Screening Italians -
Identity, Memory and Sexuality in Migrant Italian Film and Culture

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Thesis Abstract

Film has played a significant role in shaping the British-Italian community's sense of identity in the context of post war Italian immigration into Britain. This thesis explores how (Southern Italian) cultural identity has been mediated by both historical and contemporary factors and the ways in which this identity has been shaped by the process of immigration. Nostalgia and myth have helped to shift notions of the self within the immigrant community; at the same time they have also acted as tools through which the notion of homeland and belonging could be experienced. How can cultural history be understood in relation to memory and how could this duality be negotiated in terms of understanding the construction of (Italian) cultural identity? The importance of both collective and individual memory has been made visible through ethnographic research that has involved a series of interviews with members of the Italian immigrant communities located both within London and the Home Counties of Britain.

Drawing on a series of film readings, together with an historical and theoretical overview of the construction of Italianicity, there has also been an examination of the specific impact that popular film melodramas had on what was to become the British-Italian immigrant community. These films (from the 1950s in Italy) enabled the transmission of a particular version of sexual identity that is still prevalent today in American mainstream film. These ideas have been further investigated in relation to converging authenticities of experience and how this convergence has influenced second generation Italians. An analysis of the distorted forms of continuity, in terms of how home and place are perceived, informs the more theoretical aspects of the overall project. By considering the influence of film in relation to cultural difference, this research should contribute to current debates about cultural translation.

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Towards an Ethnography of Film

This thesis aims to provide a cultural history of the diasporic Southern Italian and Sicilian communities of the mid 1950s and their experiences of arrival and survival in Britain's *Home Counties* and London during the latter part of the twentieth century. Mass immigration to the South of England from the South of Italy and Sicily in particular happened between 1952 and 1960[1]. With this mass immigration[2], came the transported cinematic experience and memory of home and belonging. The diffused experiences and the role of cinematic consumption during this period of the early 1950s in Britain is in turn continuously transformed through the process of assimilation by the migrants and their children. The research for this thesis has involved a variety of methodologies and consists of an interchange between both academic research and my own lived experience as a daughter of Italian (Sicilian) immigrants to Britain. The emotional connection to any research is difficult to assess conclusively, but it is necessary to name it here because all research implies some connection with the identity of the researcher. This thesis is in part a historiography of an immigrant experience and an exploration of how this experience can be understood. In turn, it is also questioning what can be learnt from this journey (as it has been understood by a second generation Italian) and from the first person oral accounts that are used throughout. The focus of the research is in the importance that cultural expression (and the cinematic experience in particular) can have in helping to construct a sense of national and diasporic identity. In this respect, in a similar vein to Kuhn's most recent work on 1930s British audiences, it is hoped that the research contributes to a rethinking of theories and models of the relationship between film texts and spectators[3].

The research directly focuses on cultural migration as an experience of identity formation. The approach comes out of a desire to create a historical pathway that allows the subjects to articulate their own sense of themselves and their understanding of which cultural markers influenced their sense of evolving into a national subject. With this is mind, this thesis sets out to consider cultural experience and identity formation and in particular, the role and lasting impact of film spectatorship within this construction. In his study of *Mexican Masculinities*, Robert McKee Irwin argues that all immigrant groups bring with them notions of their national identity that are then made apparent through cultural expression[4]. Irwin cites literature from the late 1950s and 1960s as the chosen cultural form through which the struggles of sons of immigrant families to understand their heritage and assert their Mexicanness and to assimilate into American society are acted

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[1] This aspect of the research is full developed in the fourth chapter, *Cultural Identity and Assimilation*.

[2] For the statistical aspect of the research I have consulted published literature such as Colpi and some data from the Italian Consulate in Britain. The most useful sources were the Municipal Offices and the small Aragona Museum both in Aragona, Sicily. These research trips were conducted between 1998-2000. Additionally, the oral interviews also helped to provide an overview of dates of entry into Britain, as well as making it possible to complete (first hand account) surveys of actual lists of names of the existing members of the Italian community in Buckinghamshire and how many were arriving at any given year between 1952-1960.

[3] Kuhn, Annette. *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger, Cinema and Cultural Memory* (New York, New York University Press, 2002), P237 .

[4] Irwin McKee, Robert. *Mexican Masculinities* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

out[5]. In this case, members from the diasporic group themselves have produced narrative forms which utilise direct records from their experiences[6]. As this example shows, the role that cultural memory plays in the lives of diasporic communities is multi-faceted and neither linear or continuous in a chronological sense. What is made apparent from the contents of the oral interviews that were undertaken for this thesis is that there is no possible single assessment for this role. Cultural memory functions in complex and contradictory ways - it is an aim of this thesis to make visible some of these complexities and contradictions.

The ethnographic aspect of the research has included oral interviews of different generational members of various Italian communities in Britain, as well as first person narration, through my own experience as a second generation Italian. It is this aspect of the thesis that resulted in addressing the issues raised by the memories recalled in the oral interviews. At the start of the research process, the centrality of this body of knowledge could not have been pre-determined. Some of the accounts of the lived experience formulated here are difficult to release and make public to the world. In this regard, the editorial decisions forced some narratives to be privileged above others. The time span involved between conducting, collating, translating and transcribing the oral interviews necessitated a clear structure to the questions being asked. The level and range of analytical questioning involved in considerations implicit to the subject matter of this thesis has meant that even during the relatively short period of time since commencing this research, other previously unconsidered questions have formed themselves. As will become evident during the course of this thesis, the fluidity of the never-ending narrative points which help to shape cultural identity continuously shift across time and space. With this in mind, one's thinking about the influences which help to determine aspects of cultural formation continuously changes. Ultimately, it is this aspect of the subject matter of this thesis that makes *completion* of such a piece of work, in itself never ending, and hence impossible to achieve in a concrete sense. Perhaps all thinking must be seen in the light of constant rethinking. It is this underlying mythological framework of continuous reconsideration, which has resulted in this constantly evolving narrative coming into fruition at all.

The historical research collated here is also made up of a diversity of sources and the range of sources have sometimes led outside of the traditional confines of the academic library. The invisibility of my community and hence my lived reality, which shrouded my own experience growing up in Britain, is one of the significant factors that determined the shape that this thesis took. This has led to having to broaden the terms of the research. It has proved invaluable to analyse a wide range of visual artefacts, all of which have contributed to this thesis in a complex variety of ways. Historically, fictionalised memoirs have made an important contribution to our knowledge of cultural history as experience is used as a filtered translation for a particular cultural space[7]. For the purpose of this thesis, my own childhood diaries were a useful reminder of

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[5] Ibid, P216

[6] Irwin sites Jose` Antonio Villarreal's *Pocho*, 1959, John Rechy's *City of Night*, 1963 and America Paredes's *George Washington Gomez*, written in 1940 and published in 1990) as examples.

[7] There are many examples which could be sited here but some of the most important ones for this thesis have ranged from Elizabeth Smart, and Eva Hoffman, to more recent works by writers such as Tim Lott, Andrew O' Hagan, Meera Syal, Zadie Smith and Monica Ali, amongst others.

how I actually experienced *being an outsider*; they additionally serve as a literal recorder of some of the stories told to me about *back home*. My early schoolbooks, when I could not yet fully read or write in English, may provide an insight into how children, as they are developing bi-lingual skills, understand linguistic models. The fact that my skills in both spoken and written Italian (Sicilian dialect) are more fully advanced is made apparent through my continuous confusion in the spelling of English words which are interpreted through Italian phonetics[8]. A range of other original artefacts, both personal and public (administrative documents from the 1950s, the home made case used by my father when he left Sicily in 1955, a range of photographs sent *back home*, personal letters, newspaper and television coverage of Italian Immigration, parish records held in a variety of museums, churches and other public buildings in both Italy and England, ranging from *The Pirandello Museum* in Agrigento, Sicily to the *Public Records Office* in London, items of clothing worn on the journey from Italy to England, both used and unused dowries brought to England during the 1950s from Italy, (to name but a few) have additionally contributed to the body of research for this thesis.

The personal detailing of the lived experiences shared by so many second-generation immigrants in Britain is here both directed by my own actual experience on the one hand, and through the spoken words of those interviewed on the other. There are few shared experiences here, which are to be seen as isolated cases, or representative of a fixed notion of identity. Indeed, in their generic make-up, some of the memory stories are similar to those that might come from other diasporic communities. The role that Italian melodramas (and specifically the films of Matarazzo) of the 1950s have played within these memory stories is crucial to the overall framework of the thesis. However, post-war migration and its relationship to most British *theories of difference* has tended to exclusively look at issues of black-British identity and in this respect, this thesis has been informed by the theoretical writings of the identity politics work of the 1980s and 1990s[9]. The exclusion of other, non-black or Asian migrant groups within these debates has given strength to a double invisibility both in academic discourses and in more wide spread politics of race relations. Ones own political consciousness is obviously implicated in the conduct of the research and this thesis comes out of the debates already cited as well as a variety of other discourses that cuts across disciplines. Given the expanse of academic voices that have influenced this writing, the project cannot be seen as falling firmly into one recognised discipline over and above another. Histories of migration to Britain have been useful to consult and my research has born witness to the minimal acknowledgement of the Italian presence in Britain. Cultural historians (and indeed the primary thinkers on issues of race and identity in Britain) have tended to focus on the larger migrant groups and their writings have usually utilised the writers' own experience and black subjectivities in particular[10].

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[8] Other reasons for my skills in Italian being more prevalent was that it was the only language that I was surrounded by until compulsory English schooling, since my parents did not speak English and contact with the English language would have been minimal if not virtually non-existent. Additionally, the rigour of *Italian School* (discussed in detail in a later chapter) meant that my knowledge of the Italian vocabulary was already firmly in place, whilst the English equivalent was rudimentary.

[9] I am thinking of the work of Hall, Gilroy, Bhabha and Spivak to name but a few.

[10] There are many scholars and works that could be listed here but I have limited this source to some of the major academics that were influential to my own thinking. The early writings that came out of the Birmingham Cultural Studies Unit in the mid 1980s, spearheaded by Stuart Hall gave a clear visibility to issues of cultural translation, and pioneered British Cultural Studies. Hall's subsequent writings have been crucial in looking at questions of cultural identity. Other distinct voices emerging during this period were Paul Gilroy whose influential work, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* is (London, Hutchison Press, 1987) is now a classic text book for the cultural studies student. Lola Young's book, *Fear of the Dark*

It is one of the aims of this thesis to further the development of appropriate methodologies for the analysis of cultural identity and memory. It is for this reason that a single theoretical perspective is not given a primary focus. This is not through casual neglect but comes from considered analysis - many sources have been useful in the completion of this thesis, and its direction is reflected through a diverse range of academic disciplines. I am sympathetic to Lola Young's claim in the introduction to her book, that her study was initially undertaken because she felt that conventional film studies had not developed an appropriate critical framework for the detailed study of representations of racial difference in Britain. I would also agree with her that there is no single theoretical framework able to address all the issues raised by the combination of racial, sexual and gender issues pertinent to historical developments. She situates herself within a *Cultural Studies* domain as she feels this allows for a more interdisciplinary perspective. I too would wish this thesis to be considered as much if not more within this domain or a domain of *Cultural History*, than within a more orthodox *Film Studies* paradigm[11]. For example, the thesis is historically located within the period of Italian mass migration to Britain and the films examined come out of this era of the mid 1950s[12]. However the films examined are examined within the context of cultural memory arising from the ethnographic methodology adopted.

Hence, the thematic divisions of the chapters have evolved out of a variety of these diverse methodologies and are to be understood within the framework of a variety of academic disciplines that cut across theories of *Visual Culture*[13]. After this *Introduction*, the thesis is divided into two parts with two chapters in each part and a final conclusion. The first chapter, *Cultures of Migration* provides an analysis of some of the most important academic writing in relation to some of the scope of the thesis. It is not intended to be completely exhaustive and once again the temporal nature of writing and research allows for other references to have now become available. The scope of the literature addressed reflects the range of issues implicit in the subject matter of this thesis. The variety of forms that this literature takes, from academic texts to travel writing and from popular to specialist interest journals, reflects the breath of the project at hand here. Various *Cultures of Migration* have been explored in a multitude of ways and it is hoped that this thesis will form part of the ongoing dialogue that helps to shape cultural history. The specificity of this thesis in terms of its cultural framing of Italians and their experiences before and after emigration, together with the time period of the 1950s, mark out the focus of the writing. As I go on to investigate some of the existing literature in this first chapter, through looking at the work of Dolci, Gabaccia and others, the role of memory and cinema in my own research is key to this ongoing, aforementioned dialogue.

(London, Routledge Press, 1996) was key in addressing representations of race and gender in cinema. Another key voice here is Kobena Mercer and his writings on visual cultures, sexuality and race, some of which are collated in *Welcome to the Jungle*, (London, Routledge Press, 1994).

[11] Lola Young,. *Fear of the Dark: 'race', gender and sexuality in cinema.* (London, Routledge Press, 1996. P4-5

[12] Mass migration took different forms between 1946-1957 with the largest wave of Italians leaving for the Americas (Australia, Argentina, Canada and Venezuela in particular). Whilst 70% of those to emigrate were from the South of Italy, many chose to go to the North, whilst others went to France, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany and Britain. See Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy, Society and Politics 1943-1988* (London, Penguin, 1990) for a useful statistical data of mass immigration.

