – transformed diasporas in dissimilar ways and at distinct times, even while in both locations diasporic identities were slowly replaced by national ones. It also revealed the varied, rather than singular, way migrants responded to nation-building initiatives and assimilative pressures.

The different ways in which migrants' diasporic consciousness influenced and was influenced by the expanding power of the US, Argentina, and the Italian nation state is evident in migrants' evolving food practices. While in both the US and Argentina migrants sustained commodity paths in foodstuffs to recreate their regional cuisines, they also experimented with novel ingredients abroad, especially meat, which they incorporated into traditional cookery, creating new but familiar dishes. Over time, these changing regional foods and the identities they reflected and produced became understood by the US and Argentina, and by migrant sellers and buyers themselves, as "Italian." Liberal and especially Fascist Italy, as well as middle-class *prominenti* nationalists abroad, also promoted "long distance nationalism" or "diasporic nationalism" among migrant eaters by encouraging the consumption of Italian exports as a patriotic duty to the homeland (see Gellner; Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc). The evolution of migrant cuisines – shaped by exposure to new ingredients, the innovations of Italian entrepreneurs, the changing tastes of migrant

eaters, the desire to appeal to consumers beyond ethnic enclaves, and the assimilative forces of culinary nationalists in the US and Argentina – signaled the attenuation of diasporic subjectivities. At the same time, enduring trans-local and trans-national food traditions in migrant diasporas challenged nationalist culinary movements in the US and Argentina while transforming US American and Argentine cuisine (see Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*). Many of the foods in migrant marketplaces came to influence the culinary mainstream as curious multicultural groups of eaters began exploring novel tastes in migrant diasporas. While today pizza and pasta are considered typical American and Argentine fare, they are rooted in the early-twentieth century diasporas of migrant eaters who, over time, popularized such dishes among non-Italians. Furthermore, migrants who returned back to Italy brought with them culinary experiences and expectations that would come to influence the regional foods of their homes and ultimately global notions of what constituted "Italian" cuisine. Today, eating Barilla brand pasta constitutes "home" not only for Italians in Italy or abroad, as the commercials suggest, but for families from many different backgrounds in the US, Argentina, and elsewhere, thanks to the historic and global movements of Italians over a century ago.[12]

The national cuisines of the US, Argentina, and Italy were not constructed in the absence of mass migrations and the diasporic communities they formed, but rather because of them. Comparative approaches combined with an attention to temporality show that diaspora is most useful for historians of Italy's migrations and of Italian America when they attend to the factors that create or deter the building and maintenance of diasporas (see Gabaccia, "Juggling Jargons"). In the migrant marketplaces of the US and Argentina, food served both functions – it allowed migrants to make "all the world one home place" by recreating and conserving identities and values rooted in their home regions in Italy; and as migrants confronted new ingredients, tastes, and the power of nationalist movements, their culinary traditions changed as well, reflecting both a waning of local identities, and the embracing of national ones.

Notes

[1] See also my forthcoming "Italy and Italian Studies."

[2] For example, the classic text by Samuel Bailey about New York City and Buenos Aires as cities of Italian immigrants adopted a comparative reading in order to connect usually separated fields, often active in distinct languages (English vs. Spanish, in this case). See also Zimmer's book and the ongoing work of Georgios Anagnostou on Greeks and Italians in the US. Also, the Calandra Italian American Institute's annual April conferences have increasingly fostered permeability across geographies and disciplines (see https://calandrainstitute.org/public-programs/calandra-annual-international-conference).

[3] Co-coordinated by a group of faculty affiliated with several UK universities, the project involves exhibits, conferences, publications, media interventions, school outreach, student projects, partnerships across continents, etc. For a full description of its genesis, scope and groundbreaking potential see https://www.transnationalmodernlanguages.ac.uk/about/project/. For its main forthcoming publication in Italian Studies, see Burdett.

[4] For a list of previous works that have in part interwoven these subjects, see the Introduction to *Pre-Occupied Spaces*.

[5] For a specific example of this intertwined use of sources that privilege the cultural text, whether a film, a novel, or a repertoire of songs, see the Aperture and two chapters of Part I of Fiore's *Pre-Occupied Spaces*, entitled "Waters: Migrant Voyages and Ships from and to Italy." The cultural text prompts a shift away from numbers linked to immigration (individuals, dates, funds) towards stories, which afford migrants a voice, and thus more agency.

[6] A notable absence or indirect inclusion that I found striking was a plenary session at the 2018 MLA convention in New York City. Titled "States of Insecurity: Accepting Vulnerability, Permeability, and Instability," the session addressed immigration related to the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia, through the contribution of eminent scholars from these specific area studies. Yet, at a time in which headlines were regularly covering migration to Italy, the only reference to Lampedusa was in a presentation by Lisa Lowe, an expert on British, French and Asian global migrations. In other words, scholars with expertise in Italian migrations are not necessarily embraced in a transnational exchange, despite the intrinsically transnational nature of the country's mobility.

7 On "groupism" see Brubaker.

[8] Some might argue that Black Americans may have had a more "diasporic" sense of group identity (e.g. Gilroy, Knadler) whereas the model set out by Conzen et. al. speaks more to European and Latin American models of migration and settlement. However, Wilkerson's work suggests an ethnic model is relevant as well.

[9] See Clayton's discussion of Bourne regarding anti-Black racism (199-200). There is no record that I have found of any discussion of indigenous Americans in his essays,

though one suspects that Bourne would have viewed amalgamation to include these two groups rather than create separate identities. In some of the wider literature there is a tendency to conflate indigenous and diasporic groups, often as part of a polemic against the nation state (see Fleischmann, Van Styvendale and McCarroll), but this ignores ways in which both national and diasporaic can elite the specificity of indigenous rights, with Taiwan (see Munsterhjelm 2014) being a good example, though by far not the only one.

[10] For scholars of Italian migration who have engaged directly or indirectly with the diaspora concept see Gabaccia's discussion of the literature in *Italy's Many Diasporas*, 1-12; 192-96.

[11] On transnationalism, a good starting point is the work of anthropologists who popularized the term in the 1990s (see Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc). On methodological nationalism see for example Wimmer and Glick Schiller.

[12] For a recent collection on representations of Italian food in Italy and abroad see Naccarato, Nowak and Eckert.

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Articles

Nicola Paladin

The "Men" of the Crowd: Mobs, Armies and Public Space in Classic American Literature

Several literary critics, historians, and political scientists have discussed the conflicting nature of crowds and mobs and their actions within US culture, and many of them agree in identifying the origin of a peculiarly American penchant for cultural "demophobia" during the American Revolution and in the era of the Early Republic (see Wood; Mouffe; Bouton; Borch). As Jeremy Engels suggests, the ostracization of mobs and the disruptive potential of crowd action as a mean of social and political protest was the result of a rhetorical construction determined by moderate political elites in those years (for example, John Adams and Alexander Hamilton), and aimed "to embrace the politics of enemyship and engage in the act of 'drawing a line,' finding unity through the performance of division" (Engels 60). In particular, during the post-revolutionary age this purpose constituted the mean through which the political leaders of the Early Republic intended to mitigate what were believed to be the domestic dangers of revolution, namely the radical tensions of wide segments of the population which had been instrumental in the successful outcome of the Independence War, both in terms of consensus and logistics, but which had demonstrated, however, the power of mass action: its disruptive potentiality had always been conceived as a threat to social order in the majority of the Founding Fathers. According to Engels, "American elites ha[d] feared democracy from the beginning" (19), and they "did strike back by criminalizing democratic mobilization and turning the state's monopoly of violence against rowdy citizens" (14), which later on became one of the most serious preoccupations expressed in Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835-1840), where he speaks of the "tyranny of the majority" (Tocqueville 292).

Starting from these premises, the American preoccupation with crowds and mobs became persistent and historically endemic within US culture

and society, generating a complex and never resolved conflict between the national structures of power and popular forms of protest. Yet, as argued by Engels, the criminalization of mass protests was, first, the result of a "rhetorical architecture" (Engels 35), a form of signification, a discourse which was applicable to different dynamics, from the demonization of the loyalists during the American Revolution, to the political stigma on mobs at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

> Enemyship signifies the many ways that political actors name the enemy in order to achieve desirable rhetorical effects, which, in the early Republic, included unity, hierarchy, and deference. [...] enemyship is a bond of mutual antagonism for an enemy, resulting in a solidarity of fear, a community of spite, a kinship in arms, and a brotherhood of hatred. In the early Republic, counter-revolutionaries employed the rhetoric of enemyship to great effect, naming enemies to distract rowdy Americans from their political and economic grievances and to encourage allegiance to the Constitution by trading obedience for protection. Elites managed democracy by cultivating fears – some real, some imagined. (13)

One of the most evident rhetorical operations in this sense was indeed what contributed to stigmatizing mass protests, namely, in terms of semantics, the switch from the term "crowd" to "mob." The main element of differentiation between the two notions is the potential and practical violence that characterizes the latter, as opposed to the former, conventionally classified as a large number of people, whose very definition focuses on quantity rather than "quality." In this sense, quality encompasses all those traits that connote a crowd beyond its merely numerical rate. As counter-intuitive as it may sound, the notions of mob and crowd thus tend to intersect and disconnect, mutually integrating and subtracting each other: in particular, any crowd might turn into a mob – given the connotative qualifications that such a transformation requires – but, at the same time, quantity does not determine an exclusive parameter to distinguish between the two notions. Taking into consideration these aspects, the present analysis will resort to both terms – clearly not as synonyms – to approach multitudes depending on the possible connotations that they may or may not convey.

On this line, the transformative connotations of the terms at issue play a fundamental role, thus reinforcing the idea of how both notions have repeatedly been treated as part of a discourse. Quite recently, Christian Borch has discussed the politics of crowds from a sociological standpoint and proposed to focus on the historical semantics of crowds, grounded in psychology studies, whose origins reside in the cornerstones of crowd studies – Gustave Le Bon and Elias Canetti as the *chefs-de-file*.

Having this scenario as a background, the present study aims at analyzing the stabilization of the perception of crowds and mobs in the light of the language and the descriptive modes through which they are represented. Yet, intersecting with Engels's notion of "enemyship," the approach here applied will be that of observing the rhetorical use of language that connoted crowds and mobs' depictions in some works of the first half of nineteenth-century American literature: particularly in Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819), Nathaniel Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" (1832), Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), and Herman Melville's *Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile* (1855).

However, as Mary Esteve points out, in the history of American literature "the list of crowd representations verges on endlessness" (Esteve 2). For this reason, I have consciously avoided including in the present essay other literary classics mainly from the twentieth century which approach the role of mass protests in the United States, such as John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* (1936) or Nathaniel West's *The Day of the Locust* (1939), to mention the most famous ones. This choice is not only due to the need for selection but also to the overall aims of the present contribution, which are three and concentric: first, by agreeing with the line that traces the origin of American "demophobia" to the era of the Revolution and its immediate aftermath, this essay aims at demonstrating how such a preoccupation became rooted and crystallized in American culture through the literature of the first half of the nineteenth century, in particular through those texts that depict historical scenarios which were prior to or concomitant with the foundation of the United States. Second, to demonstrate that a very significant cause of such a phobia can be identified with the "military" potential f of mobs, an aspect which is evident in the way they occupy

and modify space. Third, to demonstrate how the only functional form of order and containment that is able to limit the uncontrolled disruptive potentiality of a mob is the mediation of a representative leader, a symbol of authority, whose most extreme manifestation is the establishment of a "state of exception," that becomes operational through repression,[1] or its halo. This last and narrower point implies a problematic correspondence; if, on the one hand, a representative leader and military repression represent State power in two different ways, then on the other hand protesting mobs can be consequently reconfigured as an internal enemy of the State, and it is probably in this uncertain status that the origin of the conflicting relationship between American culture and mass protest lies. The result may sound paradoxical: a raging mob of protesting US citizens is thus turned into the enemy of the United States; in other words, as long as they act together, these US citizens syllogistically become the nation's enemies.

One of the first American authors to describe and analyze the simultaneous and organic action of multitudes in a work of fiction was Edgar Allan Poe in his well-known short story "The Man of the Crowd," first published in *Graham's Magazine*, in 1840. The tale is set in London, and the crowd it describes is not connoted as a protesting mob, but rather as a mass of people who somehow contribute to constructing the scenario of the tale, together with the urban context; yet, the short story allows us to isolate some modes of description of a crowd that may function as a sort of model through which other literary cases can effectively be interpreted. Although most of the text is focused on the unnamed protagonist who is tailing a particular man, the so-called man of the crowd, the tale underlines the centrality of the multitude and, at the same time, functions as a model of representation of the physicality of crowds. In particular, two elements stand out from the text: first, the story provides a description of the mode according to which crowds fill the space, and it shows how this massive occupation is able to modify the perception and the use of the space; second, it focuses on the physical uniformity of crowds, an element that is particularly visible in the occupation of space and the movement of people.

Both traits emerge very clearly in the aquatic metaphors which permeate the text. For example, in one of the first textual references to the mass of people, the crowd is depicted as a tide: "the throng momently

increased; and, by the time the lamps were well lighted, two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door [sic]" (Poe 288). This passage highlights the compactness of the crowd, which is described as dense (and, consequently, uniform) and rushing, precisely like a stream of water. Moreover, the metaphor suggests the visual idea of two streams of water that cannot be crossed but must be followed or avoided, but in both cases, they impose the necessity to change position accordingly.