[13] With particular reference to cultural studies, art history, film studies, post-colonial theory and cultural geography,

In the second chapter, *Frank Capra and Anthony Minghella - Comparative Links Through Masculinity, Family and Community*, the film work of two Italian immigrant directors, one that grew up in America, Frank Capra, and the other who is third generation Italian and grew up in Britain, Anthony Minghella, is investigated. Their various works and mediated cultural experiences are analysed in relation to connection points that rise out of cultural memory. In this particular chapter, these connections were intended to be both overt and often complicated to follow. Often the directors own words have been used[14] partly by way of consistency in relation to the other oral interviews that have been conducted. Additionally, the memories constructed within the words spoken are part of the methodology that is being privileged within this research. This chapter goes on to assess the historical data that prevails in the various theories of immigration to Britain in the 1950s. This assessment utilises the authors' first hand experience and the narrative line within this aspect of the thesis is an attempt to both re-contextualise and test out artistic intention versus a migrant audience's reception.

Up until recently, the development of *Screen Studies*[15] has focused on utilising a variety of methods that focus on textual readings as the starting point through which to understand how the cinematic experience creates meaning. In this thesis, it is hoped that the limitations of this approach are made apparent when considering the implications of this second chapter. Through the oral interviews that I have conducted, it has become apparent that cinema as an institution, is inverted as an object through both fantasy and memory. The methodology in this chapter, whilst providing an insight into cultural displacement, systematically privileges individual films over the cultural context of how films were both experienced and interpreted in their own time by popular audiences. More importantly, this approach does not allow for the fluidity that is integral to cultural memory and which demarcates film reception and consumption to a multiplicity of levels. The implications imbued in the act of the remembering of *film sequences, film stars, film moments, film experiences, and of film life*[16], has proven paramount to an enabling of some understanding of this (Italian/British) aspect of cultural history.

As with all research, this thesis has been the product of a complicated journey and one that has used storytelling at the heart of its overall process. One difficulty has been the reluctant acknowledgment that this thesis could never actually be all that its author would have originally wished it to be[17]. The second part of this thesis begins with the third chapter, *Cultural Identity and Assimilation*, and it looks at various aspects of identity formation from the perspective of the second-generation immigrant. Looking for any visual representation of Italianess in childhood began a path in which the writer of this thesis originally intended for

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[14] I interviewed Anthony Minghella in London in 2001.

[15] This term is being used as a generic category through which to encompass the traditional Film Studies approach as it developed throughout the 1970s, from the journals *Screen* in Britain and *Cahiers Du Cinema* in France.

[16] This is my own brief paraphrasing and translation (from Sicilian to English) of a recent conversation with my father, October 2003.

[17] The editorial process of listening and re-listening to the many hours of taped interviews alone made for a never ending cycle of potential new lines of enquiry about previously unexplored paths in relation to identity formation. The depth and range of stories told through the oral interviews were in themselves, a historical document, which should co-exist with the more traditional, forms of historiography and Diaspora Studies in particular.

this extended research to encompass an analysis of all that had been lacking in the earlier search. The limits of this intention were indeed within the boundaries determined by academic research and it is these very boundaries that will guide the flow of information and analysis within each chapter. The methodological approach has allowed for more than one method to be brought to bear on a single research problem.[18] The various sub-headings within this third chapter, act as moments of remembering or as markers of a past experience that have accumulated to create a fluid whole. The momentary spaces in between each of the sub-headings are not to be understood as being final markers of a diasporic experience, but rather part of an ongoing dialogue. As Bergson has argued, *my personality is the being to which these actions* (within each of the sub-headings) *must be referred*[19]

The power of story telling and its relationship to cinema is one of the most significant factors that frame this research, together with the transformative power of narrative as a method of analysis. By way of conclusion, it is intended that this thesis would act as an historical narrative across both time and space, but it is also intended to be a key addition to the existing debates on the history of migration to Britain. In similar ways to those elements that make up the mise-en-scene of any given film shot and final film narration, the diverse aspects of this writing aim to correlate into a coherent whole. This is not intended in a conclusive and final sense; this thesis can never be the final word on this subject matter, on the contrary, it is part of a continuing dialogue. This thesis hopes to address questions and contradictions in relation to cultural identity and its formation, rather than to seek solid solutions. The questioning of the complex interactions between ideologies is fundamental to the purpose and validity of the research.

The fourth chapter, *Memory and Movies*, follows through some of the ethnographic work that, in Kuhn's words, *enhances, deepens, and modifies understandings of the nature and operations of cultural memory*[20]. Whilst privileging the oral interviews and the ensuing cultural memory as a methodology, this enables an investigation into the cinematic experience of Italian immigrants to Britain. Their relationship to a previously understudied collection of Italian melodramas of the 1950s[21] forms the textual focus of this chapter. Film history has tended to pay particular attention to the work made in the immediate post war period in Italy, the *Italian Neo-Realists* and *the Art Cinema* movement that followed it. As is made apparent in the recent documentary by Scorsese, *Viaggi in Italia* (2002)[22], a personal journey into film history is only made possible through first person narration. The validity of the canonical works discussed in Scorsese's documentary and the impact of the Neo-Realist work is not under attack here. However, suffice to say that the non-canonical works of Matarazzo's melodramas have enabled an otherwise differing perspective on notions of popular cinema history. Whilst putting films aside for one moment, a cinema culture is in any case shaped by the contexts and the

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18 Annette Kuhn, *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger, Cinema and Cultural Memory* (New York, New York University Press, 2002), P7
[19] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (New York, Zone Books, 1991). P47.
[20] Annette Kuhn. *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger, Cinema and Cultural Memory* (New York, New York University Press, 2002), P238
[21] Those directed by Matarazzo between the period of 1950 to 1956.
[22] In this documentary Scorsese sites the influence that the films of the Neo-Realist era had on his parents and in turn on his development as a young adult and subsequent filmmaker.

manner in which films are consumed, and by the people who consume them.[23] The film narration's which evolved from the oral histories that were undertaken, helped to determine the line of enquiry, whilst also informing the understanding of the lived experience of a second-generation Italian daughter. The memory-stories also act as a reminder of the cultural treasure that lies in our elders' memories[24]. They give a visibility to an otherwise invisible history of Italian migration to Britain and they provide an historical context for this presence.

Conducted between 1996 and 2001, the oral interviews were held both in Sicily[25] and in various parts of Britain (Aylesbury, Bedford, London and Glasgow[26]). All of the interviewees were either known to me from the Italian community where I grew up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire or were directed to me through friends[27]. The category of interviewees who were directed to me through friends was limited to third generation Italians. Given the length of time spent away from this community, it is inevitable that I know so few third generation Italians in Aylesbury. Most of these particular interviews were conducted in London and included both men and women who were mainly teenagers but all under twenty years of age[28]. The literal tape recording of the ethnographic work has enabled there to be a huge archive of oral material and the scope of this thesis has meant that in actual fact, only a small fragment of it has been used. As *Appendix B* will make apparent, the transcriptions of the Italian oral interviews that have been quoted throughout the writing have been kept in their original language (and so the actual dialects spoken also remain part of this archive). In order to maintain anonymity, each of the people whose words have been quoted has been given a letter from the alphabet as a way of identifying them. Changes (fictionalised entries) were made when ever any personal names or other personally identifying information was used within the oral interviews. All translations are my own and so I take full responsibility for any errors that may have occurred.

The personal relationship between the interviewees and myself was key to the ethnographic part of this thesis since the sharing of experiences and the memories about films would not have otherwise been possible. It soon became apparent that some of the stories told might not be heard again given the age range of first generation Italians. The dialects spoken would die with their speakers and their histories will be lost in the footnotes about post war cultural migration to Britain. Those interviewed were not used to being listened to, their stories had never previously been valued[29]. Additionally my own position as an academic has involved some degree of disconnection from the community in which I was born into. Some of the particularities of the oral interviews developed by chance rather than direct intention. For example, the third generation Italians that I was introduced to and subsequently interviewed, all happened to be less than twenty years of age. The

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[23] Annette Kuhn, *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger, Cinema and Cultural Memory* (New York, New York University Press, 2002) P2
[24] Ibid, P239
[25] Aragona, Province of Agrigento is where my own family is located and where family friends have returned to after having worked in Britain.
[26] I selected areas that had representative Italian communities
[27] In Aylesbury and London.
[28] I interviewed a total of 18 third generation Italians with an equal gender split. The age range was 14-19 and their family origins were from all over Italy but with 12 interviewees originating from the South of Italy. 9 of those interviewed had never been to Italy.
[29] "*Nobody ever cared about us as real people back then (1950s), we were workhorses, that's all*". A.

interviews all happened within a domestic context, usually the homes of those being interviewed or my own home[30]. Some of those interviewed were immediate family members, whilst others were family friends and *paesani*. The issue of the relationship between myself and those interviewed is important to address. Many of those who spoke to me permitted being tape recorded because they trusted that I would be sensitive to how their stories would be made public. Conscious of the interlinking roles of family honour, *la bella figura*[31] and confidentiality, together with the issue of cultural translation, I made the decision to interview participants alone[32].

The performative nature involved in the telling of the stories[33], sometimes left a degree of ambivalence in my role, since I was both academic researcher and Italian daughter. Some of those interviewed from the first generation found it difficult to reconcile the issue of my role in their minds and so at times I had to remind them and gently persuade them to tell me stories that they had once told me when I lived in the community. I would sometimes direct interviewees in remembering a story that I had previously made a note of over two decades earlier when I was a curious teenager interested in recording their experience as part of my own diary. The passage of time has meant that although in every case the original story was remembered, at times some interviewees did not now want to repeat the story to me, the professional[34]. Both men and women often volunteered feelings of shame, embarrassment, pained emotions and even anger. It was quite apparent that they had never been asked to remember the element of historical detailing (that makes up all of our identities), and which went on to take them on a particular path of migration and cultural translation. They continuously lived through their memories of cinema and other experiences and I was constantly struck by how vivid their narrative detailing was despite some of these narratives being over fifty years old[35].

Each of the interviewees was addressed in their preferred language, which meant that the interviews crossed Italian, Sicilian, together with a variety of other Italian dialects and English. However, other regional dialects were often used by those interviewed, so for example Neapolitan dialect may have been used in response to a question asked in (non regional) Italian. Interestingly, many regional dialects are now so interwoven with a small smattering of English words that some interviewees would be adopting speech patterns from regions of Italy that they had never actually been to. Additionally, generic English expressions might be included with the regional Italian spoken, although the interviewee would often site himself or herself as being a non-English

[30] The interviews were informal and would often be combined with a social visit. It was the lack of formality that elicited the wide range of responses to my questions.
[31] This loosely translates as the desire to create the best impression (of oneself).
[32] Fear of gossip, as it would have originally been experienced in their own villages and towns in Italy, was very much alive during the course of the interviews in the immigrant communities in both contemporary Italy and in England. It was quite common for interviewees to pepper their answers with requests such as, *please don't repeat this or don't make me talk about this now, I will do so when the tape recorder is switched* off. Their fear was for other family or community members to know their personal stories
[33] This is discussed in detail in the *Memories and Movies* Chapter,
[34] Usually this response was to stories that involved issues of poverty or prejudice that they had experienced, although if persuaded to retell the story, they were almost exclusively considered in their use of language for fear of appearing to be critical of English people.
[35] For example, it was common for street names to be remembered despite the fact that they had no longer existed for many decades. Family names of people long deceased were recalled with incredible clarity. These names were often used as markers for *home* spaces since they were memory triggers for a narrative that located the speaker in or around their home location.

speaker[36]. It is important to consider that on general terms English was partially understood, but not written or read by the first generation Italian and this was exclusively the case for all of those interviewed who were from this generational group[37]. Equally, although most of them understood (non regional) Italian, they did not speak it themselves since they are from a generation when schooling would have been taught in dialect. Also, although this is now changing with satellite and cable television, their exposure to the Italian language would have been quite limited to passport bureaucracy or airport administrative exchanges [38]. Some of the Italian language used had to be accommodated for those being interviewed[39]. Often there was evidence of minimal literacy and illiteracy was a common experience[40]. This impacted on the range of vocabulary used by both those interviewed and the interviewer. My own level of Sicilian vocabulary is limited to that which is spoken to (and by) my own parents and family[41]. Since Sicilian is a spoken language and not a written one, this too further complicated the interviewing process when I was speaking to Sicilians (quite apart from the fact that the regional Sicilian variations of dialects are complex in their differences). Although this is a small point, I was sometimes frustrated by the linguistic models I was forced to adopt, for example I would ordinarily wish to utilise Italian vocabulary but could not find the appropriate parallel word in Sicilian dialect because it did not exist or would be inappropriate for the interview.