In other literary representations of crowds, the semantic area dedicated to water was and still is the most evocative: in his poem "Out of the Rolling Ocean the Crowd" (1865) Walt Whitman describes the multitude of people through liquid metaphors, as the opening line recites: "Out of the rolling ocean the crowd came a drop gently to me". (Whitman 87). The rhetorical origin of this choice, though, does not coincide with Poe's work, but it seems to have been already part of the cultural rationale of the time; in fact, Mary Esteve observes that some distinctive narrative tropes regarding crowds had been developed before the emergence of a theoretical debate about crowd psychology:

> Long before crowd psychology emerged as a scientific discourse, conventional tropes registered this sense of a crowd's loss of personality. Rendered as oceans, streams, seas, swarms, and masses that press, jam, crush, flock, mob, throng, and pack their way into being, crowds were figured as inanimate, homogeneous, at best animalistic entities. (Esteve 6)

These two aspects – the occupation of space and uniformity – merge and define another fundamental element in the actions of crowds: the uniformity of their motion, a massive movement that is carried out by all the members of the multitude simultaneously as if they constituted a single organism. This is very evident later on in the tale when it starts raining: "It was now fully night-fall, and a thick humid fog hung over the city, soon ending in a settled and heavy rain. This change of weather had an odd effect upon the crowd, the whole of which was at once put into new commotion, and overshadowed by a world of umbrellas." The people simultaneously – almost mechanically – open their umbrellas and they act together as a single organism. This passage suggests the uniform action of people: just as drops are not distinguishable in a stream, neither

are individuals in Poe's tides of the crowd: the protagonist has the illusion of being able to classify all the people he sees in the multitude, but in fact he cannot. That is why he follows only one man, "apparently" the only one he is not able to categorize, but the truth is that that particular man cannot be categorized: he is the only one who stands out. While describing the crowd, the narrator labels several categories of people by describing them as all alike. It does not matter that they are "noblemen, merchants, attorneys, tradesmen, stockjobbers" (or many other types). The narrator's observation is characterized by what he calls a "generalizing turn," and all the classes which compose the crowd literally melt together: "There was nothing very distinctive about these two large classes," and "They did not greatly excite my attention" (Poe 389). Some of the traits that transpire from Poe's empirical description and understanding of crowds were later on theorized by Elias Canetti in his *Crowds and Power* (1905) – particularly, the physicality of multitudes:

> It is only in a crowd that man can become free of this fear of being touched. That is the only situation in which the fear changes into its opposite. The crowd he needs is the dense crowd, in which body is pressed to body; a crowd, too, whose psychical constitution is also dense, or compact, so that he no longer notices who it is that presses against him. As soon as a man has surrendered himself to the crowd, he ceases to fear its touch. Ideally, all are equal there; no distinctions count. Not even that of sex. (Canetti 15)

The equality that Canetti recognizes in crowds is mirrored by the sensory incapability of Poe's protagonist in distinguishing the men of the crowd, a recurrent feature of mass scenes in literature. In particular, it affects the actions of the multitude: as the verbs suggest, every action is collectively performed by all the people as if it were done by a single entity. This generalizing (and plural) mode of acting performed by the crowd is not limited to dynamic verbs but is also extended to reporting ones. The unanimous behavior of crowds is thus broadened to the use of the "word," a trait that is particularly visible in a famous passage of Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle": when Rip awakes, he goes back to his native town, totally unaware of the fact that the American Revolution has occurred, and professes himself as "loyal to the king"; the small crowd of villagers

responds instantly and aggressively, turning into a mob: "Here a general shout burst from the bystanders – 'A tory! A tory! A spy! A refugee! Hustle him! Away with him!'" (Irving 90). The action is performed collectively: when the people of the mob speak, they do it as one single threatening voice, producing "a general shout," which is made up of hostile accusations and insults. In other words, together with the uniformity of the crowd, the semantic choices of the men of the crowd contribute to igniting the connotative transformation that converts the crowd into an aggressive mob.

In this case, one individual intervenes and lessens the tension erupting in the mob. The narrator isolates the only person who can be visually distinguished from the mass: "It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; having assumed a tenfold of austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking!" (90). By asking those questions he represents the mob thus functioning as a delegate, although "self-elected," thus reminding us of Gustave Le Bon's description of the role of the leader: "The influence of the leaders is due in very small measure to the arguments they employ, but in a large degree to their prestige. The best proof of this is that, should they by any circumstance lose their prestige, their influence disappears" (Le Bon 126). The role of the "man in the cocked hat" is that of stemming the tide of the unanimous action of the mob, providing a potential example of Tocqueville's well-known formulation, which Chantal Mouffe has recently reshaped as "extreme pluralism," namely "a multiplicity of identities without any common denominator" in which "it is impossible to distinguish between differences". (Mouffe 30). The absence of common denominators is the precondition for anarchy and, in the case of a mob, for mobocracy: a totally unpredictable and unregulated drift characterized by a potentially violent impulse, as in "Rip Van Winkle."

Another famous representation of revolutionary multitudes in American literature is Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux," originally published in *The Token and Atlantic Souvenir*, in 1832, and subsequently included in *The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales*, published in 1851. The story revolves around young Robin Molineaux, who arrives in Boston and looks for his kinsman, Major Molineaux, the colonial authority representing the British Crown. After

an unsuccessful day-long search, the protagonist falls asleep on the steps of a church porch, and when he wakes up he witnesses a rioting parade of villagers who have tarred and feathered his kinsman. According to Larry Reynolds, "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" epitomizes Hawthorne's personal preoccupation for the collective irrationality and bestiality that can take control of the actions of a mob, as he argues that "individuals and mobs engage in forms of symbolic emasculation, portrayed as savage or demonic". (Reynolds 15). In particular, Reynolds observes, Hawthorne feared the typically human irrational side which, if extended to an entire crowd and thus turning it into a mob, had proved its destructive power. It is not by chance that, in his essay about the Civil War titled "Chiefly About War Matters" and published in 1862, Hawthorne argues that "our children will be less prodigal than their fathers in sacrificing good institutions to passionate impulses and impractical theories" (Hawthorne, "Chiefly About War Matters" 419), thus blaming passionate impulses as the origin of any social form of disorder. Quite interestingly, the idea of mobs as entities that are subject to impulses was later on developed by Gustave Le Bon: "The varying impulses which crowds obey may be, according to their exciting causes, generous or cruel, heroic or cowardly, but they will always be so imperious that the interest of the individual, even the interest of self-preservation, will not dominate them". (Le Bon 11).

Such fear of those "impulses" is self-evident in "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux," and it is represented at two different levels, individually and collectively; or, rather, it is visible in the figure of the leader of the mob, as well as in the mob itself. Somehow in line with the equally famous short story "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), the leading authoritative character may be interpreted as a personification of the devil: "his forehead [has] a double prominence," he has a "broad hooked nose, the shaggy eyebrows, and fiery eyes" (Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" 263). His position of power is evidently expressed through his physical description, as he is presented as a "horseman, clad in a military dress, and bearing a drawn sword, rode onward as the leader, and, by his fierce and variegated countenance, appeared like war personified: the red of one cheek was an emblem of fire and sword" (269).

The character's satanic symbolism corresponds to the disruptive nature of the crowd the horseman leads: he leads the parade, he is not a mediator

but rather an amplifying figure, a synecdoche and, at the same time, a catalyst of the collective mood; the subversive force that erupts from him invests the crowd and infects even Robin, the only person of the scene who is related to the tarred man, and who ends up joining and literally blending in with the mob. The proximity of the leader and the mob's "passionate impulses" remind us of a sort of "communicating vessels" continuity which expands from the individual to the multitude:

> And lastly, there sailed over the heads of the multitude a great, broad laugh, broken in the midst by two sepulchral hems; thus, "Haw, haw, haw – hem, hem-haw, haw, haw, haw!" [...] The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when, all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street. [...] When there was a momentary calm in that tempestuous sea of sound, the leader gave the sign, the procession resumed its march. On they went, like fiends that throng in mockery around some dead potentate, mighty no more. (271-72)

Although to varying degrees, what both Irving and Hawthorne underline are the risks of an uncontrolled wave of people, and both focus on the relationship between dangerous protesting mobs and individual figures of power of some sort, whose role is that of containing multitudes by symbolically representing their tensions. However, neither in "Rip Van Winkle" nor in "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" are the disruptive mobs contrasted by a repressive form of containment, in the representation of the State. In *Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile*, Herman Melville depicts this opposition in a similar historical framework, but in a different geographical context, namely in England during the American War of Independence. In chapter 21, titled "Samson among the Philistines," the protagonist of the novel witnesses the disembarkation of Ethan Allen, a rebel in the American Revolution,[2] brought to England as a prisoner of war to be tried and executed. Israel is not the only spectator in the scene: in fact, he is unwillingly part of a vast crowd of aggressive English citizens who surround the prisoner in an attempt to lynch him. What stands between Ethan Allen and the ferocious mob is a squad of redcoats who escort their prisoner to Pendennis Castle. Although outnumbered by the mob surrounding the prisoner, the soldiers are heavily armed, and this allows them to prevent

any uncontrolled action on the part of the multitude, simply because of the threatening power of their weapons:

> Some of this company having landed, and formed a sort of lane among the mob, two trim soldiers, armed to the teeth, rose in the stern-sheets [...]. Immediately the mob raised a shout, pressing in curiosity towards the colossal stranger; so that, drawing their swords, four of the soldiers had to force a passage for their comrades, who followed on, conducting the giant. [...] Israel heard the officer in command of the party ashore shouting, "To the castle! To the castle!" and so, surrounded by shouting throngs, the company moved on, preceded by the three drawn swords, ever and anon flourished at the rioters, towards a large grim pile on a cliff about a mile from the landing. (Melville 281)

The tension between the mob (which is also defined as being composed of "rioters"), its target, and the containing role of the soldiers is explicit. The way in which both parts occupy the public space signals the intensity of the contrast between them: the people are deployed along two lanes moved by a sort of centripetal force; they literally direct the soldiers' way right in the middle and press toward the center, represented by Ethan Allen, the magnetic pole which attracts the collective passionate tension. This transformation may be interpreted and reactualized through the observations elaborated by Gustave Le Bon:

> The disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning by means of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts; these, we see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of a crowd. He is no longer himself but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will. (Le Bon 8)

Once the transformation from crowd to mob occurs, Robert E. Park observes that the "collective mood temporarily controls individuals in a crowd" (Park 10). This argument interacts with Le Bon's definition of crowds as psychological:

> The isolated individual may be submitted to the same exciting causes as the man in a crowd, but as his brain shows him the inadvisability of yielding to them, he refrains from yielding. This truth may be physiologically expressed by saying that the isolated individual possesses the capacity of dominating his reflex actions, while a crowd is devoid of this capacity. (Le Bon, 11)

This psychological process, in which individuality melts into collectivity, has a narrative correspondence in the large use of aquatic metaphors that characterizes literary representations of mobs (as it already happens in Poe's "The Man of the Crowd"). The indistinguishability of water drops within a mass of water is thus psychological but also aesthetic, as suggested by Mary Esteve, and, besides, political, if one connects those same metaphors to Mouffe's notion of crowd, understood as an indistinguishable "multiplicity of identities." Irving and Hawthorne's representations of mobs seem to imply both interpretations *avant la lettre* of such a loss of borders that affects individuals; in this regard, Le Bon uses the metaphor of "contagion" – which is the exact term that occurs in "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux," as young Robin is absorbed by the mob that is ridiculing his relative: "The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when, all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street – every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there" (Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" 272). In a slightly different modality, the same physical process involves Rip Van Winkle once he professes himself as a loyalist: instantaneously, the mob surrounds Rip, filling the public space, submerging it (along with Rip), and occupying every possible spot.

The coincidence of the origins of a peculiarly American fear of mobs and the revolutionary period has been thoroughly discussed. Yet, the process through which this generally homogeneous feeling settled in US culture should not be entirely attributed to the vision of the most moderate among the Founding Fathers. It should rather be taken as the result of a progressive cultural and political transformation developed through rhetorical strategies employed during the first few decades of the Early Republic, which some significant works of fiction of those years did not fail to record. As this essay wished to demonstrate, the cultural crystallization that has concerned the stigmatization of mobs and

popular protests is particularly evident in those narratives that are set in proximity to the stormy years of the American Revolution, such as "Rip Van Winkle," "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux," and *Israel Potter*. If one common denominator of these narratives stands out, it is a quite evident form of criticism of the Revolution or, rather, a preoccupied glance at its possible collateral risks: popular action, that had been conducted during the struggle for Independence, acquires the aura of a potential threat to the fragile stability of the post-revolutionary Union. If this belief may seem implicit in Washington Irving, in Hawthorne's case it is not, as Larry Reynolds summarizes: "For Hawthorne, strong feelings not under the control of the intellect posed a grave threat not only to individuals but also to societies and nations. Like Edmund Burke, he came to disdain radical action and to imagine revolution and warfare in terms of a breakdown in the familial [and national] order" (Reynolds 15). In a similar way, Melville retrospectively criticized several aspects of the American Revolution in the age of its memorialization (as the ironic dedication in *Israel Potter* clearly suggests), but transposed the American anxiety about angry mobs to a different context, namely to England. In this sense, Melville's position shows some similarities with Hawthorne's: as Robert Zaller states, "[a]ll his life Melville was preoccupied with the problem of authority and rebellion" (Zaller 607), a preoccupation that *Israel Potter* partially erases but whose traces emerge in other parts of Melville's work – for example, in one of his dyptichs, "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, in 1854.

However, although belonging to different contexts, representing different situations, and conveying different background ideologies, all these literary texts share a set of common traits which underline the common origin of a generalized critical perception of mobs, and they all describe, to a greater or lesser degree, the physical and psychological elements at the basis of the American "demophobic" tradition. The ways Irving, Hawthorne, and Melville describe revolutionary crowds and mobs testify to a certain general level of preoccupation the military potential of mobs, due partially to the spontaneous and unregulated nature of their actions, and in part to their belligerent mode of occupying space. The most significant element that emerges from their narratives is the relationship between crowds and

the authorities, between order and dissent, and between disruption and repression; in particular, these authors seem to question the possibility of containing popular dissent and the ethics of repressive measures, when the cause for dissent is determined by the very guardians of order. At the same time, these few examples from classic American literature show a preoccupation attributable to the lack of leadership, which consequently determines the risk of "extreme pluralism," the degeneration of the "passionate impulses" so well described by Hawthorne in "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux." This risk places the mob in antithesis to the very notion of American authority, not only demonizing internal dissent but connoting it as an illicit form of disobedience.