Cultural historians are forever both present and absent in the words that they write. Much in the same way that Norman Lewis, whilst talking about a small town in Sicily states, that *there is no place in the world that reeks more strongly of the remote past than this*"[42], it is already apparent to me that the ethnographic aspect of the research sited here was formed, in part by an era that is very much disappearing. As the writer herself moves further away from the experience that helped to formulate both the ethnographic and historical aspects of this research, the thesis should not serve simply as a form of nostalgia (although accusations of sentimentality are easily levelled at those that exist between two worlds) but as an investigative tool. In this context, it is intended that this investigative body of work will help to provide an historical insight into a previously invisible and unrecorded experience. With an overarching aim to broaden

30 Conversational expressions such as *Do you know what I mean? Or, Anyway* would often be intermixed with what would otherwise be a conversation entirely in a regional Italian dialect.

[37] Compulsory secondary education until the age of 14 was introduced in Italy in 1962, so many of this first generation of immigrants had experienced a partial level of formal education before moving to England.

[38]Some of those interviewed voiced their insecurities about these interactions since they did not feel correctly schooled in 'proper Italian'. It is quite common to use the British-born son or daughter as a go-between in this type of formal interaction since their level of literacy and ability to speak English well meant that there was little room for confusion. This is still a common feature of any Italian bureaucratic building such as the Italian Consulate in London - the assumption being here that the level of English spoken by the Italian bureaucrat will be of a higher level of the first generation Italian community member, which is not always the case!

[39] I was often in the ambivalent position of using regional Italian expressions, which I would not usually use, in order to make myself understood. Speaking 'Proper Italian' was sometimes experienced as being quite alienating by those being interviewed so I would be quite fluid in my mode of address and speech patterns. Obviously, this is where knowing the interviewees before hand was useful, as I was pre-prepared.

[40] Of the 32 first generation Italians interviewed, 17 were illiterate with all or the rest of the interviewees having left formal education by the time they were 14 years of age.

[41] This is my first language and the one spoken at home during my childhood and currently with my parents. Although able to understand it, modern Italians in Italy no longer speak using a regional dialect since it is the language of the past. The evolutionary process of language is such that Italians from the same generation as those I interviewed spoke a level of *correct Italian*. The first generation interviewees spoke exclusively in their own regional dialects, hence keeping alive a linguistic model, which is particular to the diasporic community.

[42] Norman Lewis, In Sicily. (London, Jonathan Cape, 2000), P73.

the previously sited existing debates about cultural identity and the role and function of cinema spectatorship within this, it is hoped that the subject matter will provide an additional intervention into the more recent works on cultural memory[43].

In conclusion, the invisibility of the Italian immigrant experience to Britain on any representational level has always been difficult to compare with the mediated construct of *Italian-Americans*. Italian-American identity is universally linked to criminality and the mafia-gangster movie genre in particular. Importantly, the Italian-American identity construct is quite unlike the Italian born identity construct and the two identities rarely converge in a way that sits comfortably with one another[44]. The Sicilian born Frank Capra reluctantly returned to visit his hometown during middle age and only once he had become a successful director in America[45]. It was to be the later grouping of second and third generation Italian directors such as Scorsese and Coppola (amongst others) who would go on to utilise their cultural heritage as the emotional centre of their narratives[46]. Equally, the British-Italian experience is quite unlike the experience of the Italian-American and of the Italian who did not participate in immigration or has chosen to come to Britain during the last two decades. Once again, the two identities are impossible to converge and have few connection points. The continuum of lived experience that did not include the trauma of forced immigration allows for a different sense of self as an Italian in Britain. It is not uncommon for the more recent Italian immigrant to Britain who is educated and came in the last few decades, to have very little understanding of the 1950s migrant (Italian) identity[47]. The celebratory nature of the Italian-American experience, further propelled through the success of others, including the film director Tarantino[48] and the entertainer, Madonna, is impossible to image within a British context. The romanticism and nostalgia prevalent in the mediated construction which is understood to be the *Italian-American* is noticeably absent when attempting to draw a parallel between this mediation and that of the British-Italian. Apart from the few mediated stereotypes perpetuated in the contemporary British media[49], the immigrant Italian presence in Britain still remains largely invisible.

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[43] Here I am thinking of the work of academics such as Susannah Radstone and others sited elsewhere.

[44] " *To me the Italians that came here (to Britain) after the war have lived the life of Neo-Realism and still hold on to this experience. Their ideas of Italy are very stuck in time and are not true of my lived reality. Their experience is completely alien to me and I cannot identify with it on any level".* B.

[45] This is explored in his autobiography, *The Name Above The Title*, Da Capo Press, 1987.

[46] Both directors using the autobiographical, own families within their works, Italian immigrant stories, etc in films such as Coppola's collaboration with Mario Puzo in *The Godfather* (Parts 1 and 11, 1972 and 1974) or Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990).

[47] "If ever I go into one of those old Italian cafes in the East End (of London), it feels like I'm in an Italian Neo-Realist film. The sadness, the familial tensions, with children who so obviously don't want to really be working in the family business with their parents. The suffering is felt in every cup of tea they pour and you know that they have felt like this since they arrived in England in the 1950s. Their complexions are so pale, the poor things and they never seem to be able to enjoy themselves. This is so different to the Italy that I know". *C.*

[48] His (absent) father is Italian-American and his mother is part Irish and part Cherokee. Tarantino has said that he has no interest in meeting his biological father, Tony Tarantino. For an examination of 'Little Q', *see Quentin Tarantino, The Man and The Movies by* Jami Bernard (London, Harper Collins, 1995).

[49] The 2003 advertising campaign for the Italian airline, Alitalia asks the rhetorical question of whether the viewer would want to go out with an Italian. This typography, which formulates this question, is presented next to the photograph of an archetypal handsome *Italian man* staring at the onlooker.

Film directors such as Anthony Minghella[50] or Peter Cattaneo[51] cannot be said to be untypical in being third generation Italians that are very successful (and hence visible) in their chosen profession. Typicality can only come from repetition and there are few other examples of an Italian-British born visibility. Interestingly, neither director has directly explored their cultural heritage in their feature films in the way that directors such as Coppola, Scorsese and others have chosen to do. Since Minghella and Cattaneo were educated within the higher education system in Britain, class and education separates both of these directors from the majority of second and third generation Italian children. Although it has proved impossible to assess the actual percentage of higher education students that are of Italian origins [52], certainly few are from within the Italian immigrant community in Britain. Education seems to be a rare privilege for the Italian immigrant child and sadly, it is still not something that is valued within the community. This is quite unlike other immigrant groups in Britain whose strong presence can be felt within higher education[53]. In part this can be understood in relation to those immigrant groups forming larger groups, when compared to the Italian communities as a whole. This issue of education is addressed in this thesis in both direct and indirect ways. One of the evolving impressions that I got from many of those that I interviewed from the various Italian communities was that the importance of education did not feature at all as a significant value[54]. Interestingly when I interviewed the director, Anthony Minghella, he too held education up as a marker of his difference from some of his family members. Indeed, the making of money was the aspiration that surrounded him whilst growing up in the Isle of Wight and it was his desire to break away from this familial expectation that led him to studying the arts at university level[55].

It is hoped that this thesis can begin to evoke some of the complexities within the generational shifts that make up cultural identity and its multiple-layers but also to highlight the role that cinema plays within these complexities. Some of the later modifications that have been made to the thesis are obviously to do with the time span necessary in creating and then completing a piece of academic research. Ones own current experiences go on to implicate earlier readings of earlier times. As Bergson has noted[56], memory spreads out its recollections, by distinguishing what was till then a confused mass, the remembrance that could not find its proper place. With this in mind, it is hoped that this thesis in itself, as a document, forms what can be considered a part of the changing nature of what is after all an evolving set of experiences and an evolving set of recollections. The focuses of this research has been actualised, through the fluid entry points into a variety of diverse but inter related aspects of cultural history and memory (with a focus on the role and function that film plays within these constructs). It was the question of how these constructs has been

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[50] His main feature films, he has directed *Mr Wonderful* (1992)), *The English Patient*, (1996),) *The Talented Mr Ripley (1999)*, and *Cold Mountain* (2003).

[51] He has directed the quintessentially *British movie, The Full Monty* (1997) and *The Lucky Break* (2001).

[52] Equal opportunity monitoring forms do not recognise *'Italian* as a category and prefer *White* or *Other* as a homogenising categorisation that is actually meaningless. A growing tendency is for the middle class Italian parents to send their child to a British institution of higher education - the English language being deemed as the passport route to employability.

[53] For example, as well as other immigrant groups, the Asian and Chinese communities have a strong presence in the higher education sector.

[54] *"What will my children achieve with books, books do not buy you food. I need my children to go out to work, it is for their sakes as well as for mine"*. D.

[55] I interviewed Anthony Minghella in London, 2001.

[56] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (trans. N.M.Paul & W.S.Palmer), Zone Books, 1991. P171.

understood through the reflective experience of memory and immigration, at the very end of the twentieth and start of the twenty first century, from Italy to Britain, that enabled a conclusion point for what can only be a small stop in a continuous narrative.

Cultures of Migration

The first part of the thesis will provide both a theoretical overview of the subject area and will outline out some of the key terrain that is going to be analysed. This first chapter follows through some of the key literature that is related to the thesis topic and investigates a range of readings of this literature in terms of which aspects of the literature is useful and which is less useful. Some of the writings are very specific to the theoretical approaches that help to formulate Italian migrant history. For example, Sponza and Colpi, provide a platform for Italian immigrant history across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Britain. These writers use statistical data as a way of actualising experience and making it factually accurate but with little accounting for the impact that this data has on the individual Italian immigrants concerned. Both Sponza and Colpi approach their statistical data gathering in different ways. Sponza is a historian and utilises the research that he has collated to formulate a focussed historical account of a particular period in Britain. Colpi uses a similar approach but centres her thinking on the more visible aspect of cultural identity, with one of her books being a direct visual account of Italian immigrants abroad[1]. Other theoretical writing that I analyse in this chapter utilises the secondary experience of Italian migration in order to test out a variety of historical and cultural hypothesis, for example, Gabaccia and Fortier. These two writers work across different continents and time planes[2] but utilise the diasporic experience to either present an historical account of this experience or to try to formulate some understanding of the cultural determinants that make up Italian diasporic identity. Dolci's work forms some of the wider literature that is addressed in this chapter and it is his mythological approach to researching the lives of Sicilians that interests me here. As well as other theoretical literature being addressed, various academic journals will be critiqued, in part to forge an understanding of how their influence has led to the development of *Italian Cultural Studies*, but also as a way of marking out the territory that is worthy of analysis in its direct cross over with the focus of the overarching topic of this thesis. This chapter will provide an analysis of all of the above-mentioned literature and will go on to follow through some key questions in relation to all of the approaches that have been taken. Some of the seminal literature on Italians in Britain, including the afore mentioned work by Sponza, as well as the research by Peter and Leni Gillman are no longer in print and it is part of the purpose of this chapter to alert the reader to this notion of an experience that is both fading and present.

Lucio Sponza's, *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Realities and Images*[3] was given to me by Elisa Di Cataldo[4] in 1996 and read with relish. Although a seminal book about a time period that is outside the scope of this thesis, at the time it helped me to understand the history of Italian immigration and its function in the study of Italianicity. It provides an historical analysis of the immigration of Italians to England in the nineteenth century and provided a detailed account of the various struggles experienced by immigration in a political context. Located specifically within the context of this historical period it paves the way for a wider range of historical analysis, which never goes on to happen until Terri Colpi and her book *Italians Factor*[5] and her next book, the photographic

[1] Terri Colpi, *Italians Forward*, (London and Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1991).

[2] Gabaccia addresses Italian migration across different centuries and countries, whilst Fortier is looking at the post-war Italian immigrant experience in Britain.

[3] Leicester: Leicester University, 1988

[4] Di Cataldo is a former director and founder member of *Federazione Italiana Degli Emigrati e Famiglia* (*Italian Federation for Emigrants and their Families*) in London. FILEF was founded in Italy in the early 1970s by, amongst others Carlo Levi and began in Islington, London in 1987. Linked to both the Italian Communist and Socialist parties it is still in existence in both Italy and England today and works towards supporting all Emigrants abroad

[5] Mainstream Publishing, 1991

record, *Italians Forward*.[6] Very little else has ensued in terms of written publications about the Italian experience of immigration in Britain. Another key book, such as *Collar the Lot*[7] has helped to mark the specifics of the relationship between the Second World War and internment, as has Sponza's more recent book[8]. The first book acts more as an historical and archival source written much closer to the actual experience and using ethnographic data through which to explore the area. Sponza's book is the result of more traditionally researched materials including original manuscript analysis and entry records from the *Public Records Office*. Both Sponza[9]and Umberto Marin[10] make an invaluable contribution to the issue and experience of Italian identity through immigration in that they both give visibility to an otherwise invisible experience. As well as acting as recorders for a specific community's development, they help to foster an understanding of the origins of Italians in Britain that is outside the scope of this project. Although historically it is outside of the time frame that I am looking at, I still wanted to outline their importance in shaping the research currently available in English to scholars of immigration and the writing of history in particular.