Notes

[1] Iam referring to Giorgio Agamben's re-examination of Carl Schmitt's notion of "state of exception," which emerges during uncertain and ambiguous periods of imbalance between legal politics and substantial power. Agamben defines civil war as an example of these situations, a case which derives from a social and cultural process of construction of an enemy within a given society; Larry J. Reynolds identifies a critique to this construction in Hawthorne's political view, as he "understood that the demonization of one's enemies often constituted the cultural justification for inflicting violence on them" (Reynolds 24).

[2] He had become famous for conquering the fortress of Ticonderoga in British Canada and for attempting the occupation of Montréal, which failed and was followed by Allen's capture and deportation to England. The most relevant phases of both military actions are reported in Allen's autobiographical *A Narrative on Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity*, published in Philadelphia, in 1779, by Robert Bell.

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Margarida São Bento Cadima

The Production of Space in Colson Whitehead's *Sag Harbor* and Edith Wharton's *Summer*

Introduction

At first glance, Edith Wharton's 1917 novella *Summer* and Colson Whitehead's 2009 novel *Sag Harbor* do not have much in common. Not only were they written almost a century apart, but the protagonist of Wharton's text is a young woman, while the protagonist of Whitehead's book is a young man. Additionally, *Summer* is set in a fictional New England countryside village, whereas the setting of *Sag Harbor* is the Long Island coastal town that lends the text its name. However, they both take place during a summer and it is worth remembering that the protagonists of both texts are teenagers and quite close in age: *Summer*'s Charity Royall is eighteen and *Sag Harbor*'s Benji Cooper is fifteen. So what transpires from the unlikely pairing and analysis of these two texts? Wharton's novella has been analyzed in detail from a gender studies perspective and Whitehead's novel has been examined for its racial significance. However, up until now, no objective and detailed geo-critical cartography has been undertaken for either of these texts. Location is of the utmost importance, and two opposite perspectives are presented in the opening chapters of both texts.

Summer begins with Charity asking herself: "What, she wondered, did North Dormer look like to people from other parts of the world? She herself had lived there since the age of five, and had long supposed it to be a place of some importance" (Wharton 108). Charity is an insider looking out, wondering how an outsider would look at her little village. North Dormer is a fictional village that has a vacuous existence and the description highlights its desolate setting: "North Dormer is at all times an empty place…" (108). This quality of isolation is alluded to in

its name, as Hermione Lee explains: "The name of the town puns on the French for sleep, implying a 'dormant' and 'dormitory'" (Lee xix). Charity is awakening from her slumbering existence and her sense of location is expanding as she is able to gain some perspective on her own position after a trip to the nearby larger town of Nettleton. Moreover, her queries will soon be answered in the figure of Lucius Harney and her perspective will inevitably change by the end of the novella.

Conversely, Benji is an outsider looking in and his sense of location is becoming more condensed. *Sag Harbor* opens under the sign of these three questions by him: "When did you get out?" (Whitehead 3), "How long are you out for?" and "Who else is out?" (4). These questions will get repeated again and again throughout the novel. In reality, they are meant to be asked within the novel, but they are also one of the ways in which the reader is able to get a better sense of the space wherein the novel unfolds. Sag Harbor is a Long Island costal town that over the years became a place of vacation for the well-to-do black community of New York City and Westchester. Where is out? What is out? Out from where? New York City and Westchester? Sag Harbor is "out." However, it is also "in," that is a self-confined place, as Benji notes: "When did you get out? Was the sound of a trap biting shut; we took the bait year after year, pure pinned joy in the town of Sag Harbor" (4). It is both a real, geographical location, and an imagined one, created by the community that inhabits it and where Benji and his friends embrace a new, imagined black identity.

This paper will draw on theories about the conception of space and establish how they apply to both *Summer* and *Sag Harbor* – thus also delineating their tenuous similarities. Eventually, a better understanding of both texts can be achieved and new critical perspective can be attained. French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's space theory in *The Production of Space* serves as the basic analytical structure for this article. Lefebvre's theory is that space, namely social space, is made of three elements: the Perceived, the Conceived and the Lived (Lefebvre 39). These terms, borrowed from Noam Chomsky's theory without being directly related to linguistic theory in any way, equate to the three concepts Lefebvre focuses on: spatial practice, representations of space and representational space. How do these three concepts apply to Charity's situation and to Benji's world?

In these two texts, the Perceived, the spatial practice, refers to the imagined geography of North Dormer, to the extent that the reader must

rely entirely on Wharton's descriptions of the place in order to form an idea of the location. Readers, in this sense, are just as clueless as Charity about the world she inhabits. This contrasts with the actual geography of Sag Harbor, and the space Benji's community occupies within the town. As for the Conceived, the representations of space, Wharton draws heavily on nature to portray North Dormer, as if the town exists as a manifestation of nature. In *Sag Harbor* the representation of space goes back to the history, the black history of the town of Sag Harbor that Whitehead so fluidly recounts. Finally, the Lived, that is representational space, is arguably where both texts are most akin to each other. Both Charity and Benji are coming of age and reaching adulthood. Representational space is more of a theatrical space in *Summer*; Charity's life unfolds like a scripted tragedy and the countryside village becomes a place of enclosure and provincialism for a young woman who is being robbed of an idealized respectable future. Representational space is more of an experimental space in *Sag Harbor,* because the coastal town becomes a place of exploration and understanding for the protagonist's black identity, with Benji's coming of age and embracing his black identity.

The Perceived: Spatial Practice

The Perceived refers to spatial practice, which Lefebvre expounds as follows: "*Spatial practice* […] embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation" (33; emphasis in the original). In both texts this refers to the particular location of the settings and the characteristics of the social formation of each place. In the first page of *Summer*, the first description of North Dormer is as if Wharton is painting a landscape worthy of the Hudson River school: "The springlike transparent sky shed a rain of silver sunshine on the roofs of the village, and on the pastures and larchwoods surrounding it" (Wharton 107). However, Wharton deftly deconstructs this idyllic landscape in a single sentence a little later on: "The place lies high and in the open, and lacks the lavish shade of the more protected New England villages" (107). By referring to North Dormer as a "place" rather than a "village," Wharton emphasizes the unprotected nature of the setting and foreshadows what is about to happen to the protagonist.

Sag Harbor opens with the Cooper family's 5 a.m. journey from New York City to Sag Harbor, and the protagonist's observation: "We stopped which meant that my father was waiting for an opening to cross Route 114, and then we were rolling down Hempstead, the official start of our hood" (Whitehead 18). Already the language has begun to change, and is not only territorial anymore: Hempstead is not simply a neighborhood, it is "our hood." Invisible borders and spaces are already being delineated.

Lefebvre adds: "Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion" (Lefebvre 33). This manifests as monotony is *Summer*, as is clear from Charity's exclamation towards the end of the text: "Things don't change at North Dormer: people just get used to them" (Wharton 172). In Wharton's text it is not so much a question of continuity and cohesion, as it is of tedium and stagnation. This is not the case in *Sag Harbor*, where continuity is present precisely because the African-American families have been vacationing there year after year, thus creating the cohesion of the black community. To quote Lefebvre again: "In terms of social space, and off each member of society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*" (Lefebvre 33).

This experience of the space is a personal one, and both texts are specific accounts of how the protagonists experience space. In *Summer* the story is told by a third-person narrator and in *Sag Harbor* by Benji Cooper as an adult, which means that both texts recount an individual experience with a certain distance from it. This individual experience of the place creates a collective notion and appropriation of the space, or, in Lefebvre's words: "The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it" (38). Benji belongs to his community, but Charity was brought into hers and never fully accepted it, as her backstory reveals from the very beginning: "She had been 'brought down from the Mountain'; from the scarred cliff that lifted its sullen wall above the lesser slopes of Eagle Range, making a perpetual background of gloom to the lonely valley" (Wharton 109). Charity was brought to North Dormer from the Mountain, an admittedly drearier place. Nevertheless, Charity's backstory and the description of her past serve to add to the sense that North Dormer is an isolated enclosure where she is trapped. The only way to escape is by having a better understanding of it. Coincidentally,

this is what Lefebvre concludes: "From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space" (Lefebvre 38). It is essential to draw up a literary map of both the fictional North Dormer, as well as of the town of Sag Harbor, in order to understand how both places are occupied and what significance emerges from this.

Charity is positively shocked when Lucius Harney walks into the village library where she works and asks her about the history of North Dormer. When he says "I'm an architect, you see, and I'm hunting up old houses in these parts," she bluntly replies: "Old Houses? Everything's old in North Dormer, isn't it? The folks are, anyhow" (Wharton 113). Charity's reply also has an interesting dimension, in that the people of North Dormer are dehumanized when they are compared to the buildings, and treated as non-human entities. Charity fails to grasp the importance of history and this is abundantly clear when Harney enquires about a book titled *North Dormer and the Early Townships of Eagle County*: "She remembered, the last time she had picked it up, wondering how anyone could have taken the trouble to write a book about North Dormer and its neighbors: Dormer, Hamblin, Creston and Creston River" (113). Charity's disdain for the history book is nevertheless compensated for by the possession of an actual map in her mind: "She knew them all, mere lost clusters of houses in the folds of the desolate ridges: Dormer, where North Dormer went for its apples; Creston River, where there used to be a paper-mill, and its grey walls stood decaying by the stream; and Hamblin, where the first snow always fell" (113-14). The fact that Charity has her geographical location mapped out in her mind serves to highlight her animal instincts, rather than her rational mind, as Lee explains: "She feels and thinks through her blood, she lies on the ground like an animal…" (Lee xix). This is especially evident when Charity is experiencing and musing on the natural world around her.

In *Sag Harbor*, it is ironic that Benji refers to the book, the "*Guide to Sag Harbor: Landmarks, Homes & History*" that everyone in Sag Harbor possesses, precisely because "we knew where our neighborhood began because that's where the map ended. The black part of town was off in the margins" (Whitehead 18). There is no map of Sag Harbor, therefore it is left to the black community to map out their town, their territory. Sometimes it consists of stating what is within the boundaries, in a matter of fact way,

as is the case when Benji states: "There were three housing developments in our summer world – Azurest, where we stayed, Sag Harbor Hills, and Ninevah" (24). Other times, it consists in describing what is outside the boundaries, such as the woods near Sag Harbor: "The real woods outside of the developments were the true frontier, enigmatic and intimidating" (28). These woods, which may still be harboring the Ku Klux Klan or not, are just as mysterious and terrifying as what lies beyond the space of the black community. For that purpose, symbolic marks and metaphorical borders were drawn up, not only to delineate the space that is and distinguish it from that which it was not. Benji breaks this down for the reader: "The Rock, the Creek, the Point: the increments of our existence" (37). About the Rock he says that it "was a few houses down from ours and a powerful psychological meridian" (36). If these points of reference served to define space, they also served to place the community. Benji adds: "Take my word, friend, the Rock was an anchor to keep you from drifting too far" (36).

These points of reference, while keeping the black community within their space, also serve to keep out all those that do not belong to that community, when presented with possibility of intruders: "everybody in the developments, whether they lived on the beach or not, felt that selfish tug of ownership when they saw strangers – i.e., white people – on our little stretch" (36). Apart from the Rock, there is also the Creek: "The shallow waves of the Creek put an end to the line of beach houses, and on the opposite bank the wetland outskirts of East Hampton, whispered in their eternal huddle" (37). And finally the Point, which like the two preceding spots serves a similar purpose of demarcation: "Watching over a scrabble of inhospitable beach, the wetlands curved up to Barcelona Neck, aka the Point, and beyond that maps failed" (37).

Benji is very aware of his space and the space his community occupies, versus the space they do not: "Outside our black enclave and lighting out for the white side of the island" (51). The division is indubitably racial. Even a teenage kid like Benji is fully aware of it, and even within the typically rebellious tendencies of his teenage years, he is curious about the other side, that is not his: "We had formed scouting parties to explore the dirt trails behind Mashashimuet Park, striking out toward Bridgehampton, and made occasional forays up 114 to the twisty, forsaken bends of Swamp Road, in a tentative East Hamptony salvo" (51). Ultimately, despite

curiosity and rebelliousness, Benji and his friends do not dare cross the black boundaries of Sag Harbor, "but generally we confined our shenanigans to the developments, to obsessive loops up and down Main Street in town" (51).

The Conceived: Representations of Space

The conceived is so explained by Lefebvre: "*Representations of space* [...] are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes and to 'frontal' relations" (Lefebvre 33). In *Summer*, the order is established by nature and the landscape determines the way the space is conceived. This is not so in *Sag Harbor*, where the presence of the black community, past and present, made the town what it is. Over the years, the black community of Sag Harbor has woven an order, a history.

Lefebvre elaborates on the notion of representations of space as "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bend – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived and what is conceived" (38). The first generation of people that came out to Sag Harbor were the "scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, social engineers," and the artists "with a scientific bend." They claimed the space as their own and they set out the ground rules, so to speak. The following generations are building on that. Benji's generation is building on that. That is why this is ultimately "the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)" (38-39). It is dominant because precisely history, the past, bears its weight. The Sag Harbor community is especially proud of their history, and especially when there is a "Famous Black Person" involved – an example of this being the story Benji's mother tells: "The woman who lived there in the 50s, my mother reminded us from time to time, used to have fish fry on Saturdays, selling lunches, and legend had it that DuBois came out to Sag once and ate there" (Whitehead 13). In reference to W.E.B. Du Bois's visit to Sag Harbor, Benji quotes his famous essay "Of our Spiritual Strivings" in *The Souls of Black Folk:*

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,-an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. (Du Bois 52, also qtd. in Whitehead 13-14)

Sag Harbor is a space, a social space, where this "double-consciousness" Du Bois speaks of can not only exist but be reconciled. Just like the rock, Du Bois's visit is what anchors the black community to Sag Harbor.

This is strikingly different from *Summer*, where the denizens of North Dormer are despairingly described by Charity when she is arguing with Harney: "But anyway we all live in the same place, and when it's a place like North Dormer it's enough to make people hate each other just to have to walk down the same street every day. But you don't live here, and you don't know anything about any of us, so what did you have to meddle for? (Wharton 130). The people of North Dormer are stagnant, just like the place where they live, and this adds to the oppressiveness of the village. The society of North Dormer perfectly exemplifies what Immanuel Kant called "the *unsocial sociability* of men, that is, their tendency to come together in society coupled with a continual resistance which constantly threatens to break this society up" (Kant 44). They have come together because they live in the same space, the village, but their urge is to break apart and scatter. This desire is especially strong in Charity, who is constantly thinking about what life is like outside of North Dormer.

When describing the Sag Harbor community itself, Benji notes that it is a "tribe": "Once the season is in full swing, you came across one of the tribe" (Whitehead 20), he also remarks: "You could coexist in this Sag Harbor galaxy in perfectly alienated orbits, always zipping into each other's blind spots, or hidden on the dark side of the moon" (26). It seems to be a contradiction that a community can be a "tribe" and at the same time its members can be completely alienated most of the time. That is simply because what brings the "tribe" together is their color, and that in

itself is not enough to make the community tight-knit. The people of Sag Harbor also exemplify Kant's "unsocial-sociability": they come together because of their color and that in itself is not enough to quell the urge to break apart and scatter. Unlike the people of North Dormer, however, they get to break apart and scatter once the summer is over.

Nature plays a preponderant role in both texts. In *Sag Harbor,* Benji muses about the reasons that made the first generation settle specifically in Sag Harbor: "I'll wager on this: the sunsets closed the deal for that first generation, the ones who came here originally, my grandparents and their crew" (38). Although the idea of sunsets is idyllic, the reality is much more pragmatic, as Benji concludes: "That first generation asked, Can we make it work? Will they allow us to have this? It doesn't matter what the world says, they answered each other. The place is ours" (38). It is worth remembering that the settling of Sag Harbor had racial implications:

> Certainly that first generation claimed and settled on Sag Harbor Bay because the south side was off-limits – the white people owned the coastline, South Hampton, Bridgehampton, East Hampton. And the Jersey shore, and every other stretch of vista-full property in the tristate area, the natural places of escape from city life. (51)

The first generation came to Sag Harbor because, due to their color, they were restricted to that one place. History delineated the boundaries of the space of the black community. Again the irony of the book title *Guide to Sag Harbor: Landmarks, Homes & History* is evident, because just as the mapping of the black community is not present in the guide book, neither is their history represented. It is their presence in the space of Sag Harbor over the years that has created an unwritten perhaps, but often spoken of, history of Sag Harbor. On the way to Sag Harbor, Benji says: "With every mention of a landmark, that place came into being after nine months of banishment in the city" (15). An example of this oral history is when Benji speaks of their Sag Harbor neighborhood: "Hempstead was where the houses started to have names, with stories and histories attached" (18). The mainstream history of Sag Harbor may be in the book, but the real black history of Sag Harbor has been constructed by generations of families vacationing in the town.

Nature is also crucial in *Summer*, with the protagonist Charity described by Lee as having an "animal-like" attitude, as in this passage: "Charity Royall lay on a ridge above a sunlit hollow, her face pressed to the earth and the warm currents of the grass running through her" (Wharton 134). Charity lacks the words to describe the nature she feels pulsing through her, but the narrator fills this lacuna with an exuberant summer description, an artwork in itself, of what Charity sees: "Directly in her line of vision a blackberry branch laid its frail white flowers and blue-green leaves against the sky. Just beyond, a tuft of sweet-fern uncurled between the beaded shoots of the grass, and a small yellow butterfly vibrated over them like a fleck of sunshine" (134). But Charity's experience of nature transcends the mere sense of sight, she experiences the natural world with all her senses in a sentimental way: "This was all she saw; but she felt, above her and about her, the strong growth of the beeches clothing the ridge, the rounding of pale green cones on countless spruce-branches, the push of myriads of sweet-fern fronds in the cracks of the stony slope below the wood, and the crowding shoots of meadowsweet and yellow flags in the pasture beyond" (134). The last part of the sentence suggests that Charity is a small detail in a vast, universal natural world.

The narrator's descriptions are so vivid that they create, more than a set painting, the impression of actually being in that very setting in nature, because the reader is invited to experience its smells: "All this bubbling of sap and slipping of sheaths and bursting of calyxes was carried to her on mingled currents of fragrance" (134). These vivid, dynamic descriptions of nature also add to a sense of anxiety in the reader, of a story that, just like the season it is taking place in, is ephemeral and will eventually cease to be. Now that the reader has inhaled this fragrant description, it must release and exhale it: "Every leaf and bud and blade seemed to contribute its exhalation to the pervading sweetness in which the pungency of pine-sap prevailed over the spice of thyme and the subtle perfume of fern, and all were merged in a moist earth-smell that was like the breath of some huge sun-warmed animal" (134). This quote also involves the reader's senses, not just the two most obvious ones, sight and smell, but taste, by way of the the reference to the aromatic herb thyme. Earlier in the novel, the reader has already been made acutely aware that Charity Royall processes the world through her senses, and of her animal-like nature: "She was blind

and insensible to many things, and dimly knew it; but to all that was light and air, perfume and colour, every drop of blood in her responded" (115).

Charity processes the natural world through empirical means that her own body naturally provides: "She loved the roughness of the dry mountain grass under her palms, the smell of the thyme into which she crushed her face, the fingering of the wind in her hair and through her cotton blouse, and the creak of the larches as they swayed to it" (115). A little later on, the narrator describes Charity's romantic interest, Lucius Harney, using references from the natural world: "His hair was sunburnt-looking too, or rather the colour of bracken after frost; his eyes grey, with the appealing look of the shortsighted, his smile shy yet confident, as if he knew lots of things she had never dreamed of, and yet wouldn't for the world have had her feel his superiority" (116). This description only serves to highlight that Harney belongs to the educated world of ideas, and Charity to the sensory world of nature. Harney's hair is "sunburnt-looking" not because it has been actually out in the sun, but because this is the way that Charity sees his specific shade of hair. It is also curious that Harney's hair is "the colour of bracken after frost," because although the story takes place in summer Wharton resorts to winter imagery to describe Harney. Just another reminder that Charity and Harney are not intended for each other, they belong to two different worlds. Charity is the vibrant eruption of summer and Harney is the cold hibernation of winter.

The Lived: Representational Space

The Lived is the representational space, that Lefebvre explains as "embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces)" (Lefebrve 33). The reader witnesses Charity's disconnect from nature as the novel progresses, and by the end of *Summer* this is most evident. Not only that, but Charity gets lost in the specific rural setting she occupies, compared to the larger cosmopolitan setting her lover is occupying now. She is becoming aware of her own distance

from civilization: "so wide a country, and the sight of those strange lands reaching away on every side gave her a new sense of Harney's remoteness" (Wharton 243). Wharton further adds that: "She knew she ust be miles and miles beyond the last range of hills that seemed to be the outmost verge of things, and she wondered how she had ever dreamed of going to New York to find him" (243). As Charity becomes aware of this distance, this remoteness, she withdraws altogether from the natural. Charity comes back from nature as the season of summer draws to a close.

As Charity returns from North Dormer, after her marriage to Lawyer Royall, the landscape is altogether different even though only two days have passed: "In the train, during the short run from Creston to Nettleton, the warmth aroused her, and the consciousness of being under strange eyes gave her a momentary energy. She sat upright, facing Mr. Royall, and stared out of the window at the denuded country" (259). Wharton continues explaining it: "Forty-eight hours earlier, when she had last traversed it, many of the trees still held their leaves; but the high wind of the last two nights had stripped them, and the lines of the landscape' were as finely pencilled as in December" (259). Just as Charity's life has gone from a vibrant summer to an endless winter, so the landscape has changed in her eyes to reflect this drastic shift. The natural world in which she had loved Harney no longer exists, it has changed, it has faded and been broken down: "A few days of autumn cold had wiped out all trace of the rich fields and languid groves through which she had passed on the Fourth of July; and with the fading of the landscape those fervid hours had faded, too" (259). At this stage the reader witnesses Charity's depersonalization, if she is denied her nature she too denies nature and withdraws: "She could no longer believe that she was the being who had lived them; she was someone to whom something irreparable and overwhelming had happened, but the traces of the steps leading up to it had almost vanished" (259). This contrasts sharply with the earlier descriptions of the landscape in the novel, at the beginning of summer: "There had never been such a June in Eagle County. Usually it was a month of moods, with abrupt alternations of belated frost and mid-summer heat; this year, day followed day in a sequence of temperate beauty" (134). Already the reader has being warned that this season is unusually alluring, suggesting that it could never again

be repeated: "Every morning a breeze blew steadily from the hills. Toward noon it built up great canopies of white cloud that threw a cool shadow over fields and woods; then before sunset the clouds dissolved again, and the western light rained its unobstructed brightness on the valley" (134). By the end of the novel this "unobstructed brightness" has come to pass and can never be repeated.

Sag Harbor is a representational space replete with the symbols and codes the black community has inscribed in it over the years. In his remarks on representational spaces Lefebvre refers to "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of the 'inhabitants' and 'users,' but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe" (Lefebvre 33). This is what the narrator, Benji, does in taking on the role of artist and philosopher, in describing Sag Harbor, and the images and symbols associated with the representational space of the town. Thus, Sag Harbor is indubitably a representational space, for the black community in general, but more specifically for the protagonist and narrator.

It is worth remembering that in New York City Benji's identity is always misrepresented, it is always being mistaken: "I remember one day in the seventh grade when an old white man stopped us on a corner and asked us if we were the sons of a diplomat. Little princes of an African country" (Whitehead 4). His African-American identity is not only mistaken, but most importantly called into question: "Because – why else would black people dress like that?" (4) Given the fact that the Cooper brothers are "modeling gear from the Brooks Brothers Young Men Department" (4), this cannot be conciliated with their black, African-American identity. However, as Benji notes regarding the old man's question in New York City – "What did we look like? I don't know, but his question wasn't something we'd ever be asked in Sag Harbor. We fit in there" (5). Furthermore, as Benji remarks, "Sag Harbor was outside the rules" (24).

But more than being outside the rules, it is more appropriate to say that Sag Harbor has its own set of rules, that differ from the rules the boys live by the rest of the year. This new set of rules makes Sag Harbor the perfect place for Benji and his friends to explore their own identity and what it means for them to be black. This involves putting on a performance,

as Benji himself remarks: "We were people, not performance artists, all appearances to the contrary" (88). Putting on a performance, so to speak, of black identity involves experimenting with language, gestures and clothing. Language is the first to be explored. When Benji reunites with his Sag Harbor friends, that is his peers, they have some catching up to do, language-wise: "Hanging out with NP was to start catching up on nine months of black slang and other sundry soulful artifacts I'd missed out on in my 'predominantly white' private school" (29). As their identity changes, morphing into what the boys perceive to be a black identity, so does the language. This continues throughout the book. In fact a conscious effort is made on the narrator's part to test out his own lexicon of words: "I said, 'Shut up, bitch.' I'd been experimenting with 'bitch,' trying it out every couple of days. Going well so far, from the response" (93). So now that the language is more appropriate to the black identity Benji aspires to, it is time to perfect the gestures.

The gestures being played out in the novel are handshakes. Benji describes Marcus and Bobby's handshake in this way: "He extended his hand to Bobby and I witnessed a blur of choreography" (43). This is more than a handshake, it is an art, a performance that requires a choreography with which the Sag Harbor boys are unfamiliar, because in reality it is not part of their culture: "Yes, the new handshakes were out, shaming me with their permutations and slippery routines" (43). In fact, Benji is not very skilled at this acquired art: "Slam, grip, flutter, snap. Or was it slam, flutter, grip, snap? I was all thumbs when it came to shakes" (43). Nevertheless, the boys associate handshaking with black culture and make every effort to assimilate the habit into their everyday life in Sag Harbor: "Devised in the underground soul laboratories of Harlem, pounded out in the blacker-than-thou sweatshops of the South Bronx, the new handshakes always had me faltering in embarrassment" (43). Handshakes are a learned, second nature to the boys, but they insist in performing this ritual, so as to proclaim their black culture.

Lastly, it is time to adapt the wardrobe to Sag Harbor and to the black identity the boys wish to demonstrate. This is mainly noticeable through jewelry, the gold chains, that some of the boys in Sag Harbor wear. When Benji takes on a summer job at the ice-cream parlor Jonni

Waffle, he notices Nick's gold chain: "I saw he had a new gold chain" (87). Benji then describes Nick's old chain: "His old one said NICK in two-inch letters, and was studded with tiny white rhinestones"; by comparing the old chain to the new one, he deduces that "[h]is new chains said BIG NICK in two-inch letters, and was studded with tiny white rhinestones that glittered more exuberantly than those of its predecessor, the ersatz diamond industry having made admirable strides in the last few months" (87). Benji himself, however, does not adopt a drastic change of clothing. He does not wear gold chains, probably because his father disapproves of them. Thus, his assimilation of what he perceives to be a black identity remains on a linguistic and gestural level only.