The cultural complexities at stake, together with the impact of the post war bulk recruitment of workers to England has been virtually unexplored. It is described in Colpi's *Italians Forward*[11] but no analysis is available other than some short articles in various journals[12]. A brief mention here should go to the *Picture Post* edition[13] that pictured Italian children and the streets of post war Clerkenwell in London, as the community was growing and developing. Alongside other communities, this magazine provides a visual record of the post war Britain and the emerging second and third generation Italian-British community. Some of the children pictured had come here as small children, whilst others had been born in London to parents who were predominantly from the South of Italy. Innocence and ethnicity are portrayed as black and white entities and now serve for me as a journalistic picture book of how Italians were located and understood. The poor streets of London are doubled up in acting as both saviours for the children whilst also providing us with the visible reference to their being *outsiders*. Long before discussions about integration were heard, these images served to historicise (if only in a small way) the Italian immigrant experience in ways that rendered them powerless. Did the children realise they were being photographed and was their parent's permission being sought? Neither of these two questions can be answered (despite my attempts) and who the children are and whether they are still alive have also been questions that have troubled me.

The Italianist journal originated in 1981 from the *Department of Italian Studies* at Reading University[14] had devoted an entire issue to the subject of Italian immigration to Britain[15]. Edited by Zygmunt G.Baranski, the journal (funded by the department and outside subscriptions but sometimes additionally funded by both the British Academy and the Italian Institute[16]) is ordinarily usually

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[6] Ibid

[7] Peter and Leni Gillman, (London, Quartet Books, 1980).

[8] *Divided Loyalties, Italians in Britain during the Second World War*, Peter Lang Publications, 2000

[9] Sponza came to Britain as a student from Venice in the early 1960s and retired as Professor Of Italian from University of Westminster, London, in 2002.

[10] *Italiani in Gran Bretagna*, Roma: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1975 (Italian version only)

[11] Edinburgh and London, Mainstream Publishing, 1991.

[12] Some of these are referenced elsewhere in this thesis and they are also available from Bedford County Library in Buckinghamshire.

[13] *Picture Post*, 24 September, 1955

[14] Reading University is one of the first universities to have an Italian Studies Department. In 1989, The Italianist number 9 featured a series of essays about forty years of Italian Studies at Reading University and the founder of the department, Luigi Meneghello, makes contributions to this volume.

[15] This volume of *The Italianist* soon went out of print and the subject of Italian immigration was also the focus for The Supplement to *The Italianist* number 13 (1993). This supplement, edited by Lucio Sponza and Arturo Tosi, included 5 essays and was subtitled *A Century of Italian Emigration to Britain 1880-1980s*.

[16] See *The Italianist* number 9 (1989)

concerned with more classical issues in relation to Italy. Italy and Britain are rarely contetuxualised in the contemporary[17] and the realities faced by Italians in Britain are not acknowledged since this is not its principle objective. The journal primarily deals with literary concerns and the classics in particular, although some essays on the post 1950s era have been included[18] that do not necessarily conform to this.[19] These essays have tended to more specifically represent the diverse range of concerns within the artistic sphere[20] but were never representative of the generic nature of the journal.

However, this journal is multi-faceted and I will attempt to explore at least some of these facets. Some of its leading contributors (and indeed members of the editorial board) have helped to shape the academic discipline that is contemporary *Italian Studies*. Academics such as those already mentioned and others such as Laura Lepschy (University College, London), Giulio Lepschy, (Reading University) Sharon L. Wood, Christopher Wagstaff[21] and Robert Lumley have all in diverse ways contributed to the development of a discipline that is both exclusive and necessary. The richness of Italian culture has always been evident in the university art history departments and nowhere has this been more visible than at University College London where this evidence is still apparent. The study of the Italian language has often been integrated within these departments or larger linguistic departments within universities. *The Italianist* was an acknowledgment of this richness but also sought to tease out other areas for scholarly attention especially for Italian enthusiasts. It was contributed to by both Italian and British academics resident in Britain and within the British university system and included essays in both English and Italian. The journal stretched the boundaries of what had previously been a rather stuffy area of study that guarded its boundaries rather rigidly. Although, arguably the journal never quite went far enough in disrupting the cosiness of the study of the Italian artistic and literary classics, it still managed to broaden, develop and finally shape, Italian Studies, as we now understand it. The pioneering work on both language and literature that Laura and Giulio Lepschy went on to produce at the University of London is apparent in its embryonic form in the pages of *The Italianist*[22]. The theoretical rigour informing the understanding of the complexities of the structure that is the Italian language in its spoken and written form is representative of some distinguished scholarly work by Giulio Lepschy.

Other than the key scholars that contributed to *The Italianist*, the journal was important in providing a platform for the development of *Italian Film Studies* in Britain. As I have already stated, the journal did not set out to be a film journal and the major British film journal *Screen* was already well established[23]. The development of film theory in Britain and in the pages of *Screen*, tended to provide European cinema with some attention but Italian cinema in particular had few avenues through

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[17] One example where this happens is in *The Italianist* number 14 (1994)

[18] For example, Politics and Youth: Notes on two post war generations in the Veneto by Percy Allum and Ilvo Diamanti (*The Italianist*, Number 8, 1988)

[19] *The Italianist* Number 5 (1985) devoted the entire issue to the life and work of Pasolini

[20] *The South: Society and Representations* by Anna Cento Bull, (The Italianist (Supplement) Number 14, 1994 or Cities of Imagination: *Traces of Italo Calvino* in Jeanette Winterson's Fiction by Guido Bonsaver, (*The Italianist* (Supplement) Number 15, 1995).

[21] It was through *The Italianist*, that Christopher Wagstaff helped to give visibility to the developing discipline of Italian Film Studies with key essays such as *The Construction of Point of View in Bertolucci's* Il Conformista, (*The Italianist*, Number 3, 1983) or *The Italian Cinema Industry During the Fascist Regime*, (The Italianist, Number 4, 1984), or *Reality into Poetry; Pasolini's Film Theory*, (*The Italianist* Number 5, 1985).

[22] For example, the essay *Sexism and the Italian Language*, by Giulio Lepschy (*The Italianist* Number 7, 1987. The issue was devoted to Women and Italy).

[23] *Screen* began publication in 1969 as an amalgamation of *Screen Education* (1959-1968) and *Film Teacher* (1950-1956).

which to be visible. *The Italianist* and particularly the writing of Chris Wagstaff[24] helped to establish what is now a firmly established tradition of *Italian Film Studies* (based in Britain) albeit university based[25]. Italian film was theorised along side the other arts and in this respect, given the era, *the Italianist* was both pioneering and radical in its approach. It was and still is a successful[26] university journal and one whose influence is not to be under estimated with respect to its influence across a range of academic disciplines.

Post 1979, university (and other institutionally) funded journals that were collective endeavours, have tended to associate themselves with counter politics[27], although historically this has often been the case.[28] *Block* journal[29] was launched at the same time as the Thatcher government began its first term but of course none of those involved could have foreseen how differently the artistic landscape would look in a very short space of time. In the *10th Anniversary Issue*[30], the Editorial leads with the recognition that *it may be inconvenient that political reorganisation is taking place at a time of theoretical turbulence and re-orientation, it is important to recognise that the dissolution of the bases of traditional intellectual authority affects the subject position of critical theory as much as its objects*[31]. The journal had always set out to rework art and design history within a leftist political perspective[32] and this remained their core position throughout all publications. Although this was not directly parallel to the politics of *The Italianist* (and its objectives were more specific to the advancement of *Italian Studies* as an academic discipline) it was still an important early example of an inter-disciplinary approach to visual culture. Founded in the following year, *the Italianist* as a journal was indeed devoid of direct (party) politics but the editorial team still managed to capitalise on the expertise and financial support available to them through Reading University. This capitalisation was key in directing resources into a project that has left a lasting legacy not only for *Italian Studies* as a whole but also to those of us engaged in our own interconnected projects.

At the same time that the aforementioned journals were constructing new, historical, cultural and critical narratives, the writer Danilo Dolci was collating over thirty years' worth of taped oral interviews of Sicilian people. Writing in 1981, in the Foreword to *Sicilian Lives*, John Berger introduces the work of Danilo Dolci and the multiple voices heard in the book. In all pre-industrial societies people have believed that living is a way of living a story. *In this story one is always the protagonist and occasionally the teller, but the inventor of the story, the designer of the plot, is elsewhere. People who believe this, and who lead the story of their life in this way, are often natural*

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[24] But also other writers, such as Lesley Caldwell (see *Madri d'Italia: A Cinematic exemplification of fascist concern with motherhood*, in *The Italianist*, Number 8 (1988), C.E.J.Griffiths (see Italian cinema in the Thirties: Camicia Nera and other films by Giovacchino Forzano, in *The Italianist*, Number 15, 1995), Laurence Simmons (see *Resistance film/resisting film: Pontecorvo's The Battle of Algiers*, in *The Italianist*, Number 15, 1995), and Mary Wood (see *Images from the Southern Front; The Mezzogiorno in the cinema of Francesco Rosi* in *The Italianist*, (Supplement, Culture and Society in Southern Italy Past and Present, edited by Anna Centto Bull and Adalgia Giorgio) Number 14 (1994).

[25] Lesley Caldwell formally at Greenwich University, London, Mary Wood at Birkbeck College, Faculty of Continuing Education, University College, London, David Forace, UCL.

[26] Still available with Issue 20 published in 2000.

[27] Other examples would include *The New Left Review*, also founded in 1960 or *Third Text* founded in 1987 by Rasheed Araeen.

[28] We do not have to look very far back in time to see that this was the case with journals such as *Cahiers de Cinema* or Art Monthly.

[29] Founded in 1979 (issue 1 was launch dated Winter, 1979-1980), it was a Middlesex Polytechnic (now University) funded publication. Editorial and contributing staff from the Art History Department included Barry Curtis, Lisa Tickner, John Bird and Judith Williamson amongst others.

[30] *Block* 15, Spring, 1989

[31] *Block* 15, Editorial, *Retrospective and Prospective*, Spring 1989, Page 3

[32] Ibid

storytellers.[33] Given the importance that storytelling had as an encounter with memory planes and identity formation amongst the Italian (Sicilian) emigrant community in England, Dolci's work (in its totality) is paramount to this study. Dolci first went to Sicily (Trappeto, a village in the West of Sicily) in 1952, and there began his life's work about this island and its people. In his book, Dolci records the stories told to him by the many peoples that he encounters in Sicily, the work becomes a memory map of the lives of those elements left behind through emigration. This book (available in English translation) acts as the only record of this very specifically Sicilian project. It anchors an historical moment that documents a particular version of poverty and hopelessness together with providing a direct insight into the formation of Sicilian identity. By using the first person narrations in their direct form, Dolci allows an access to this history in an immediate sense.

Each speaker represented by a different chapter in *Sicilian Lives*, vocalises their reality and Dolci interferes only to tell us a few details about the person speaking. He divides the interviews into named sections that are contextualised through the subject matter conveyed in the spoken words of the individuals concerned. First person names are often used as chapter headings and we enter into the worlds of each person, whilst also entering a journey that filters from one speaker onto the next. This filtering process enables the words to linger in such a way that the reader is party to a continuous dialogue. The experiences discussed are informal and often anecdotal, with Dolci allowing us the barest of introductions to our storyteller. One representative chapter begins: Rosaria, She is sixty, a woman of the old school: a passive, candid peasant conditioned by her religion and by her frustrated desire to become a nun. We are in Cammarata at her house, which sits precariously over a landslide.[34] Rosaria begins by telling us how her parents forced her to get married when she was all set to become a nun. The story that she recounts is steeped in momentary reminders of the stories that would be shared amongst the Italian emigrant women whenever they had the opportunity to speak out of earshot of the men. It is important to acknowledge that Dolci elicits a complex narrative web that is wholly experienced by the feminine and shared generationally. Narrative tales of this order are exclusively reserved for an all female audience and Rosaria is one of the few female voices heard in *Sicilian Lives.*[35]

The voices heard (through the written word) in *Sicilian Lives* capture a particular moment in Italian (Sicilian) cultural history. The rules of peasant life are fully explored in the narrative and the texts are imploded through the re-telling of these stories. The experience that Rosaria re-counts is one that is specific to *pre-modern Sicily* but one that is found amongst the emigrant community in England. Her story is captured on the page and the unique evidence that this experience provides (both as historical data but also as it is then re-experienced by the reader) is key to our understanding of Dolci as a cultural historian. He provides a platform that makes space for the invisible to become visible and his presence is only as instigator. As a Northern Italian who went to live in Sicily in 1952, Dolci witnessed and confirmed the radical changes that gave rise to the mass emigration discussed during the course of this thesis. Some of the people whose stories are witnessed in *Sicilian Lives*, may well have gone on to become part of the immigrant tracheotomy. Their poverty is expressed in resigned terms - the very same terms that were translated over to the Home Counties of England during the period of the 1950s and mass immigration. Elsewhere in the book[36], firmly held beliefs are stressed in factual terms and many of these are still alive within immigrant communities in England.