Ultimately, what the teenagers of Sag Harbor perceive as black identity, the black identity of the streets, of the predominantly black neighborhood they do not inhabit, is not well-regarded, not even accepted by the Sag Harbor community. Early on in the novel, Benji states that, "[t]here were no street niggers in Sag Harbor" (31). This distaste for street culture is further supported by Benji's father's view on the subject: "The Street in my father's mind was a vast, abstract plane of black pathology" (87). This view is more than understandable given that Mr. Cooper's upbringing differs greatly from that of his sons: "He'd grown up poor, fighting his way home every day off Lenox Avenue, and any hint that he hadn't escaped, that all his suffering had been for naught, kindled his temper and his deep fear that aspiration was an illusion and the Street a labyrinth without exit, a mess of connecting alleys and avenues always leading back into itself" (87). To Benji's father, black street culture is an undoing of sorts of all his hard work to come up, and bring his family up, in the world, and not only does he not share in it, but he creates an alternate black identity for himself and his family.

Conclusion

Overall, the "production of space" manifests itself differently in the two texts. However, this unifying critical theory also serves to bring them together as well as to highlight their similarities. A better understanding

of both texts has been achieved through an analysis of their setting from a spatial theory perspective. Regarding social space, Lefebvre states: "From the point of view of knowing (*connaissance*), social space works (along with its concept) as a tool for the analysis of society" (Lefebvre 34). However, the prism of social space is only one of the many ways in which texts can be understood. Marlon Lieber suggests the link between Colson Whitehead's text and Edith Wharton's literary production: "This is why it makes more sense to treat *Sag Harbor* as a novel of manners and start looking for its predecessors among works by authors such as Edith Wharton" (Lieber 118). This link extends beyond just the novel of manners, and it deserves to be explored in a rigorous and thorough manner. Henri Lefebvre was not the only one to write about social space and spatialization in general; therefore it would be interesting to consider other theories and how Colson Whitehead's ongoing literary production is inspired by and woven together with Edith Wharton's established literary corpus.

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Federico Bellini

To Make the World in the Maelstrom of its Undoing: Cormac McCarthy's *The Stonemason*[1]

"The play will not play": *The Stonemason* as "a notable failure"

Among McCarthy scholars, *The Stonemason* causes a certain embarrassment, which is equaled only by the screenplay for *The Counselor*. The primary reason for such embarrassment, as discussed by Edwin T. Arnold in a brilliant essay, is that the play was born under great auspices but finally failed to live up to its expectations. Written in the late 1980s, McCarthy's play received one of the seven grants awarded in 1991 by the American Express / John F. Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, which gave $10.000 to the author, and $50.000 to the Arena Stage in Washington, DC, for the work's production (Arnold 141). *The Stonemason* was supposed to be staged in 1992, but once the company understood the limitations of the script, and McCarthy proved unwilling to change it, they chose to return the grant and give up the project. The remarkable decision was also fostered by the fact that some of the actors felt that the work used racial stereotypes, and that "McCarthy, as a white writer, was unable to understand or dramatize the complexities of black family life" (Arnold 148). This reasoning is somewhat ironic considering that the play was first selected by the Arena Stage precisely because they assumed that McCarthy was a "young black playwright." Arnold recounts how the company "had recently committed itself to an awareness of cultural diversity in its presentations; *The Stonemason* offered them the opportunity to do a complex drama with all-black characters" (144). Later on, in 1997, a new attempt to produce the play was made at the McCarter Theater in Princeton,

New Jersey, but it too was abandoned two years later, supposedly because the play "needed to be developed further and McCarthy could not find time in his busy schedule to do the necessary work" (Simonson, qtd. in Peebles 82). One production did indeed eventually see the light of day in October 2001 at the Arts Alliance Center in Clear Lake, Texas, for a fundraising event. However, this was a one-actor show, in which only selected passages of the play were performed with the accompaniment of live music and the projection of photographs, thus making it a "multimedia experience of voice, music and image" (Peebles 82) that could probably be more easily considered a rewriting of McCarthy's play rather than an actual performance.

The play as such has thus only been presented to the public in book form – being published by Ecco Press in 1994. Still, as an overview of the play's critical reception shows, its problematic status remains. Lurking behind Erik Hage's comment that *The Stonemason* "bears witness to the fact that the writer's mastery of the novel did not so easily translate to theater" (Hage 152) lies an apologetic euphemism. John Cant recognizes that "there is something amiss with *The Stonemason*," and even though he eventually claims that the practical difficulties of the play could be "remediated most readily by an imaginative production in another medium" (Cant 122, 134), such as television or cinema, the realization of such a remedy still remains to be seen. Stacey Peebles, from whom I borrow the acute definition of the play as "a notable failure," perceptively observes that the play was indeed originally conceived as a screenplay, and had it remained so this would "lessen [...] or entirely eliminate [...] these production problems" (Peebles 71, 73). William Quirk admits that "as far as 'dramatic form' goes, this is certainly not McCarthy's preferred literary type," and if he finds the plot and form of *The Sunset Limited*, the only other McCarthian play thus far, "somewhat lacking" (Quirk 34), it is likely that he does not think any better of *The Stonemason*. Peter Josyph claims that the fact that McCarthy's play is a failure "places him even more securely in the tradition of great novelists" who could not "resist the lure of the stage" (Josyph 119) and made a mess of it.[2]

Despite her initial enthusiasm, Emily Mann, the artistic director of the McCarter Lab that led the second attempted production of the play, was painfully aware of its weaknesses and attempted to persuade McCarthy to redress them. Manuscripts and correspondence held at the Wittliff

Collections at Texas State University in San Marcos testify to Mann's failed attempts to reach a compromise with the author while simultaneously offering a unique insight into McCarthy's creative process. One aspect of the play that proved to be more complicated and which was repeatedly discussed by Mann and McCarthy is the fact that the main character of the play, Ben, was supposed to be played by two distinct actors on stage: one of them a silent character among the others, "only a figure designed to complete the scene," while the other was to stand on a podium and serve as a narrator of the events in a kind of voice-over. This technique, from McCarthy's perspective, was to have a double function: first, it would allow for placing the events in a "completed past" which, as the author repeatedly remarks in his long, first stage direction, has no communication at all with the "separate space" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 5-6) from which Ben talks; and secondly, it would allow for those typical McCarthian monologues in which narrated events are intertwined with arcane symbols and endowed with allegorical meaning to be included into the theatrical medium.[3] However, the adoption of this technique also entails several major problems: primary among them is the fact that if Ben the narrator as opposed to Ben the character knows what is going to happen, then one wonders why he does not seem to foresee what his family is doomed to. This aspect particularly worried Emily Mann, who ponders in a letter to the author dated 1 July 1997:

> Since the story-teller knows his story (the narrator, not the character) should he not foreshadow the coming disasters, as a good storyteller would, just a little more? Should he not mark the turning points just a little clearer and simpler, should he not have us invest in the key characters just a little more so we feel the hero's dilemma just that much more fully? (McCarthy, *The Cormac McCarthy Papers*, Box 66, Folder 2)

Another problem with the play has to do with Ben's long monologues which, while extremely fascinating on the written page, must be something of a nightmare for any actor or theater director. Cuts were repeatedly suggested, but McCarthy insisted at this point that no change be made, and that success depended exclusively on the ability of the actors. In one of the letters to Mann he claimed self-confidently: "My general comment

about the monologues is that if the character who plays Ben is not capable of holding the audience the play will not play, and nothing in the way of trimming more drama out of the dramatic sections will help" (ibid.).

The author's perceptible frustration at what he apparently saw as an unwillingness to understand or accept an essential part of his work already surfaced in the long stage direction that opens the published play, in which the author discusses the complicated relationship between Ben's podium monologues and the staged play. After some rather tortuous reasoning McCarthy ends with a liberating and yet quite contradictory tone, considering the effort invested in explaining the issue: "And now we can begin. As the mathematician Gauss said to his contemporaries: Go forward and faith will come to you" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 6). It is interesting to note that the quote McCarthy attributes to Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855) is actually usually attributed to one of his predecessors, the encyclopedist Jean Baptist le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783), who, while introducing hesitant students to infinitesimal calculus, suggested: "Allez en avant, et la foi vous viendra." Could the misattribution be due to a mistake on behalf of the author, who was probably misled by the fact that he might have found d'Alembert and Gauss's names mentioned together in reference to the so-called "fundamental theorem of algebra"? More interesting than this slip, though, might be the fact that the quote appears verbatim, as a simple Google search proves, in the English translation of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*. This book – which, as Michael Lynn Crews has insightfully discussed, "has been a rich source of inspiration for McCarthy" (Crews 106) – might very well be his actual source. Spengler uses d'Alembert's quote as an example of how the eighteenth century was an age of "refined scepticism [which] witnessed the emergence of one impossible truth after another", becoming thereby "a very carnival of abstract and immaterial thinking" (Spengler 58).[4] The fact that d'Alembert's quote was located in the context of describing the Enlightment's divorce from materiality made it possibly even more interesting and memorable to McCarthy: he might have compared it to the overcoming of the materiality of brick and mortar masonry by the more "abstract" forms of modern construction technology.

Returning to our main topic, McCarthy's choice not to yield to some of the requested changes, even at the cost of not ever seeing the play's production,

demands some attention. Clearly, the elimination of such elements would have meant corrupting the work's structural and stylistic bases as well as its intent. Thus, although the theater piece can indeed be defined as "a notable failure," it is precisely taking into account its limitations that a full understanding of this work's importance in McCarthy's career can be achieved. One might even be tempted, at this point, to wonder whether the misattribution of the quotation could have been made on purpose; might this have been a subtle way of inviting readers – and critics – not to linger too much on the superficial imperfections of the work and "Go forward" to grasp its essential core?

"A simple classical story about a hero and his mentor..."

As McCarthy allegedly said in a telephone conversation with Emily Mann which she refers to in the letter previously mentioned, *The Stonemason* can be summed up as "a simple, classical story about a hero and his mentor, how the hero loses his way, and how he recovers it" (McCarthy, *The Cormac McCarthy Papers*, Box 66, Folder 2). The play is set in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1971 and the hero of the play is Ben – an African American who venerates his 101-year-old grandfather Papaw, his mentor. Papaw represents one of the last vestiges of the stonemasonry practice and of the life-form embodying it – one that is as old as human life but is now quickly disappearing, being overcome by the use of hydraulic cement. Stonemasonry, within the tightly-knit allegorical texture of the play, does not merely represent a construction activity, but rather an entire worldview and a set of values based on what I have elsewhere called the "ethic of craftsmanship." Big Ben, Ben's father, represents the middle generation that has betrayed family traditions and welcomed cement and modernity. His choice, however, apparently does not pay off, considering his company is going bankrupt. Ben's teenage nephew, Soldier, who represents the fourth generation living under the same roof, embodies the disruptive side-effects of the friction between old and new: he is a troublesome youth who meddles with drugs and ultimately becomes a criminal.

All actions pivot around Ben, who is narrator and interpreter of many events. He struggles to hold his family together, and is driven by the best of intentions, informed by the values he learned working alongside his grandfather Papaw, his "mentor." These values, as already mentioned, are embodied by the stonemason's craftsmanship, which comes to symbolize whatever is good and right and beautiful on three different yet interconnected levels. First on the individual level, in which craftsmanship is seen as the only way to lead an authentic life; secondly on the social level, in which craftsmanship redeems the oppressed; and thirdly, on the symbolic-mythical level, with stonemasonry serving as the representation of a more genuine relation between humanity in general and the world. In the first part of the play, craftsmanship is represented as an infallible panacea against all evils on each of the three levels. This is based on Papaw and Ben's belief that there is an unbreakable symmetry between the craft of the stonemason and the action of God:

> For true masonry is not held together by cement but by gravity. That is to say, by the warp of the world. By the stuff of creation itself. The keystone that locks the arch is pressed in place by the thumb of God. […] according to the gospel of the true mason God has laid them in their bedding planes to show the mason how his own work must go. A wall is made the same way the world is made. […] The structure of the world is such as to favor the prosperity of men. (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 10)

The veneration of work is so vast as to be almost reminiscent of Thomas Carlyle's "Gospel of Work." As the Victorian thinker famously claimed in *Past and Present*, "Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God" (Carlyle 113). Similarly, in Ben's speech craftsmanship is seen as mirroring divine action in the human world. The belief that masonry is the repository of all values rests on the metaphysical assumption that there is an objective order in the world, which corresponds to God's plan for it, and that this order is supposed to lead to a constant amelioration of human life. The stonemason's craft is steeped in this knowledge, which is handed down from one generation to the next but can only be fully attained by means of personal, individual experience with craftsmanship.