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[33]John Berger (Foreword) in *Sicilian Lives* by Danilo Dolci (London, Writers and Readers, 1981)
[34] *Vicious Circles* Section, Page 71
[35]For example, we hear about shared superstitions
[36] In the Section titled, *Vicious Circles*, A Street Cleaner says, ""*Every believer finds his saint." What I mean is you have to know somebody who can pull strings for you. It's a matter of connections.*" Page 98

When Dolci claims that *talking about your poverty and depression, about your deepest problems, is excruciatingly painful. But if you can not excavate, thrash things out, reach a point where real dialogue takes place, you never get to the threshold of the solution,* he is understanding the importance that the act of telling has on those re-counting their stories.[37] The act of (re) telling partly enables the storyteller to focus on who they are and how they came to be. Nostalgia grounds a remote resonance here and loss is even less audible. What is gained (and hence, re-affirmed) through the renewal of the story is paramount here. The significance of the moments shared within the journey, which is the story that is being (re) told through Dolci, is the constant refiguration of that which makes up identity and our subjectivity. The possibilities that are apparent if one is the active participant in these stories (as Dolci most certainly was, albeit not through blood ties) are inclusive in being able both to reaffirm ones sense of place but also in transforming ones relationship to this space. This double binding manifests itself in a multitude of ways and is not fixed to a single moment in time or to a particular subjectivity. Dolci understands this and simply allows the words to carry the weight of their history.

In this sense, I would like the interviews that I have conducted of the various Italian/Sicilian émigrés, to act in a similar way. The act of storytelling within the ethnographic research conducted is located with the diasporic community in Britain and my being both witness and participant within these stories separates me from Dolci. The time and space that differentiate our work are underscored through immigration. What is perhaps more complex to consider, is the notion of authenticity of experience, something that is still worth mentioning at this point in the early twenty first century. Although my experience moves further away from the third and fourth generation Italian immigrants' lives here in Britain, Dolci was always an outsider to the stories told. Choice (and political motivation) enabled him to take advantage of the privilege of experiencing how others lived. A qualified architect, for Dolci the world he entered into was never previously known. Dolci studied the cause and effects of poverty when he arrived in Sicily and he used oral interviews to inform his political activism[38]. Importantly, many of the oral interviews are left unidentified, with one transcript simply called *D* stating; *there are too many of us, there is always unemployment - emigration is the only answer. Emigrate, with or without a permit*[39]. In *To Feed The Hungry,*[40] a study of unemployment in Palermo in the 1950s, Dolci simply lists the words spoken and the reader is left with these words that are representing a community - their categorisation is simply alphabetical[41]. At other times he devotes short chapters to what he calls *Witnesses*[42] which are his diary writings of the course of events as they unfold, mixed with dialogues with particular people that he meets.

I too made a conscious choice to make my life very different to the one predetermined by me through cultural expectations within the diasporic community. However, the oral interviews that I conduct are only possible because I am both from this place (as I return there) and no longer from this place. I am trusted because I was a member of the community (and one that my parents are still members of) and partly mistrusted for having left it and chosen to return. Many of those that allowed me to interview them, spoke to me as a daughter within their community and as a professional. My parents' social standing having improved through their children being educated, I am both insider and outsider. The oral interviews that form part of this thesis were all conducted during the period of the late

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[37] *Prologue*, Dolci, Page 4

[38] Many international committees, including one set up in Britain that was located at 29 Great James Street, London, WC1 aided him in his work.

[39] Recorded in *To Feed The Hungry*, P316

[40] Danilo Dolci, *To Feed The Hungry* (London, MacGibbon & Kee, 1959)

[41] See Statistical-Sociological Survey in Part 2 of *To Feed The Hungry*, commencing P269.

[42] Ibid, P27. It is important to note that the publication of one of the (edited) oral interviews in this book originally appeared in the journal *Nuovi Argomenti* and led to Dolci's arrest in 1956. Three lines in the interview were deemed to constitute obscene matter, however, the charges were subsequently quashed.

1980s and 1990s and in this sense form a contemporary record of a particular immigrant story. The evolution of this immigrant history can only be understood in part through the oral interviews and are part of a dialogue that takes different forms. Dolci's oral interviews act as anthropological texts and are reflective of a particular moment in Sicilian history and there is little visibility of the mark left by emigration. They now seem remote from the continued dialogue that should form part of Italian cultural history and are strangely hard to place within the more contemporary theories of cultural geography.

Italy's *Many Diasporas* by Donna R. Gabaccia[43] is the most recent intervention into the issue of Italian immigration and identity formation by this third generation Italian-American academic[44]. Gabaccia has devoted a career to investigating Italian (and often Sicilian) identity and some of her other books such as *Militants and Migrants, Rural Sicilians Become American Workers*[45] have been instrumental in helping to formulate the complexities of the multiple theories of immigration and diaspora studies. Her focus is more on the historical development of Italian immigrant experience and together with Franca Iacovetta,[46]she is currently working on an edited collection of essays called *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives - Italian Workers of the World*[47] I will firstly look at the earlier book Militants and Migrants and then go on to discuss Gabaccia's latest intervention into the study of *Italian Diasporas.*

Previous book searches (either through more traditional methods or web lead) had resulted in an acknowledgement of the title at best or more commonly its dismissal as an unknown entry. I mention this if only to acknowledge the debate around how quickly histories are erased and no longer recognised as being worthy of recognition and acclaim. The book is a volume in the *Class and Culture* series[48] that looked at areas of cultural formation but as Gabaccia states in the introduction, *unlike most studies by immigrant historians, more than half of the book focuses on Europeans in their homelands before and after mass migration to the United States.*[49] The book makes constant connections between the locations that shaped Sicilian childhoods and those that became their home base in adult life as immigrants. She chooses to place emphasis on the ways that for *many Sicilians both places were significant and familiar.*[50] This is an interesting idea and one that I wish to look at in a little more detail here. Since she defines herself as an immigrant historian, she recognises the problems of fieldwork and the use of the case study within historical (and sociological) work. She praises Samuel Baily's call for *village-outward case studies*[51] since they offer *the opportunity to transcend boundaries of the nation state, which normally define labour studies*[52]. The idea here is that the historian should focus on specific hypotheses and this inn turn will allow for the recognition of subtleties that would other wise not become visible. Interestingly she claims that this methodology allows her to *study migration that replicates migrants' experiences and perceptions* since they lived in both worlds[53].

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[43] UCL Press, 2000
[44] Donna R. Gabaccia is Charles H. Stone Professor of American History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.
[45] Rutgers University Press, 1988 (she was known as Donna Rae Gabaccia for this publication)
[46] Professor in the Department of History at University of Toronto and author of, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992)
[47] University of Toronto Press 2002.
[48] Edited by Milton Cantor and Bruce Laurie
[49] Gabaccia, Page 2
[50] Gabaccia, Page 2
[51] See Samuel Baily, *The Future of Italian-American Studies: An Historian's Approach to Research in the Coming Decade* in Tomasi, *Italian-Americans: New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity*, Staten Island; Centre for Migration Studies of New York, (1985) P193-201
[52] See Introduction to *Militants and Migrants* where she explores this further
[53] Gabaccia, Ibid

The book is structured around three related questions about Sicilian labour and migration movements. The central concern that she has in this book relates to the impact that 'out-migration'[54] had on the peasant and worker movements in the nineteenth century countryside. In turn the second question that is addressed is whether migration had any impact upon rural protest traditions in the United States. This is a fundamental issue that pays due attention to the way that immigrant life helps to shape the lives of those around them in the *host country*. Although Gabaccia is looking at a different historical period here and is doing this within the context of American immigration, this question may be fruitful to ask in relation to the British context of Italian immigration. The unionisation of (immigrant) workers in the post-war context is discussed below in the chapter about the London Brick Company,[55] but I have not been able to find any references to the inclusion of the names of any Italian immigrant workers in the records of British labour movements.[56] Hence it would seem that this situation is comparatively uneven in terms of the cultural context of Britain and in relation to the American context explored by Gabaccia. The third and final question addressed in *Militants and Migrants*, is in relation to the labour activism that was developed in the hometowns of the Sicilian return migrants'. Interestingly, return migrants' mobilised themselves in such a way that the *Italian Diasporas* tended to utilise the experiences that they had of activism in America and they were able to resist fascism and were more likely to be involved in Communist resistance movement.[57]

In *Italian Diasporas*, Gabaccia provides an historical overview of five hundred years of movement by the Italian peoples[58] (but disappointingly she does not include Italian migratory experience in relation to Britain and perhaps the numbers involved are outside of her project). One of her arguments in this book is that transnationalism[59] can act as a way to understand the interconnections between *family, work and consciousness in more than one national territory*[60]. She argues that these interconnections and transnationalism in particular is *no invention of a late twentieth-century or postmodern world*.[61] She goes on to explore Italian identity formation through the land movements of the Italian people and their experiences over the specified historical period. The making of *Italian Culture at home and abroad*[62]is analysed through a variety of methodologies and the study of language formation introduces the question of how one is to understand what it might mean to be(come) Italian. Artistic capital through the work of Leonardo Da Vinci and others[63] is contextualised through its impact on European civilisation.

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[54] Gabaccia's term

[55] Based in the South East of England and predominately in the Home Counties, *The London Brick Company* was the main employer of Southern Italian workers during the period of mass migration in the early to mid 1950s

[56] Despite my efforts, perhaps any activities may not have been documented with this type of detail. However, in general terms C. Booth explores the role of Italian immigrant workers in the 19th Century in Life and Labour of the People in London, 17 Volumes, (1902-3). Interestingly, Sponza does not comment on this and like Gabaccia is dealing with the 19th century

[57] Gabaccia, Page 3

[58] This book is part of the *Global Diasporas* series (edited by Robin Cohen) and is affiliated to the Transnational Communities Programme at the University of Oxford funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council. Other books in this series published by UCL Press in association with Taylor and Francis Group, include *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Robin Cohen), *New Diasporas* (Nicholas Van Hear), *The Sikh Diaspora* (Darshan Singh Tatla)

[59] A term often used by contemporary anthropologists such as Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (eds) *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered* (New York: Academic Press, 1992)

[60] Ibid, Page 11

[61] Ibid, Page 11

[62] Chapter heading, Page 14

[63] Gabaccia additionally sights Marco Polo, Columbus, Casanova, Titian and Napoleon Bonaparte's Tuscan ancestors (see Chapter 1, previously cited).

She moves on to a discussion about the ways that labour can be understood as an export that governed an understanding of the Italian people both abroad and in their original homelands. Focusing on the period between 1870-1914[64], Gabaccia explores why it was that just at the point when the Italian State was formed, so many of its inhabitants wished to leave the country. *Explanations for Italian mass migration thus lie as much in global and local histories as in the national history of Italy.*[65] An important insight into the development of the role of labour migration is explored partly through the investigation of *the rebellious poor*[66] but also through the gender divisions implicit within this migratory process[67]. Understood to perform the role of *servi*,[68] the Italian workers were completely dependent on their padroni and Gabaccia explains their subservient nature, and the patronage system as a whole, as being integral to our understanding of Italian identity[69]. The patron-client relationship was convened at every level of Italian society and this also included the modern state itself.[70] As a historical perspective this aspect of Gabaccia's writing provides a key tool through which to think about post Second World War Italian migration to Britain. One question that is apparent from some of the ethnographic work that I have conducted was in relation to the perceived passivity from the workers about their poor treatment in the brickworks[71]. Indeed the typical response given was in relation to the fear felt by any negative retort by their employer should they rebel in any way. In parallel to Gabaccia's findings that *Italians pitied as truly powerless those lacking patrons, not those possessing them*[72], the Italian immigrant workers expected this treatment and saw it as part of what it meant to be an Italian (worker) in Britain and elsewhere[73].

Uneducated Italians were not discriminatory in their choice of location to migrate to, although they were able to discern the difference between countries across the Alps to Europe or across the oceans. Indeed, as Gabaccia notes, they saw anywhere beyond the sea as *one undifferentiated place - la Merica*[74]. Diverse regions would locate to form a new Italian identity within a new location. *A diaspora was never a transplantation of a whole community to a single site abroad*[75]. Yet those from a particular region in Italy would cite that location as their patria and it *remained the most important source of belonging for Italy's migrants.*[76] Then, as now, other emigrants from the same region are important but the place of birth would always remain paramount in the construction of a sense of self-identity. Gabaccia goes on to discuss the differentiations between Northern and Southern Italian attitudes to this identity in the nineteenth century and it is not something that I will dwell upon since this notion (in this particular historical framework) is outside the scope of this thesis. However, something that is of distinct importance is that Gabaccia argues that migration *helped keep alive the localism Italian nationalists sought to overcome.*[77]

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[64] Chapter 3, *Workers of the World*, 1870-1914, Page 58
[65] Gabaccia, Page 58
[66] Gabaccia, Page 58
[67] Gabaccia, Page 61
[68] Clients or dependants
[69] Also see Jane and Peter Schneider, *Culture and Economy in Western Sicily* (New York: Academic Press, 1976)
[70] Gabaccia, Page 65
[71] See my chapter on *The London Brick Company*
[72] Gabaccia, Page 65
[73] "*We came here for work and to be able to eat, they (the managers of the factory) could so easily take this away from us if they really wanted to. Why would I give them any reason to do this?*" E.
[74] Gabaccia, Page 70
[75] Gabaccia, Page 73
[76] Gabaccia, Page 73
[77] She argues that linguistic differences became even more apparent whereas the original dialects were further influenced by the *host country's* language, see p73

The experience of nationalism as it came to be shaped by the Italian immigrants is interesting to consider since it is replicated as an experience in the migratory movement of the 1950s in Britain. *Although few of Italy's migrants had strong national identities when they left home, many more developed them as they lived and worked abroad.*[78] As was the case with the migrants of the 1950's (but for additional reasons), whilst talking about the migrant Italians that were to become workers of the world, Gabaccia claims, *they had never voted; most had never belonged to a labor union or workers party.*[79] She focuses on Brazil as a country where Italian migration helped to formulate the labour movement and cites key radicals within this movement[80]who went on to create rural co-operatives and agricultural communes. One visible distinction between Gabaccia's findings and my own, is the contrasting behaviour of women in relation to labour activism. She explores the leadership qualities of Italian women in the period of 1930s and how they were in fact very visible in number when it came to representing the larger worker unions. *While women were otherwise invisible among internationalist exiles in the other Italies, women's work as wage earners quickly transformed a few female immigrants into activists.*[81] There is no comparative data about Italian women's activism amongst Italian immigrant communities in Britain during this period, but some of this could be understood in relation to women's' lack of access to the dominant language until relatively recently.[82]

Gabaccia finds that over a period of time, *Italy's* many village-based diasporas merged almost imperceptibly to become other Italies[83] Catholic and labour activists tended to have competitive stances in trying to relocate the loyalties of the Italian migrant workers and she puts this down to a real sense of scepticism felt by the immigrant communities. Being uneasy about all organised groups is put down to the overwhelming importance placed on the *family and neighborhood as the best guarantors of economic security.*[84] By 1900 regional-based (*paese-based*) organisations started to be formed and they offered clear purchases that the Italian immigrants truly desired. Italian language schools were opened, as was an Italian hospital that was for the sole use of Italian immigrants. Importantly, Gabaccia finds that forty percent of Italian students were educated at these schools in Buenos Aires at a time and location where public education *scarcely existed before 1905.*[85]

The same claims for creating institutions that met localised needs are replicated in my own research with the first Italian language school being set up in 1966 in the Kings Cross area of London (other schools followed this original innovation and there is still evidence of these schools in contemporary Italian immigrant communities[86]). A member of the Italian community, the businessman Giovanbattista Ortelli, founded the *Italian Hospital* in Queens Square in London in 1884 and in 1958 the *League of Friends* of the hospital organised charity fund raising events in order to maintain the hospital. Due to a multitude of circumstances but also in part because of the more local hospitals available through the *National Health Service*, members of the Italian immigrant community would no longer have to specifically travel to the *Italian Hospital* and the hospital was closed in 1989[87]. It is now the central

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[78] Gabaccia, Page 106

[79] Gabaccia, Page 111

[80] See page 116 but also, *Merica! Merica!: Emigrazione e colonizzazione nelle lettere dei contadini veneti e friulani in America Latina 1876-1902* by Emilio Franzina (Verona: Cierre, 1994)

[81] Gabaccia, Page 117

[82] As I discuss elsewhere, migrant workers did not have access to English language classes when they came to Britain in the 1950s. They worked long hours and did not always value education for its own sake or for the possibility of future prosperity. Many of them had not expected to live in Britain long enough to fully benefit from learning the language and later came to be fully reliant on their children for the translation of the language.

[83] Gabaccia, Page 120

[84] Gabaccia, Page 120

[85] Gabaccia, Page 12

86This issue is explored further in the chapter *Cultural Identity and Assimilation.*

[87] Its Trustees, one of which included Lord Forte, closed it.

location for the administrative offices of *Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital* (which remains directly round the corner to this building) but still shows the original Italian plaque and maintains its Italian chapel on the top floor.[88] Interestingly, Gabaccia cites the limited intervention of the *Italian Catholic Church* since the emigrants were going to another Catholic country (Brazil) but this was not the case in Britain of the same period which saw the founding of the *Italian Church, St Peter's* in Clerkenwell in London in 1864. Although Mazzini[89] had already set up a school in the *Italian Colony* in London's Clerkenwell in the 1840s for the illiterate poor immigrants, a little later on, the priests that came from the Italian church came to determine the role and function of education for the Italian immigrant in Britain[90].

Gabaccia states that *almost thirteen million had applied to leave home in the thirty years before 1914; only four million more would do so during the next thirty years*[91]and she puts this down to the changing economic situation during the pre and post war years. Mussolini's direct appeals to Italians living abroad are understood, as having pushed migrants *to embrace nationalism* and the form that this wartime nationalism takes is the main focus of Gabaccia's next chapter. In a comparable sense, Sponza's findings about the Second World War and the place of Italian immigrants in his book *Divided Loyalties*.[92] Gabaccia concludes that the First World War saw emigrants having to claim their allegiances and *not since the Risorgimento had debates about nationalism, its meaning, and its practice generated so much passion in Italy's diasporas*.[93] New controls on migratory movements were also helping to give emphasis to a particular version of nationalism, but mass migration ultimately ended due to the worldwide economic depression and collapse of the global labour market in the 1930s. *The numbers leaving Italy plummeted and reached zero after the onset of World War 11*.[94]

In her analysis of fascism and its opponents, Gabaccia discusses the role of the *Scalabrini Missionary Order* that was set up in order to protect Italian migrants abroad. I will be discussing this Order and its relevance to contemporary Britain in more detail elsewhere[95]. However, I wished to mention it, if only to provide an historical over view of its inception and of the historical role that Catholicism played in aiding Italians abroad. *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini*[96] founded the *Pious Society of Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo (the Scalabrinians)* in 1887 since he was disturbed to discover that Italian migrants had so little religious support in their new place of home. His *Order* was one[97] of

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[88] The Hospital was closed during the war and reopened in 1950. An official photograph of this event is reprinted in Colpi's *Italians Forward* (Mainstream Press, 1991, p113) as is another visual record by Umberto Marin which shows the Hospital as it looked in 1959 (also reprinted in *Italians Forward*, p113), also see Bloodlines, Vite Allo Specchio by Owen Logan (Cornerhouse Publications in association with Istituto Italiano Di Cultura, 1994)

[89] Giuseppe Mazzini was a political exile in London during the period of 1840s and today there is a plaque commemorating his residency in Laystall Street WC1, Clerkenwell, London

[90] Starting from St Peter's Church, the Procession of the Madonna Del Carmine first happened in 1883 and was the first Catholic procession of this type in Britain since the Reformation. Happening on the third Sunday in July, it served as a symbolic unity of all Italian regions, with Italians travelling from all over Britain to attend it. It still happens today but in a much smaller format and with a nostalgic twist added to the procession walk since few Italians actually live in the roads that lead the procession. The event is overwhelmingly upheld by the older members of the community with few younger members engaging with it at all.

[91] Gabaccia, Page 130

[92] Lang publications, 2000

[93] Gabaccia, Page 131

[94] Gabaccia, Page 134

[95] See the chapter, *Cultural Identity and Assimilation.*

[96] Catholic Bishop of Piacenza (Piacenza is a northern city that saw huge migration to London during this period).

[97] 1875 saw the creation of a Catholic Congress based in Milan that sought to support migrants abroad. Gabaccia claims that it was modelled on Germany's St. Raphael Society that aided mutual benefit societies in Canada, Argentina and other countries. See p137 but also claimed by Mario Benigni, *"L'emigrazione Italiana considerate da tre riviste Cattoliche negli anni 1880-1914,"* in Franca Assante (ed), *Il Movimento migratorio Italiano dall'unita nazionale ai nostri giorni* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1978)

the first visible institutional supports that was offered to immigrant workers and was targeted towards those that had migrated to the Americas, since they represented the largest number. The missionaries were dispersed from its central founding location in Piacenza (a city that was named after Columbus) and were initially sent to Brazil and America in 1888 before many other missionaries were formed and sent throughout Europe[98]. Importantly, Catholicism and nationalism were linked through the *Scalabrini Order* and *it promised to strengthen faith and homeland - religion and patria - simultaneously.*[99]This historical context provides a platform through which the contemporary role of the *Scalabrini Order* might be understood in London and in the South East. Gabaccia discusses the development of other *Orders and the Society For Assistance to Italian Workers in Europe* in particular[100] and the role of Catholicism and state funding.

The final two chapters of Gabaccia's book deal with post 1945 emigrants and obviously concern me more in relation to my own project. The *Italian economic miracle* of the mid to late 1950s is discussed and she generalises that *almost every Italian moved somewhere during Italy's economic miracle*[101] and I would wish to further develop some of her claims. The financial assistance that Italian immigrants to Britain gave to this *miracle* came about through sending money *back home* either to their families or in order to build/buy land for their return. She claims that unlike the previous era, Italians migrated within Italy as opposed to internationally, with many leaving *the rural South to work in the centre and the North.*[102] Gabaccia chronicles the journey that led Italy to this Italian *miracle* and finds that the State had little direct impact on this economic turn.[103] The ensuing impact of this 'miracle' has enabled twenty first century Italians (living in Italy) to boast that Italy is the fifth most important industrial economy in the world. The development of the fashion and design export market hugely impacted on the country's well being and this additionally went on to result in a higher standard of living for those that chose to stay behind whilst watching other siblings emigrate or those who never intended to leave their homeland. [104]

Three-quarters of Italy's Europe-bound migrants in 1946-54 received state assistance in finding or travelling to jobs.[105] Gabaccia briefly mentions the deals that the Italian government did in relation to Britain and its *bulk recruitment* of labour in exchange for mutually beneficial allowances. The *Agreement*[106] that Belgium made with the Italian government in 1946 is used as an illustrative example to show that many countries were involved in the sale of (manual) labour for the good of the (Italian) country as a whole. Her findings show that Italy had little investment in helping those Italians that did emigrate since it anticipated that these workers would eventually return home and she quotes the

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[98] See Bruno Bezza (ed), *Gli Italiani fuori d'Italia, Gli emigrati Italiani nei movimenti operai dei paesi d'adozione 1880-1940* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1983) for a variety of perspectives on the development of The Scalabrinis' (Italian version only)

[99] Gabaccia, P138

[100] Founded after Scalabrini's death in 1902, Bishop of Cremona, Bonomelli sought to include socialism within the Catholicism preached. In Europe both Orders went on to compete directly for migrants' attention and having relaxed their antipathy towards the State, willingly took government funding for their work once it was offered. See Luciano Trincia, *Emigrazione e diaspora; chiesa e lavoratori Italiani in Svizzera e in Germania fino alla prima querra mondiale* (Rome: Studium, 1997)

[101] Gabaccia, Page 154

[102] Gabaccia, Page 154

[103] She cites the fact that 1948-1968 saw Italy having twenty different governments as an example of how their direct intervention was marginal since they could not agree on any key policies during this period

[104] For a key insight into the Italian and international governmental practicalities of posting workers abroad see Luciano Tosi, "*Italy and International Agreements on Emigration and Immigration*", in The World in My Hands, Italian Emigration in the World 1860/1960 (Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1997)

[105] Gabaccia, Page 157

[106] Belgium agreed to sell coal at a lower price to Italy and to sell 200 kilograms per day for every Italian who went to work in the Belgium mines. See Gabaccia, P157

work of Klausen and Tilly here.[107] Gabaccia compares the previous century's padrone system with the post war one and rightly states that *men no longer migrated among fellow villagers to destinations where they found large numbers of paesani who had arrived earlier. The state and its representatives, not the village, became the central mode through which information about jobs and wages now passed.*[108] She then goes on to focus her research on the countries that she had previously addressed such as Canada and America but does discuss the turn away from emigration to the Americas and towards Europe.[109]

In the final chapter of *Italian Diasporas* called *Civilta' Italiana* and *Multi-Ethnic Nations* and in the section that deals with the contemporary period of immigration[110], Gabaccia consolidates the research that she has done on nineteenth century Italian migration and the work of the penultimate chapter. Other than mentioning the British Empire earlier on in the book, this final chapter has some resonance with the Italian Diasporas as it has been experienced in post war Britain. She states, that *in the former colonies of the British Empire, more claim hyphenated identities as Italian-Americans, Italo-Australians or Italo-Canadian. In Italy and the former British Empire, plural identities are more common.*[111] Her focus is on emigration to Germany and Switzerland although many of her discoveries through this research replicate my own findings in relation to the British context. Both these countries continue to claim that *they are not nations of immigrants*[112] and Britain has its own ambivalence to 'multiculturalism and specifically what it means to be British. She quotes Leslie Moch's research findings whereby foreign workers were *wanted but not welcome*[113]. I will show how directly comparable this is with the British context of post-war Italian Immigration. Gabaccia tends to focus on contemporary Italy as it has been impacted upon through migration and resettlement (those that *returned home* and those that had more recently made Italy their home like North African street traders). My interests are more specifically about the post 1950's and the immediate contemporary identities visible amongst Italian immigrant diasporic communities in Britain. Gabaccia makes extensive use of the huge body of work done on post war Italian immigration to Germany and Switzerland[114] and takes these two countries as the focus for questioning who those immigrants of the 1950s are today.[115]

In her concluding analysis, Gabaccia records the fact that the self-definitions and the labels that help to define these immigrants through the eyes of the scholarly are multi-faceted. Hyphenated identities are more likely for those immigrants that live in the former settler colonies of the British