Ben's wife Maven warns him about the risks of such idolatrous veneration. She asks him whether it is not a "pretty romantic notion" to believe that Papaw's "opinions are valuable [only] because he's worked all his life"; to which he replies: "Yes. It's also true. You can't separate wisdom from the common experience and the common experience is just what the worker has in great plenty" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 58). Ben elaborates on Papaw's rectitude and fidelity to truth as he recalls how Papaw broke his wooden level realizing, by means of a plumb bob, that it was not perfectly straight:

> I see him standing there over his plumb bob which never lies and never lies and the plumb bob is pointing motionless to the unimaginable center of the earth four thousand miles beneath his feet. Pointing to a blackness unknown and unknowable both in truth and in principle where God and matter are locked in collaboration that is silent nowhere in the universe and it is this that guides him as he places his stone one over two and two over one as did his father before him and his sons to follow and let the rain carve them if it can. (67)

Working is a way to submit to God's plans for the world, but it is also, in a Hegelian way (as shall be seen, Hegel is an important reference in the play) the medium with which one can intellectually penetrate such plans. In this context, Ben criticizes Freemasons because they aspire to understand the mysteries contained in masonry using symbolic gestures and bookish studies, instead of by actually building: "The work is everything, and whatever is learned is learned in the doing. […] knowledge is instilled in you through the work and not through any contemplation of the work" (65). Knowledge is reached through experience rather than through conceptual abstraction, so that the truth contained in the stonemason craft can only be attained by means of imitation and direct action: "you couldn't learn it out of a book if there were any and there are not. Not one. We were taught. Generation by generation. For ten thousand years" (26). The same skepticism towards intellectual knowledge is reflected in Ben's decision, referred to in passing in the play, to drop his studies at college and learn his grandfather's trade. McCarthy's manuscripts show that, in spite of his character's scorn of books as a source of knowledge, the author did rather

extensive bibliographical research while working on this play. In *Books Are Made Out of Books*, Michael Lynn Crews refers to "three areas of research [...]: architecture, freemasonry, and African American life in the South" (Crews 219). McCarthy perused books such as Joseph Rykwert's *The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century*, Robert Gould's *History of Freemasonry*, and Paul Frankl's *Gothic Architecture*, and took notes about Batty Langley's *Ancient Masonry* and Cicero's *Dream of Scipio.*

Although the author's research surfaces at several points in the play, more often than not the intertextual references, as is often the case with McCarthy, are woven into the text itself so as to remain hidden. An interesting case for the way in which different intertextual layers coalesce is the passage on Papaw's "labor theory of value," during which he claims – in a singular and somewhat ironic variation on John Locke's thesis, which derives private property from labor – that "[t]he man's labor that did the work is in the work. You caint make it go away. Even if it's paid for it's still there. If ownership lies in the benefit of a man then the mason owns all the work he does in this world and you caint put that claim aside nor quit it and it dont make no difference whose name is on the paper" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 30). Accordingly, Papaw recounts how he refused to join his colleagues who had decided to demolish a house they themselves had built as retaliation for not having been paid for their work. Doing it would not only be useless, but offensive towards their own work and the values incarnated therein. Ben expresses the "further agenda" of Papaw's "labor theory of value" by referring to Hegel and "his paradigm of servant and master in which the master comes to suffer the inner impoverishment of the idle while the servant by his labors grows daily in skill and wisdom" (31). Papaw, born in 1870, is the first of his family to have been born formally free and protected by the Reconstruction Amendments, yet it is evident that neither the 101 years of his life nor the Civil Rights Act have been enough for the intention of those amendments to come to fruition. However, Ben suggests that the positive value of work is so strong that, in a way, it even compensates for the injustice of slavery and submission, since "work exists outside of the claims of the worker and landholders alike" (31). "We knew it was a thing that if we had it they could not take from us" – says Papaw about what he calls the trade – "and it would stand by us and not fail us. Not ever fail us" (33).

Aside from Locke and Hegel, a further dimension of this intertextual play can only be assessed after having read an extremely interesting paragraph in one of the manuscript's versions of this passage.

> BEN. I think that what [Papaw] means is that the work exists outside of the claims of worker *or* contractor. Mason or Landowner. When Lamkin was refused payment by lord Weary for building his castle he killed lord Weary's firstborn child. Lord Weary is also another name for the devil. And there is an old superstition that masons tempered their mortar with the blood of infants. Out of the cradle the red blood did run. But the man whose life is rooted in holy labor – and it makes me smile too, yet it is holy – and the man who exploits that labor and who is esteemed for occupying a structure the craft of which is beyond the capacity not only of his mind but his soul... both men are outside the work actually. And yet the spirit of the mason resides in the stone and the stone is he while the Lord in his manse is kept from the weathers by a thing altogether other than himself – even if his own honest labor has paid. On this I remain a manual aristocrat. (McCarthy, *The Cormac McCarthy Papers*, Box 66, Folder 4)

McCarthy is here referring to a folk ballad of Scottish or Irish origin telling the story of a nobleman, Lord Weary, who refuses to pay the workers who have built his castle. As a reaction against this injustice, one of the unpaid builders, Lamkin, sometimes also referred to as Lambkin or other variants of the name, murders Lord Weary's wife and child. The ballad inspired the title of Robert Lowell's 1946 poetry collection *Lord Weary's Castle*, in which "the castle of the title may [...] refer to the world created by God but turned into all sorts of commercial, military, religious, or familiar establishments which are constructed at the expense of the owner's debt to God and to other men. [Lamkin] may also be seen as representing the exploited lower class, the true creators of value, who will take their ultimate revenge on selfish owners" (Fein 35).

A fascinating fact about the sheet of paper on which this passage is written is that it shows the clear marks of the author's fit of rage. McCarthy had written on the side of the passage, with his characteristically tidy and clear handwriting, "Lamkin." Later on, he must have had some difficulty in finding the passage marked by this reference, so that when he did find it he

used a black marker to highlight it with arrows and to write on the top and bottom of the page the name of the character in capital letters two inches tall. The emotional state he must have been in when doing this is clearly perceivable in the note he added at the bottom of the page in bold strokes and all capital letters: "30 minutes looking for this fucking sheet of paper" (McCarthy, *The Cormac McCarthy Papers*, Box 66, Folder 4). Apart from the funny anecdote, this seems to testify to the importance this reference had – at least during one stage of the play's writing: it was an intertextual reference that McCarthy had studiously decided to insert at a strategic point in the work and, even though it was later dropped, it still might be considered as an important sub-text worth analyzing, also in reference to Lowell's work.

Returning to Ben's philosophy of work, embodied in his mentor Papaw, it appears that it not only aligns work with truth and justice, but also with the principle of beauty, thereby seeming to reflect the Medieval notion of how Truth, God and Beauty coincide. The beauty of the stonework is seen as an aspect of the work's perfection itself: "The beauty of those structures would appear to be just a sort of by-product, something fortuitous, but of course it is not" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 91). The work's design arises out of a "necessity" and corresponds to the "structure of the world" which is supposed to be made for the "prosperity of man" (10), including the enjoyment of beauty. Beauty is not something added to the products of work, but it is the essence of work itself, as it "is simply a reflection of the purity of the mason's intention" (91).

"…how the hero loses his way..."

The stonemason's trade comes to symbolize the essential values on all three levels mentioned above, thus fulfilling the role of Papaw as mentor, as McCarthy defined him in his phone conversation with Mann. On the individual level, the hard work that Papaw fosters contributes to the expression of personal excellence; on the societal level, it is a means of preserving one's dignity even under oppression, as well as the way to eventually overcome such oppression; and on the cosmic level the

stonemason's action reflects the creative will of a benevolent God. However, as was anticipated, Ben eventually "loses his way." That is, he does not manage to rise to the values that he had chosen for himself.

Thus, not only does Ben not manage to save his family from falling apart, but he even unwillingly contributes to the tragedy: his father commits suicide after his company goes bankrupt, and Ben feels guilty because he did not give his father the money he had asked for. Soldier flees, becomes a criminal, and Ben offers him money to persuade him not to interfere with the family anymore and allow his mother, Ben's sister, to start a new life. However, when Soldier is found dead from a drug overdose the truth surfaces, and Ben and his sister separate in regret and resentment.

In spite of the implied glorification of craft, here, like in all of McCarthy's writings, effort does not lead to success, goodwill does not prove to be a reliable guide for judgment, and more often than not hope is frustrated. Ben, as he narrates, had come "to the life of the laborer as the anchorite to his cell and pallet," convinced as he was that "if enough of the world's weight only pass through [someone's] hands he must become inaugurated into the reality of that world in a way to withstand all scrutiny" (111). However, towards the end of the play he is forced to admit that he has "lost his way" and that his excessive veneration for his grandfather had actually led him astray. In a passage from the manuscript, which was later shortened in the published form, Ben states this clearly as he meditates on what he should have done with his father:

> If I'd ransomed all I own and given him the money would it have saved him?
>
> No.
>
> Was I obligated to do so anyway?
>
> Yes.
>
> Why didnt you?
>
> Because I didnt think it was right.
>
> Because you didnt love him. / Because I didnt love him [added in handwriting]
>
> Why didnt you love him?
>
> Because I didnt know him.
>
> Why didnt you know him?

> Because I didnt love him. My affections were fixed upon a[n] exotic cultural artefact that I called my grandfather and I used my love for him (That bond, him, ?) to get even with my father. An artefact. An historical freak. Not even an anachronism. There was never a time he'd have sorted into without tearing something. At best he was an idea. Your father drowned before your eyes and you stood smiling with your arm around a phantom. (McCarthy, *The Cormac McCarthy Papers*, Box 66, Folder 8, page marked as "D")

Ben is forced to realize that he had never really understood Papaw's teaching. Just like Freemasons intellectualized and thus spoiled real work, Ben too has idealized his grandfather and misunderstood his lesson. The failure of his attempt to hold his family together is not just a question of bad luck: it is the empirical proof that the metaphysical principles on which Ben's ethics of work rests are mistaken. While at the beginning Ben had declared that gravity was the "warp of the world," which holds the "stuff of creation" together, and was the physical representation of how "the structure of the world is such as to favor the prosperity of men" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 10), he is now forced to rethink this. As logic has it, this proposition can be negated in two ways. The first and most radical is by saying that there is no such thing as a structure of the world. Jeffrey, Soldier's sixteen-year-old friend and partner in crime, represents this view in his short dialogue with Ben, who has been looking for information about his runaway nephew:

> JEFFREY. […] All I know is you living in the past. I'm living in the past. History done swallowed you up cept you dont know it.
>
> BEN. If history swallows everybody up who do you think is running the world?
>
> JEFFREY. It look to you like somebody *runnin* it? (74)

Jeffrey here is clearly not speaking the way an average teenager would: McCarthy is using the character to give voice to a philosophical standpoint against which to define that of the main character. Jeffrey stands for the nihilist belief that there is no such thing as a "structure of the world," that the world is just a constant catastrophe in which everything happens by chance and nothing leads anywhere.

By contrast, although Ben does not negate that there is such structure, he is eventually forced to admit that it is not "such as to favor the prosperity of man". Towards the end of the play Ben says: "I lost my way. I'd thought by my labors to stand outside that true bend of gravity which is the world's pain" (111). The implicit reference in this passage – apart from the Einsteinian space-time bend – is to the gnostic worldview that has proved so influential to McCarthy. According to Hans Jonas one of the central tenets of Gnosticism is the doctrine of *Heimarmene*, or "Universal Fate," which overturns the Stoic concept of order and the alignment of the macro and the microcosm: "Order and law is the cosmos here too, but rigid and inimical order, tyrannical and evil law, devoid of meaning and goodness, alien to the purposes of man and to his inner essence" (Jonas 250). Everything is structured, ordered, and deterministic, but the *telos* – that is, the goal of this order – is not harmony and balance but, by contrast, the continuous destruction of whatever comes to be. The world is not ruled by a benevolent power, but by an evil God, the Demiurge, who enjoys the perpetual falling apart of his own creation and the suffering of his creatures. Gravity, the "warp of the world" holding the "stuff of creation together," is not the force "pointing motionless to the unimaginable center of the earth […] where God and matter are locked in collaboration that is silent nowhere," and which holds up the wall; rather it is the bent force which finally makes any wall fall down. There is only one law which is all-comprehensive, inescapable, and that governs all. It is the law of ultimate destruction: "things exist and then exist no more. Trees. Dogs. People. *Will* that namelessness into which we vanish then taste of us?" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 104).

This change entails a subversion of Ben's philosophy of work on all three of the levels previously described. On the individual level, the effort to build habitable places (in both a literal and a metaphorical sense) in the end only leads to adding ruins to ruins. On the societal level, every change seems merely to be the substitution of one system of exploitation for a new one, such as in the series of slavery, legal marginalization, and then economic marginalization for black American communities. A passage from an early manuscript version that was later abandoned clearly shows McCarthy's intention to address the issue of the repeated cycles of oppression in American history. In this fascinating and disturbing passage,

Ben recounts how Papaw would sometimes talk in his sleep to friends long dead while, in the opposite part of the house, Soldier would shout in his nightmares, thus symbolically bringing the ghosts of the past and the ghosts of the future together in the same house:

> And some nights Soldier would be having his nightmares and Papaw would be calling out his instructions or greeting people dead and in their graves the better part of a century and in his tower on the third floor Soldier would be howling in his sleep strangling with fear and rage and locked in combat with whatever demons he was condemned to deal with night after night and in his howling above and this calling out below the house seemed to be filling with spirits unknown to one another that had best been left so but were nonetheless wrenched out of the dark of their separate destinies and slammed rudely together in some common noumenal space, black slaves born two hundred years ago set elbow to elbow with teenage dopefiends in dayglo jumpsuits and welfare mothers in jeans with black mammies in bandanas. (McCarthy, *The Cormac McCarthy Papers*, Box 66, Folder 8)

Finally, on the cosmic level, the Freemasons' idea of the Great Architect as the nurturing power controlling the world yields to the Gnostic idea of God as Demiurge, the evil force which perversely enjoys the destruction of what he himself created.