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[107] Jytte Klausen & Louise A. Tilly, "*European Integration in a Social and Historical Perspective*," in Jytte Klausen & Louise A. Tilly (eds) *European Integration in Social and Historical Perspective, 1850 to the Present* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), p6-8

[108] Gabaccia, Page 158

[109] Between 1955-65, more than 3000,000 Italians left Italy yearly. (Gabaccia, p160)

[110] Nations of immigration: nations of immigrants; Italians in Europe (Gabaccia, P177-187)

[111] Gabaccia, Page 177

[112] Gabaccia, P178

[113] Leslie Page Moch, "*Foreign Workers in Western Europe: 'The Cheaper Hands' in Historical Perspective*", in Jytte Klausen and Louise A. Tilly (eds), *European Integration in Social and Historical Perspective, 1850 to the Present* (Lanham Md: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), P193

[114] Much of this research is in German and so I have had little access to it other than through my own (minimal) translation. Other relevant research includes, Leslie Page Moch, "*Foreign Workers in Western Europe: The Cheaper Hands' in Historical Perspective*", in Klausen & Tilly, *European Integration, 1880-1980*, p103-16 or Delia Castelnuovo Frigessi, "*Elvezia, il tuo governo: Operai Italiani emigrati in Svizzera*" (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1977), or Hans-Joachim Hoffman-Nowotny, "*Switzerland: A Non-Immigration Immigration Country*," in Robin Cohen (ed), The Cambridge Survey of World Migration (Cambridge University Press, 1995) p302-07 or Pietro Coletto, "*I lavoratori Italiani nella repubblica federale di Germania* (Milan: Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Fac. Di Scienze Politiche, 1965-6)

[115] Gabaccia, P177

Empire[116] and Gabaccia claims that this is not the case for Switzerland and Germany where migrants adopted unitary national identities.[117]Interestingly, her findings (which echo my own findings about Italians in Britain) suggest that both Switzerland and Germany *have extremely low rates of naturalisation among resident foreigners.*[118] She finds that experiences of discrimination and the many obstacles faced have accompanied fears of naturalisation and the result has been more *plural or "hyphenated" identities.*[119]However, her findings claim that today in America those from Italian descent are no different educationally and occupationally than other Americans. This is dissimilar to the situation as it stands in Britain in the contemporary and obviously this is partly due to the differences in the historical migratory patterns.[120]The author defines herself as Italian-American[121] and discusses the issue of self-identification in contemporary America when over half of migrants' grandchildren still define themselves as *Italian-Americans.*[122]

The fact that some scholars are resistant to the distinction between Italian and American is interesting to me since the equivalent definition has no visibility at all in Britain. [123]She feels that this need for hyphenation may have something to do with the persistent feeling of being *in-between* even in a debate where *we are all multiculturalists now*[124]Gabaccia concludes with the idea that in Italy the collapse of the post war republic in 1992 showed that regional nationalism was actually very much alive. *The Separatist Northern League*[125] in contemporary Italy was formed at the inception of this collapse despite the fact that the corruption that was apparent within (and gave rise to) the collapsing government was evidenced as being both Northern and Southern in its inspiration. So at the very point when multi-culturalism and ideas about identity are more commonplace as cultural signifiers within contemporary discourse, Italy is compounding notions of Italianicity by having some of its inhabitants genuinely wanting to divide their country in terms of whom they define to be properly Italian. Gabaccia claims both rationality and cosmopolitanism[126] as being part of the contemporary Italian identity and the inclusion of immigrants into Italy, now finds Italy being no different to other countries. It too is now a country of immigrants.[127] Gabaccia calls this new identity formation *civilta' Italiana* and finally concludes with questioning its survival and transformation.[128]

Her final question and my starting point in the *Introductory* chapter of this thesis, is *whose civilta'* ' is at stake here? A contributing theme of my project here is to further investigate the creation of an Italian identity that negates the idea of a mediated commercial presence of Italians that is the most

[116] Italian-Americans, Italo-Australians or Italo-Canadians, p177
[117] Gabaccia, P177
[118] Gabaccia, P179 but also see Hans-Joachim Hoffman-Nowotny, "*Switzerland: A Non-Immigration Immigration Country,*" in Robin Cohen (ed.), *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
[119] Gabaccia, P182
[120] See my writing on the role of education within the Italian migrant experience.
[121] Gabaccia, P184
[122] For a concise overview of this notion of self definition see Jerre Mangione & Ben Morreale, *La Storia; Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992)
[123]Examples of this are in Richard Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990), Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) and somebody that Gabaccia is in favour of as presenting a sensible response is George E. Pozzetta, "*What Then is the European American, This New Man?: Ethnicity in Contemporary America,*" Altreitalie 6 (1991): p114-17
[124] Apart from the British black debates such as Hall, et al it is also worth reading Nathan Glazer, *We Are all Multi-Culturalists Now* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997)
[125] It called for the independence for their state of Padania (north of the Po River)
[126] Gabaccia, P187
[127] Ibid
[128] This idea of transformation is developed in *Cultural Identity and Assimilation*

common image through out the world. *It is not the civilta' Italiana of the largest of Italy's diaspora, the ones formed by the workers of the world as they travelled the globe ceaselessly in search of economic security.*[129] The other parallel image is that of the mafia and this is another creation under consideration here. Gabaccia considers symbols of *labour migrants civilta' Italiana*[130] through the language of food and mafia associations imploded by film directors such as Scorsese.[131]She only very briefly addresses the film industry and sees specific (criminal) Italian representations as an indicator of a particular version of Italian identity that is most commonly understood as being authentic[132]. She mentions the characterisations of the Italian criminal in the Mafiosi style from the early era of the 1930s and on to more recent Italian-American representations through the work of the previously mentioned, Italian (Sicilian) American director, Martin Scorsese and his films such as *Goodfellas* (1990)[133]. Sadly this is only a small part of this chapter and her argument could now be more fully extended to include the self-referential dialogue in *The Sopranos* where those very stereotypes mentioned by Gabaccia are named and shamed[134]. Arguably some of the realism embedded in this kind of product, with its particular attention to the detailing of Italian immigrant history, together with its huge commercial and critical success,[135]is only made possible by the writer and producer being Italian-American himself[136]. Gabaccia ends her book by looking at the variety of impacts that images of Italianicity have in the world and it is the intention of this thesis to contribute alongside this aspect of her work.

Another book that I wish to discuss here is *Migrant Belongings, Memory, Space, Identity* by Anne-Marie Fortier[137]that attempts to understand identity formation through movement and attachment. The back cover of the book states that *the study follows the Italian identity project since 1975, when community leaders first raised concerns about the future of invisible immigrants* and the author uses this notion of invisibility as her starting point. Although still unclear about the meaning of *the Italian identity project* and how this might be contextualised differently from the traditional exoticism located within Eurocentric sociological methodologies that I discuss below,[138]my criticism of this approach is only levelled at those who also claim to be critical of this approach whilst merely replicating it. Fortier locates the *diversity within* which is fundamental to an understanding of the range of Italian communities[139] and she uses contemporary theories about cultural differences in order to do this. From the outset, she claims to want to investigate the monographs on Italians by Italians in Britain and how *written narratives cobble together elements of the past in the name of an identity project.*[140] Here she is referring to the three books available on *the Italian community*, all of which I have already discussed[141]. The author is claiming them to be part of an *identity project* (this is now more commonly how this work is theorised and understood) but each of these authors see

[129] Gabaccia, P188
[130] Gabaccia, P189
[131] Whom Gabaccia feels has spread these American versions of old Italian stereotypes throughout the world.
[132] Certainly the representation of the Italian-American in American movies is exclusively understood as an identity linked with criminality and the Mafia in particular.
[133] Perpetuated further in products such as the hugely successful *The Sopranos* (HBO, 199?)
[134] See the Pilot Episode of *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1997) where Carmella is bemoaning the quality of *The Godfather Part Three* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1996) film, or in the same episode where family supper is spent lamenting Italian stereotypes.
[135] Viewing figures for *The Sopranos* was 12.2 million in December, 2002.
[136] David Chase, writer, director and producer grew up in New Jersey as the only child of an Italian-American family.
[137] Berg Press, 2000
[138] The author, herself a Canadian emigrant to Britain disposes of her own experience here and even goes so far as to take on *an Italian identity* which will be discussed later on in this chapter
[139] Fortier, *Migrant Belongings, Memory, Space, Identity*, P37
[140] Fortier, Pages 37-38
[141] Marin, Sponza and Colpi

themselves more specifically as historians and do not have claims on how their work goes on to be contextualised. Using Anderson's notion of the *imagined community*[142] Fortier claims that the findings in these books helped to create an imagined (Italian) community.

It is important to note that none of the writers cited here are representative of the post-war Italian community that they are writing about.[143] Fortier claims that Marin *remains to this day a prominent figure in the English Italian community*[144] but I would argue that he always acted as the benevolent outsider, paid for by the *Italian Church* and Government. This does not make him a member of *the community* in a typical sense and those who knew him acknowledge this.[145]Sponza is a Venetian academic who is based in London but again acts as a counter to *the community* as it is understood here since he came to this country out of choice rather than poverty. Within this context, his membership of the Italian community is more easily understood as that of the intellectual elite and it is significant that this is the status more properly accorded to the author of one of the most important sources in the English language about Italians in Britain. The final author is Colpi who has a Scottish mother and Italian father and is an Oxford graduate. Her membership of this 'imagined community' complicates things further since she is speaking from the position of another version of the academic elite and is of mixed parentage herself. Born into one of the oldest Italian business families in Scotland[146]Colpi, like the two authors already cited, provides an historical analysis of the development of the Italian presence in Britain. The language adopted by Colpi's publishers has to be understood in terms of the context of the arena in which she acted[147]and this is key to any scrutiny of historical data that claims to be *breaking new ground*[148]. It may appear that I digress, but I state these facts in some details so that one can fully evaluate the assertion that the *Italian identity project* was a conscious representation of how Italians in Britain saw themselves. This was not yet possible, since those *invisible immigrants*[149] were voiceless within the academic world during this period. This is not a claim here for Italian absolutism but rather raising the issue of who was speaking for *the community* and whose voices have helped to shape an understanding of Italianicity.[150]

Fortier does not take these monographs as being completely neutral, but to dissect them in theoretical terms in order to illustrate how an hypothesis about *an imagined community* is easily possible. However, these findings are only one version of what theoretical research makes possible and my findings are simply another voice in this arena. My concern here is about the relationship

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[142] Anderson, Benedict *Imagined Communities*, (London and New York: Verso, 1983)
[143] Umberto Marin is a Scalabrinian priest who lived in Bedford from 1960 to 1966 and then in London from 1966 until 1979 when he retuned to live in Italy.
[144] Fortier, Page 40
[145] For example a range of interviews that I have conducted amongst first generation Sicilians (male and female) saw Marin as being a representative of Italian authority
[146] This is how the author is described in the back cover of her book *The Italian Factor*, (Mainstream Publishing, 1991)
[147] For example, the press release for the book, together with the inside jacket state, "*Describing the flood of new Italian immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s and other post-war developments, she (Colpi) offers an incisive overall picture of this ever evolving ethnic community*". The use of the term 'flood' is unfortunate since it had already been adopted by pre-Thatcherite Conservative governments rhetoric and this rhetoric was all apparent in the existing Conservative that was in power when the book came out. Together with this, the publisher seem to be claiming, albeit unintentionally, that there could ever be an *overall picture* of the various Italian communities.
[148] This part of the press release here reads in full as follows: *Dr Terri Colpi's exciting work breaks new ground. For the first time ever she provides a comprehensive and highly readable analysis of the Italian community in this country.*
[149] Also a term used by Marin, p5 but this term is used amongst sociologists and appears in the work of Les Back, *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture. Racisms and Multicultural in Young Lives*, (London, UCL Press, 1996)
[150] This is a term that I use that encompasses all variations on what might constitute an Italian identity in the twenty-first century.

between theory and practice and the theoretical dimensions given in Fortier's findings are in keeping with modes of academic research that allows little room for those *being scrutinized* to be empowered during the academic endeavour that surrounds them. Although this is a minor point and indeed not always the sole purpose of this kind of academic research, the irony of the hierarchical positions has always struck me as worth noting. It is important to consider how those (representative) members of the Italian community that have been written about in this book might feel about their portrayal. Within this type of academic research there is no place for their responses. I will provide some insight into this issue using a similar methodology[151]but in a conscious attempt not to replicate the very concerns that I have outlined here.

Fortier uses direct experiences of being amongst members of the community through which to engage with the theoretical discourses she outlines[152]. She attends events within particular Italian communities that are both representative and not representative at the same time. Fortier cannot know, for example, that this type of event, in this case the annual remembrance ceremony at the Brookwood cemetery, would only be attended by a particular member of the Italian community. By this I mean that there are some members of the larger community who would not wish to associate themselves with these members of the community. This disassociation can be regional as well as familial (whole families will not attend because they do not wish to see other members of their family) although it is in general terms exclusively attended by first generation members and perhaps second and third generation members that are directly connected to those being remembered. How far any group is representative of any community is of course an issue under continual consideration throughout this thesis and it is important to consider in this context. Fortier's work is interesting in terms of who is included in the analysis and who is not. Her insights that use direct experience (those she interviews and mixes with) are often contextualised by acute parallels between institutional discourses being made. One of the Italians that she intends to attend the Brookwood Ceremony with has no desire to return to Italy and sees himself as being a Londoner. She feels that this counters *the grain of London Italian institutional discourses of identity, where the national myth finds wide currency.*[153]I would argue that these London Italian institutional discourses of identity have rarely heard the voices of those they claim to represent or be speaking about. Fortier wonders what happens to the definitions of *national culture when emigrants rearticulate their allegiance to the homeland while refusing to physically return there*[154].