"…and of how he finds it". To make the world again and again and again

As discussed above, the subversion of the early optimistic view according to which the structure of the world is such as "to favor the prosperity of men" does not lead to Jeffrey's nihilism. The awareness that nothing is eternal and perfect, that no wall will stand forever, does not lead to the negation of any value in attempting to build something lasting. McCarthy's ethics of work corresponds to a genuine and profound interest in the human being's relation to the world, and to a belief that this relation can be constructive rather than destructive. However, the point is that such constructiveness cannot be considered as eternal or absolute. Ben misunderstands the lesson of his grandfather by taking a certain view of stonemasonry as an absolute value that never needs to be questioned, while in fact it is always both

relative and tentative. This is represented in Ben's closing monologue, as he sees the ghost of Papaw appearing naked in the darkness:

> He was just a man, naked and alone in the universe, and he was not afraid and I stood there with my tears pouring down my face and he smiled at me and he held out both his hands. Hands from which all those blessings had flowed. Hands I never tired to look at. Shaped in the image of God. To make the world. To make it again and again and again. To make it in the very maelstrom of its undoing. (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 133)

If the truth, value, and beauty that can be found in work are not universal, this does not mean that they are empty. On the contrary, they can only exist insofar as they are always tentative, striving for their own precarious affirmation without becoming absolute. "The wisdom of the journeyman is to work one day at a time," says Ben while meditating on the etymology of "journeyman" and remembering how Papaw "always said that any job even if it took years was made up of a day's work. Nothing more. Nothing less. [...] In the concept of a day's work is rhythm and pace and wholeness. And truth and justice and peace of mind" (96).

Even though the universe is bent towards destruction, one can still try to create moments of resistance, beauty, and justice. However, in order to do so one cannot appeal to transcendental truths, but must work piecemeal, day by day. This idea is central to many of McCarthy's works, especially from the Border Trilogy onward, and it has found its most poignant representation in *The Road.* The protagonists of McCarthy's latest novel, a father and his child, struggle to survive as they proceed one day at a time across the post-apocalyptic wasteland, managing to create in the mayhem and destruction surrounding them an occasional oasis of solidarity, humanity, and tenderness.

"The work that you do": The ethics of authorial work

In his 2007 Oprah Winfrey interview, McCarthy claims that he decided to write because he knew that he would not want to work. This is indeed a very interesting statement, coming from a writer for whom, as we have

seen, work is seen as the space in which the complex chiasmus between the human being and the world takes place. However, once work in general is distinguished from craft as truly meaningful work, endowed with an ethical awareness and a disciplined commitment (see Brinkmeyer), then McCarthy's remark is more easily understood.

In *The Stonemason*, Big Ben is as much a worker as Ben and Papaw, but his decision to drop stonemasonry in favor of concrete alienates him from those values that are inherent to the traditional craft and that lead to "rhythm and peace and wholeness" instead of overwhelming pressure and forgetfulness. By means of true craftwork, represented here by stonemasonry, the human being makes of the world *his* world, even if just for the time of his existence: "The world was before man and it will be again when he is gone. But it was not this world nor will it be, for where man lives is in this world only" (McCarthy, *The Stonemason* 104).

McCarthy's ethics of work now comes full circle, and allows us to finally gauge the import of this failed play within his *oeuvre*. In the same aforementioned Oprah Winfrey interview, in which McCarthy ironically places his profession in opposition to work, he also says that a writer has to take his craft seriously: "You have to treat it as the work that you do" (McCarthy, "Interview" n. pag.). McCarthy's appreciation in the face of the world's brittleness corresponds to his disciplined weaving together of the products of a fertile, mythopoeic imagination in an extraordinary prose in order to get as close as possible to an unreachable perfection. This idea – which recalls Samuel Beckett's invitation in *Worstward Ho* to "try again. Fail again. Fail better" (Beckett 471) – can ultimately lead to a meta-poetic interpretation of *The Stonemason* as a failed play but at the same time as the most authentic expression of McCarthy's ethics and poetics of work. Just as Papaw refuses to destroy the house he built because the value of the work invested in it remains, so did McCarthy, in refusing to compromise with the requests of the theater company, accept the failure of his creative project in order to not betray his vision. What is left to the readers then is the tangible proof of McCarthy's dedication, together with an imperfect but powerful work of genius.

Notes

[1] I would like to thank all the staff at the Wittliff Collections for their extraordinary helpfulness as well as Mr. William J. Hill for having generously supported my research visit. Thanks also to Kevin, Barbara, Jerry, and Hannah for showing me the warmth of a Texas welcome. Several passages of this paper have already appeared, albeit in different form, in my article "Cormac McCarthy's *The Stonemason* and the Ethic of Craftsmanship."

[2] Notwithstanding the acuity of Josyph's observations about McCarthy's disregard for the rules of theater, along with his vivisection of the work (by which he effectively exposes all of its weaknesses) he still finds the play a useful excuse for discussing at length his days in Paris. However, there have also been positive – and even enthusiastic – criticisms. Kenneth Lincoln seems to be a great fan of the work, which he bafflingly defines as "theater Grotessco [sic]," while going so far as to claim, in his peculiarly boisterous and self-referential tone, that "McCarthy's artistry with stage speech pulls taut the rein on language and form apprenticing the trade from Greek tragedy through Shakespeare, to Mamet and Pinter" (Lincoln 91). In her idiosyncratic and multifaceted reading of McCarthy's play Mary Brewer appreciatively remarks that "*The Stonemason*'s representation of black masculinity and faith, as personified by Ben and Papaw, defies the degraded images that historically have typified dominant discourse about blackness and black religious practice" (Brewer 45).

[3] It would be rather hard to imagine such monologues as part of the dramatic action itself. An analogous technique is adopted in *The Counselor*, in which the final "McCarthian monologue" takes place on the phone, thus distancing the speaker from the listener.

[4] More interestingly, probably, the motto could be read in light of the relation between "works" and faith in Protestant theology, which is here and elsewhere one of the most inspiring references in McCarthy's approach to the themes of free will, destiny, and the relation between the subject and the outside world. See, for example, the following passage from Nietzsche's *Dawn of Day* in which the philosopher gives precedence, as McCarthy seems to suggest, to action over faith: "*Works and Faith.* – Protestant teachers are still spreading the fundamental error that faith only is of consequence, and that works must follow naturally upon faith. This doctrine is certainly not true, but it is so seductive in appearance that it has succeeded in fascinating quite other intellects than that of Luther (e.g. the minds of Socrates and Plato): though the plain evidence and experience of our daily life prove the contrary. The most assured knowledge and faith cannot give us either the strength or the dexterity required for action, or the practice in that subtle and complicated mechanism which is a prerequisite for anything to be changed from an idea into action. Then, I say, let us first and foremost have works! and this means practice! practice! practice! The necessary faith will come later – be certain of that!" (Nietzsche 29).

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L'inedito

Renata Morresi

"Cosmos: a Nocturne": A Poem By Rachel Blau DuPlessis

"Cosmos: A Nocturne" is marked by the interplay between the singular and the manifold, the minor incident and the massive event, the infra-ordinary and the striking. Readers familiar with DuPlessis's poetry will recognize this tension: the long-poem *Drafts*, published in several books, started in 1985 and written across thirty years, brings together an inexhaustible drive to question the systems of signification the subject is imbued in (including poetic tradition), the material conditions, accidents and gestures animating one's life, and the political need to confront major socio-cultural issues, such as global wars and the conundrums of US politics, gender and women's agency, Jewishness and the dangers of identity, mass destruction and the work of memory. Structured on a rectangular grid numbering 114 poems (with unnumbered poems, collage poems and poems of the interstices to disrupt this apparently fixed architecture), *Drafts*, as the title suggests, is built on "the provisional and the contingent" (Pritchett n. pag.), openly challenging the universalism of Pound's *Cantos* and sharing H.D.'s palimpsestic strategy, where writing is both rewriting of what was erased and endless glossing at its margins. The status of work-in-progress allows a mode of inquiry which is never oblivious of the historical context of its production and "dare[s] compare the little with the large" ("Draft 72: Nanifesto," in DuPlessis, *Torques* 97). Full of references, quotations and allusions, not only to literary tradition, but also to newspapers headlines, art exhibitions, scientific research, pop culture, casual conversations, languages such as Esperanto, Latin, Yiddish, German, French, and Italian, DuPlessis's work cannot be easily reduced to a school or a poetic movement. In fact, her poetic signature signals a daring complexity: mixing the argumentative logic of the essay, the density and the mechanism of poetry, the construction and length one associates to

narrative, her writing insists on saying that poetry matters, right here in the messy and murky world, as an instrument of knowledge and awareness.

Drafts has been a massive accomplishment and an on-going generator of poetry, each poem resonating of another poem, each sequence of poems folding on another sequence, each interstice leaving space for another page. "Cosmos" inherits and mirrors the richness of this writing process, reaching out to the heart of DuPlessis's poetics, which never loses sight of "the mite, the mote, the mute" (95), striving to give account of what is silenced and unspeakable. As the title suggests the time is the night, with its offer of a deep space and a deep time, a scenery that invites a meditation on individual vulnerability as well as facing the challenge of collective responsibility. In it the subject provides a contemplation of the limitless immanence always on the verge of submerging humanity, not in any transcendental sense but in the shape of litter and poison. The meditative mode soon becomes an interrogation of our position in a world literally overwhelmed by our own waste. DuPlessis's midrashic writing dwells on every single fissure, every single fragment: nothing is dismissed as an object of investigation, no matter how microscopic or apparently insignificant. Refusing the pastoral device of framing a coherent and inspiring view, a traditional setting for the poetic subject to start interrogating the universe, here the subject is found in a space-time "saturated / with pitiless derangements." The distance necessary to trigger meditation is not given by Nature (an ideal charged with contradictions), but by the dangerous, noisy, darkened space of conflict and confusion typical of existence in the globalized West, with its empty slogans, its constant state of emergency, its "political failure." Thus, the poem confronts the material and discursive rubbish produced by flawed politics and rhetoric, the results of "natural" disasters (mostly caused by human neglect), as well as the very human disaster of pretending to cope with the global and the cosmic without awareness of our local, unstable, provisional status. The subject's exploration of "reality" becomes a questioning of our ethical choices and a way to open poetry to critical thinking: "What is to be done? / What could or should we do?" The concern with the ephemeral we find in Rilke's "Ninth Elegy" is here alluded to in a recurring list of simple words, "house, bread, pitcher, night, door," so general and common and yet so charged with one's own experience and

perceptions, in such a way that they end up asking us whether we can take care of all this, or at least dare to accept it: "it's an unfixed archive, / neither all omnivorous / nor all complete."

DuPlessis's work is an elegy full of hermeneutical tension and a linguistic experiment immersed in historical consciousness. Translating DuPlessis into Italian means facing this complexity, but also coming to terms with the dizzying compounds, the wordplays and the coinages, the fibrillating alliterations and rhymes and all the rich soundbox DuPlessis employs. To do this the translator has tried to dialogue with Italian poetry, the one most in love with an experimental and resonant word, from the late twentieth century to today: Zanzotto, Sanguineti, Caproni, Insana, Lo Russo and Giovenale have left their marks in DuPlessis's Italian version (see DuPlessis, *Dieci bozze*). DuPlessis's language, direct and layered at the same time, colloquial but dense with its unsettling extra-systoles, intertwining the high and the low, mixing academic and informal registers, *diverts* the target language, rerouting and amusing it. The (not too secret) hope of the translator of poetry, after all, is that of challenging linguistic numbness while contributing to the interpretation and the dissemination of her work.

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Rachel Blau DuPlessis

Cosmos: A Nocturne

1.

I began this far away
down-where
before dawn
in a night saturated
with pitiless derangements –
part dreamed, part head-blood,
part galloping times,
capital letter concepts
arranged in categories
then scrambled, intercut
spilling counterpart ides.
ILLJUSTNEST
ECO-EATH
DISUST
NOXXUS
ASTERAGE
ONWRECK.
Every abstract noun
an inchoate block
that, struck like a rock,
gushed
a water choke,
ready at any odd cell-small
no-sleep-image-anger
to cover the world
with mud.

Not dreams, not nightmares:
    It's sludge of political failure.
    Systemic ruptures, looms of dooms on earth.

Yet the quiet gate stayed open,
the slide into sleep had seemed assured.
It was no help being
rebar-rigid with rage,
no particular sense to pit
extreme heat
    caged children
        bottled water litter's microbits
against sleep.
Yet these things burst,
    flooded over, further embittering
        other unstoppable tides.

2.

It seems I have no skin,
am hungry ghost to haunt the stormed-on streets,
wading in elements so engulfing and poisonous
I am about to die again.

3.

The merger of two black holes forms
one binary black hole – is this really a thing?
did I say it right?
The person lying flat in awe and fear is
not quite sure
what this entails
except black holes are rare,

and somewhere there.
Implosive anti-matter stuff?
The inside out of cosmos outside in?
A heavy dot with which to rebegin?
Galactic collision between long-zone
bi-fold double swooshing light-year slough?
Although the person seems secure
that she is / I am here
implacable as astrophysics,
though not so impressive
nor as long-term,
withal the double question
does this count?
Does it matter being here?

4.

Can this cosmos be trusted
with a list of words,
daily simples,
nothing abstract
like WILL or JUSTICE, can it
    be trusted to accept that
nouns (like "home" or "night")
    are invested with our feelings?
Say: the touch
    of that particular door,
its key to jiggle in a certain way,
    then a little kick; you're home.
The light flickers
the leaves get shadowy luminous
endarkened colors shine.

The moon is up.

The door is shut.
The night is full.
The world is clear.

Can the cosmos bear
my pitcher in the shape of a rooster –
flowery, charming, and (it turned out)
impractical; can it dare
the word "mother"
without evoking
something mendable;
can it share our bread.

Does the cosmos
care to understand
house, bread, pitcher, night, door?

5.

Yet ferocious mis-management ensues

(a series of if-then clauses follows
involving plastics
and electronic waste, generating
profit, disordering the drinkable, fracking
plasma fields of cosmic blood)
from which a flood
of moral suffering rises above
last night's crest.

What is to be done?
What could or should we do?
To live in our world, is what I mean.

And is it relief or infinite sadness to think
that this will be destroyed,
whether we (insomniac mites)
do it, or approve, or not?
Will be absorbed and be transformed
in the long-term normal course of things
no matter whether we wake tomorrow
or stay awake till light, to say
"pitcher, door, house, bread, night."

6.

Glints of cosmic greenglass pierce our rocks
(blackglass! azure arrivals! jewels of song!)
all from drifts of dust.

It's cosmic dust.
These matter-swirling beauties generate
our astonished empathy, considering
that all this
is innumerable grasps and gasps of cells
and minerals hooked into each other's processes
where chancy atoms frisk and frost
setting night and day in motion
where we can see their turns.
Does it matter that we can?
We see them now.

This place, these multiples, this time
barely countable, barely accountable
with the numbers we possess –
it's an unfixed archive,
neither all omnivorous
nor all complete

but present as colors, mixed
and metamorphic,
just like that.

Crystals of small light fall from a compromised sky.
And once you know what you must face,
you try to wake.

April-November 2018

“Cosmo: Un Notturno”

Traduzione italiana di Renata Morresi

1.

Ho cominciato da così lontano
    là-dove
        prima del sole
in una notte satura
    di spietati eccessi
        in parte sognati, in parte pulsanti,
tempi in parte sfrenati,
        concetti con la maiuscola
allestiti in categorie
    poi rimescolati, interposti
        riversando idi equivalenti.
MALGIUSNIDO
    ECO-MORTE
        DISUSTO
NOXXUS
    ASTRERA
        NOWFRAGIO.
Ogni nome astratto
    un blocco amorfo
        che, picchiato come roccia,
ha fiottato
    acqua che strozza,
        pronta ad ogni strambo micro-sbocco
d’odio concreto
    a coprire il mondo
        di fango.

Né sogni né incubi:
    è poltiglia di fallimento politico.
    Fratture sistemiche, telai di tragedie sulla terra.

Tuttavia il passaggio quieto rimase aperto,
scivolare nel sonno era parso garantito.
Serviva a poco starsene
barre rigide di rabbia,
non sembrava importante porre
il caldo estremo
    i bambini nelle gabbie
        i microbit di scorie nell'acqua in plastica
contro il sonno.
Eppure queste cose esplodono,
    inondate, inasprendo
        altre implacabili maree.

2.

Sembra che io non abbia pelle
sia lo spettro affamato che infesta le strade devastate,
guadando tra elementi avvelenati soverchianti così tanto che
sto per morire di nuovo.

3.

La fusione di due buchi neri forma
un buco nero binario. Ma davvero è una cosa questa?
E l'ho detta nel modo giusto?
La persona che striscia sgomenta e spaurita è
non tanto certa
delle implicazioni
salvo che i buchi neri sono rari,

che stanno là da qualche parte.
Implosiva anti-materia?
Il rovescio del cosmo rivoltato in fuori?
Un punto denso da cui ricominciare?
Collisione galattica tra lunghe mute bine
raddoppiate sguscianti da anni luce?
Sebbene la persona sembri sicura
di essere qui / che io sia qui
implacabile come l'astrofisica,
anche se non altrettanto formidabile
né duratura,
nondimeno la doppia domanda:
questo conta?
Conta qualcosa stare qui?

4.

Possiamo affidare a questo cosmo
una lista di parole?
le semplici quotidiane,
niente di astratto
come VOLONTÀ o GIUSTIZIA, possiamo
    fargli accettare che
i nomi (come "casa" o "notte")
    siano investiti del nostro sentirli?
Esempio: la foggia
    di una certa porta
la chiave da scrollare a quel modo,
    poi un colpetto, sei entrata in casa.
Balugina la luce
le foglie prendono un chiarore nell'ombra
i colori spenti tornano a splendere.

La luna è alta.

La porta è chiusa.
La notte è fonda.
Il mondo è limpido.

Il cosmo può sopportare
la mia brocca a forma di gallo?
a fiori, incantevole, e (venne fuori)
inservibile; può osare
la parola "madre"
senza alludere
a qualcosa da aggiustare;
può condividere il nostro pane?

Al cosmo importa
di capire
casa, pane, brocca, notte, porta?

5.

Tuttavia un feroce malgoverno ne risulta
    (segue serie frastica di se-allora,
    che implica rifiuti elettronici
    e in plastica, genera
    profitto, intorbida il potabile, frattura
    campi plasmatici di sangue cosmico)
da cui un'alluvione
di travaglio morale risale
la cresta della notte scorsa.

Cosa va fatto?
Cosa potremmo o dovremmo fare?
Per vivere in questo mondo, intendo.

Ed è sollievo o infinita tristezza pensare

che questo sarà distrutto,
non importa quel che noi (acari insonni)
facciamo o vorremmo?
Sarà assorbito e trasformato
nell'infinito e normale corso delle cose,
che noi si dorma fino a domani
o si rimanga in piedi fino all'alba, a dire
"brocca, porta, casa, pane, notte".

6.

Laser di vetro cosmico perforano le nostre rocce
    (vetri scuri! arrivi azzurri! gioielli di canzoni!)
tutti da derive di detriti.

È polvere cosmica.
Queste perle di materia vorticante generano
la nostra sbalordita empatia, considerando
    che tutto questo
        è fatto di innumerevoli scosse e soffi di cellule
        e minerali agganciati in processi reciproci
                dove atomi aleatori girano e gelano
                mettendo in moto il giorno e la notte
                dove li vediamo vagare.
                Importa che possiamo farlo?
                Li vediamo, adesso.

Questo posto, questi multipli, questo tempo
possiamo a malapena contarlo, darne conto
coi numeri che possediamo.
È un archivio nomade
né del tutto onnivoro
né del tutto completo
ma presente come i colori, mescolati

e metamorfici,
proprio come loro.

Cristalli di luce minima cadono da un cielo compromesso.
E una volta che sai cosa devi affrontare,
provi a svegliarti.

Aprile-novembre 2018

Abstracts

Stefano Luconi, The Color of Citizenship: Asian Immigrants to the United States and Naturalization between 1870 and 1952

The 1870 Naturalization Act granted migrants from Africa and their descendants the right to apply for US citizenship. Consequently, while blacks joined whites among the potential beneficiaries of the naturalization process, Asians remained excluded from it until the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act repealed the "aliens ineligible to citizenship" clause from US legislation. Yet, the contours of who was white and who was Oriental turned out to be somehow blurred when it came to Asians with light complexion and to peoples residing in regions bordering with Europe and Africa. Drawing primarily upon a few landmark cases before the Supreme Court and lower federal courts, this article highlights the efforts of a few Asian applicants who endeavored to exploit loopholes in the naturalization legislation to become US citizens. Moreover, it examines the racial and religious criteria to which federal judges also resorted to define who was Asian and, thereby, not eligible for naturalization and accommodation within US society.

Alice Balestrino, Post-9/11 Rhetoric and the Split of Safety in Amy Waldman's *The Submission*

The article investigates the theme of citizenship in relation to individual and collective civil rights in post-9/11 US, by focusing on Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2011), a novel that speculates on a fictional controversy, ignited by the accidental selection of a Muslim American architect in the competition for the design of the 9/11 Memorial. Within this framework, the narrative represents the discrimination of Muslim and Arab Americans as a minority group singled out by assumptions of collective responsibility for the attacks on the World Trade Center and it reflects on the notion of safety and its implications. Waldman addresses these issues by adopting a multi-perspective narrative that allows for the depiction of differing understandings of safety – perspectives that the author seems to place on a continuum. On one end lies a slice of the American population that resorts to national security rhetoric in order to prevent a Muslim architect from memorializing 9/11, because his religious background is reputed as a threat in itself. On the opposite end lies a Pakistani immigrant without documents who lost her husband in the 9/11 attacks (himself an illegal worker at the WTC), a woman for whom this climate of mounting racial friction results in the total negation of her safety when she is killed in an anti-Muslim riot. This tragic event can be interpreted as the apex of a trajectory, developed over the whole novel, that

interrogates the dynamics of a comprehension of safety and of national identity that opposes "Americans" to "immigrants," and eventually leads to a split in the notion of "safe" into its two antithetic meanings of "not likely to be harmed" and "not likely to cause or lead to harm."

Ayman Al Sharafat, Attitudes of the United States' Presidents Towards Immigration: George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump

The year 2001 marked a turning point in the attitudes of the United States Presidents towards immigration. In order to chart these changes in attitude, this study will analyze official documents from the administrations of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. The documents will be examined to see how immigrants and immigration are described by the three Presidents, and how they differ in their views. To examine immigration policy issues which appeared on the presidential agenda, the searchable "Public Papers" archive of *The American Presidency Project* (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/) are used by John Woolley and Gerhard Peters. To clarify the Presidents' attitudes toward immigration, James Q. Wilson's classification of policy model are used. Wilson supposes that attitudes and policies have distributional consequences. The results indicate that Presidents Bush and Obama showed similar attitudes towards immigration. They emphasized the concentrated benefits and concentrated costs of immigration. On the other hand, the attitude of President Trump towards immigration is distinct from that of the previous two administrations. He downplays the benefits of immigration all over the United States and throughout its history, and concentrates on its costs.

Lindsey N. Kingston, Healing the Scars of Forced Migration: An Italian-American Story

In this research-informed essay, the author connects her Italian-American heritage (and the political processes by which Italians "became" white and American) to current migration issues within the United States and Italy. She argues that migration comes with consequences, good and bad, and represents the loss of home as much as the gaining of a new one. She contends that we can begin to re-humanize migrants in our political discussions by telling stories from our own families, and by recognizing the complicated and sometimes ugly histories from countries such as the United States and Italy. Just as skin color or national origin do not determine who is a "legitimate" claimant of asylum, neither does the "achievement" of arriving somewhere first. The suffering of war and poverty still resides within living memory in places where many citizens vehemently protest the integration of refugees. Those shared human experiences ought to reaffirm our commitment to human rights norms, including the right to asylum, and give us the courage to fight against exclusionary rhetoric.

Lin Ling, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*: Diasporic Muslim Identities in Literary Representation

This article explores the representation of diasporic Muslim identities in a coming-of-age narrative, Arab American female novelist Mojha Kahf's bestseller *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, published in 2006. It examines how the religious diasporic hybrid identity is mobilized within the female protagonist Khadra Shamy, including how she struggles to negotiate her identity across different cultural terrains and gendered, racialised, intergenerational configurations. It attempts to show how these literary representations construct – and help conceptualize – the ways we understand diasporic Muslims in the US. The individual experiences as narrated in the novel illuminate a series of essential socio-political questions facing the community as a religious minority in a secular context. This study addresses these questions through the representation of cultural hybridity in literary narrative within the framework of postcolonial theory. It focuses on three constructs of the novel central to the conceptualization of the female protagonist's hybrid identity: firstly, the mirror images and moral panics that generate cultural clashes in the East-West encounter; secondly, the predicament of the protagonist's ambivalent existence as a diasporic individual; and thirdly, the ways she forges her hybrid identity as a New Woman within the diasporic context.

Nicola Paladin, The "Men" of the Crowd: Mobs, Armies and Public Space in Classic American Literature

The meaning of crowds in US culture has always been controversial, and the disruptive potential they might have has generally been considered dangerous. Historically, the few large manifestations of this latent power and its impact on the public space trace back to the revolutionary years: in 1776, a crowd of New Yorkers tore down the statue of George III. They were not only erasing a symbol of oppression, but also modifying the shape of the city, because the relationship between people and the space they inhabit is not unequivocal: the agency of mobs determines tangible effects on space, defining public space in many ways through its massive occupation. The article investigates the military nature of crowds portrayed in classic American literature, by analyzing crowd scenes in Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819), Nathaniel Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" (1832), Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), and Herman Melville's *Israel Potter* (1855).

Margarida São Bento Cadima, The Production of Space in Colson Whitehead's *Sag Harbor* and Edith Wharton's *Summer*

At first glance, Edith Wharton's 1917 novella *Summer* and Colson Whitehead's 2009 novel *Sag Harbor* do not have much in common. Not only were they written almost

a century apart, but the protagonist of Wharton's text is a young woman while the protagonist of Whitehead's book is a young man. Additionally, *Summer* takes place in a fictional New England countryside village, whereas the setting of *Sag Harbor* is the Long Island coastal town that lends the text its name. However, they both take place during a summer and it is worth remembering that the protagonists of both texts are teenagers and close in age: *Summer*'s Charity Royall is eighteen and *Sag Harbor*'s Benji Cooper is fifteen. So what arises of the unlikely pairing and analysis of these two texts? Wharton's novella has been analyzed in detail from a gender studies perspective and Whitehead's novel has been scrutinized for its racial significance. However, up until now, no objective and detailed geocritical cartography has been undertaken in either of these texts. Location is of the utmost importance, and two opposite perspectives are presented in the opening chapters of either text respectively. This article draws on space conception theories and establish how they apply to both *Summer* and *Sag Harbor* – thus also delineating their tenuous similarities. Eventually, a better understanding of both texts can be achieved and new critical perspective can be attained.

Federico Bellini, To Make the World in the Maelstrom of its Undoing: Cormac McCarthy's *The Stonemason*

Possibly due to the fact that it has never been produced in its entirety, Cormac McCarthy's play *The Stonemason* has thus far received only scant attention by critics. However, an analysis of this text, supported by the manuscripts held at the Wittliff Collections, proves highly rewarding for an understanding of the author's poetics. The article discusses the intrinsic limits of the play in light of the history of its reception and of its failed productions as well as McCarthy's misattribution of a quote from Jean-Baptiste Le Rond D'Alembert to Carl Friedrich Gauss in the first stage direction. It also analyzes the play following McCarthy's own suggestion – recorded in his correspondence with Emily Mann – that the piece was intended to be "a simple, classical story about a hero and his mentor, how the hero loses his way, and how he recovers it." In doing this, it relies on the several intertextual references in the play. Finally, it considers McCarthy's decision to publish the work in spite of its limitations as a meta-poetic statement about his authorial ethics.

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