Citing the work of Gilroy in relation to the bringing together of *nation* and culture[155]she asks a question that presupposes some kind of prior fixing of identity. The assumption is that prior to claiming their British-ness, those that now claim their disallegiance with Italy may well have claimed to be Italian. I would contend that Italian emigrants were positioned as Italian subjects rather than claim this definition for themselves. Prior to leaving Italy, those that went on to become emigrants had never to think of themselves as *Italians* and were more likely to see themselves their own particular region[156]. Italians' sense of being part of a community is usually linked to whether they have helped to form that community with the aid of other family or regional members. Contemporary

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[151] See Appendix A & B
[152] For an example of this see p69
[153] She continues, "*Though he identifies himself as an Italian, Toni has no inclination or interest in firming his ties with Italy; he is a Londoner, his family is scattered in London and Scotland, and his links with Italy is far from nostalgic or romanticized.... I ponder on what becomes of the homeland in the diasporic imagination once the desire to return has left*". P 69
[154] Fortier, Page 71
[155] For a fuller analysis of this citation see two books by Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts. Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpents Tail, 1993) and *Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993)
[156] As a Sicilian or Neapolitan, etc.

emigrants from Italy do not see themselves as belonging to *a community* and this was also the case for those that came in the 1950s. This definition was something that was given to those who had arrived and was not one that they had conceived for themselves. To tell a newly arrived Italian emigrant that they display stereotypical characteristics of *an Italian* is to tell them something that they have no real sense of knowing what it is that they are being accused of. Their sense of self not being previously ruptured means that a continuity of a sense of self has been maintained. This identity was never fixed, but importantly, their national identity had never previously been questioned.

In the third chapter of her book, Fortier discusses the *politicization of emigration of London Italians who struggle for the formalization and institutionalization of political ties with Italy.*[157] This is the chapter that I found most interesting and found the brief contextualising of debates about contemporary identity politics with Berlusconi's version of Italian (Party) Politics especially insightful. Gabaccia's extensive work in this area in relation to the role of Party Politics in Italy and immigration is exemplary. However, the specific focus on the British context is of interest here and Fortier pays some attention to this area. She argues that contemporary debates around European citizenship have to be seen in the light of historical perspectives[158] and I would further add that these perspectives should be viewed from oppositional spaces. Contemporary British and Italian immigration Policies need to be considered in the light of the realities of post war immigration to Britain[159] since a cultural amnesia is so often apparent in governmental discourse on contemporary immigration.[160] Equally, Berlusconi's attitude towards Italy's growing emigrant communities needs to be considered in the light of Italian support for its own people to leave Italy in the 1950s if only in order to keep alive the economic miracle that was aided by the money sent back by those abroad. Additionally other worlds' positions might be a useful starting point in understanding identity formation. For example, the Eritrean people's understanding of the construction of Italianicity (in any location where they might now be living) is key in understanding the changing shape of what it might mean to be *Italian.*

The issue of cultural assimilation is problematised in relation to it being perceived as being a symptom of a lack of preservation of Italian culture.[161]Fortier structures her research around the three areas that she perceives as claiming to be of paramount importance to those that she calls *Italian emigrant leaders*[162]. These three areas include the voting rights of emigrants, the role played by language in identity formation, and the place of second and third generation Italians in constituting a new Italianicity. Her main source of information was founded by Father Valente of the San Paolo Society in 1948 and was subsequently controlled and published by the Centro Scalabrini since 1963[163]. *La Voce Degli Italiani*[164] is a religious Italian newspaper that has a circulation of around 25,000[165] and with 5,000 subscriptions is the most widely read newspaper by Italian immigrants in Britain. The majority of its readership is from the first generation community members and it is published in the Italian language only, with only the occasional article in the English language. It is the only visible voice given

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[157] Fortier, Page 71
[158] Fortier declares a consistency in the views held about immigration by different Italian governments'. See page 71.
[159] Both from its former Colonies as well as from Europe and the South of Italy in particular
[160] Issues about integration and compulsory English language classes are currently being discussed in relation to Blair policies towards emigrants to Britain (asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants, would all be affected by the legislations being posed) whilst none of these requirements were deemed necessary in the 1950s.
[161] Again the inclination here is to understand culture and cultural identity as being a single, fixed state. See Page 72.
[162] A contentious term in that there are inconsistent views within the various communities about who these *leaders* actually are. Representative spokespeople for Italian emigrants have rarely belonged to the community that they claim to represent.
[163] A publication that is located in South London's Brixton and is sold on a subscription only basis.
[164] Translated as *The Voice of the Italians.*
[165] Quoted on page 73 but also verified by The Scalabrini Centre, 05.08.02.

to the debate around Italians in Britain even though their concerns centre on London Italians rather than those that live in other parts of Britain. Fortier sees the newspaper as *adopting a distinctly political direction*[166]and rightly cites the formation of the two press organisations that practise journalism by other Italians abroad[167]as being significant in understanding the role that the Scalabrini Order has played here[168]. However, Fortier's choice of data must be seen as being representative of a London Catholic perspective and one wonders how much of the actual readership is made up of the 1950s Italian émigré. Generally unheard of amongst Italians in the South East, *La Voce* (as it is more commonly known by its readers) is the voice of the Scalabrinian Order and its followers that include both elected and unelected *community representatives.*

The use of this type of data is problematic in that it can reflect any cultural collectivity only in a marginal way. The Italian speakers that subscribe to the newspapers immediately are often one step removed from other Italian emigrants and this distance is usually transmitted through education. Most of the first generation Italians came from rural villages and their levels of literacy are patchy with some not being able to read or write at all. This is, to my knowledge an unresearched area and one that is key when considering the role of education and media within contemporary Italian émigré households. The internal snobberies and assumptions by those that are literate (even within this first generation community) about those that are not is not to be underestimated here. Unelected (and sometimes those elected) community spokespeople are rarely neutral about those that they claim to be representing and regional prejudices are not uncommon. Those *leaders* that speak for a community are often felt[169] to be self-interested unless they have a distinct social standing within the community, such as the local priest. Hence the voice of *the Italians* that is being reflected by this newspaper is at the very most a marginal one, especially since its Catholic principles can be said to be problematised by the fall in numbers of those that attend mass with any regularity[170]. The system of Catholic belief can be said to be losing its hold on the second and third generation Italian émigré and particularly with those who were born in Britain post the 1960s. The issue of *la bella figura*[171] is also worth mentioning here since this is maintained by the behaviour of the female members of the family. In my own findings, the mass attendance of first generation Italian women was disproportionate to their male counterparts. Interestingly, it is often the only event where the woman is *allowed* to attend alone since she is representing the whole family. This is no longer the case with second and third generation Italians. With this in mind, *La Voce* is indeed an important source of information about Italian life as it is perceived by a London based Italian minority, but it should not be seen as being representative of what the wider, Italian émigré communities read or are indeed engaged with.

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[166] Fortier, Page 73

[167] Fortier distinguishes between this and a journalistic practice that is *for* Italians abroad, P73

[168] *The Federation of Italian Newspapers in Europe* was created in 1965 and the *World Federation of Italian Press Abroad* was created in 1971.

[169] This was a concern that kept coming up amongst those that I interviewed, mistrust between members of *the communities* seems very prevalent. This is still a common feature of rural living in Italy where one is unlikely to easily trust another from a different village to oneself. Hence the status that gossip has within contemporary Italian communities.

[170] Of those that I interviewed from the various Italian immigrant communities and across the various age groups, there were very few regular church attendees. Those that did attend with some regularity were exclusively female and aged over sixty.

[171] This term is almost untranslatable and has a fluidity of meaning depending on the context. In general terms it is the expression used to illustrate a sense of ones standing within the community, for example, it could be understood to mean to create a good impression of oneself and by definition, ones family. *Che brutta figura* translates as *What a bad image* (has been created of my family and myself) is an expression commonly used in the Italian language and had regional variations. The original expression has been translated accordingly throughout this thesis.

Fortier has selected this newspaper as her source through which to help her identify the construction of Italianicity, since she can detect that issues of citizenship are frequently discussed in its pages[172]. An over importance is given to these articles since she goes on to stress the impact of these article on *Italian intellectuals* and *Community Leaders*. She over stresses the distinctness of these findings since they are fairly consistent with contemporary debates in Italian newspapers published in Italy. Their very existence should not in itself be deemed as reflecting a wider consciousness even though its circulation figures are indeed impressive. The *new geographies of identity*[173] that Fortier goes on to explore in relation to the data from *La Voce*, is important to consider since, *the notion of Italians abroad stems from a vexed position between the impossibility of return to Italy, and the quest for new solidarities based upon new forms of existence.*[174]These newer identities have been in formation for many years and Fortier suggests that between *here* and *there a third space, beyond the confines of territorial boundaries* exists. She sees this space as being *conjured up*[175]and visible in the section of *La Voce* titled *Pianeta Emigrazione*[176] but only for the very boundaries that are being claimed to be interrupted, to actually be reaffirmed by the discourses of *here* and *there*. Italian identity is contested here and those living in Britain as émigrés (and non émigrés with Italian roots) are outside of the National debate in Italy. Whilst the political discussions about Italian Nationalism are very apparent in contemporary debates in Berlusconi's Italy, the writers of *La Voce* attempt to involve themselves, through creating a dialogue about *this home* and *that home*. Fortier claims that *Tensions arise between a diasporic awareness and a nationalistic discourse, both of which ground the creation of an Italians abroad identity*[177]and would only be the case if the diasporic community (as it has been perceived here) had been fully consulted and their various views reflected. These tensions are only apparent within the pages of *La Voce* and amongst the members of elitist Italian institutions.[178]

From this, Fortier moves on to Italian language tuition that I explore elsewhere but I do want to make some comments about her thinking here. She contends that what some *community leaders* claim as being a desire, she wrongly interprets as having happened. After speaking to a prominent figure in the London Italian community, Giuseppe Giacon claims that he saw the development of Italian language classes as the conscious attempt at community formation. He reiterated these claims to me[179]and said that he saw the formation of these evening and Saturday schools as being the way that the first generation could help the generations that followed them. The community, as this spokesperson saw it, needed an active hand at being shaped and fully formed. When I asked him if he thought that the classes still hold this function he conceded that things were different now and that non-Italians could now also attend the classes. No community formation ideas seem necessary in the contemporary and a minimum annual fee is charged for what are otherwise Italian Consulate funded classes. His wishes for those classes have to be seen within the context of what *doppo scuola*[180] could ever actually achieve. Those who attended throughout the 1970s-1980s were exclusively children of émigrés and so they were not a community in formation but already part of an existing collection of people. Arguably the link within these classes was the fact that attendees tended to be from within the second-

[172] Fortier, Page 73

[173] A term used by Lavie, S and Swedenburg, T. See *'Between and Among Boundaries of Culture: Bringing Text and Lived Experience in the Third Timespace'*, Cultural Studies 10, P154-179, 1996

[174] Fortier, Page 80

[175] Fortier's words, P80

[176] Translated as *'Planet Emigration'*.

[177] Fortier, Page 80

[178] In the interviews that I conducted, this issue of the rights of Italians abroad seemed to be of particular concern to those that represent Italian institutions in Britain. Representatives from The Italian Consulate, The Italian Embassy and The Italian Cultural Institute, all felt that this was 'very important' to their self-identity as Italians. These voices, like La Voce, cannot claim to be speaking for the diasporic community as a whole but rather for self-interested reasons.

[179] 28 July, 2002, telephone interview at COASI, the London administrative base for the Italian classes.

[180] This literally translates as *after school* (as in, an after school activity).

generation and British born Italians and so one could identify the changing nature of the community but certainly not the actual formation of one. The wishes of those from the first generation were not necessarily realised, although perceptions will differ. As an attendee of these classes,[181]I saw the classes as informing me about *my community* and the *education* received was multi-faceted. Already being part of a community was not something that I could help, attending the classes were part of what it meant to belong to a community, it was not the vehicle that helped to form this community. Fortier theorises that this is what actually happened and that *contrary to common speculation about ethnic community leaders, they can be well aware that they are creating a community does not precede its institutions. It is not born out of spontaneous generation. It (the community) needs places and spaces where the Italian 'spirit' and 'feeling' are performed and inscribed.*[182] This book follows many of these contentions and pushes them merely theoretically.

Contemporary identity politics are scattered throughout this book despite so many of its contentions being misleading. One wonders what this research is for and in turn what this book is for? How does it contribute to the debates about identity formation? The writing style is frustrating in that most sentences are referring to the work of others and where this does not happen then other primary sources are not *unpacked*[183]to a significant degree. The use of the Giacon interview is a case in point here. One can investigate the desire for a community to be created; it is very problematic to assume that this was actualised. This leads the rest of the research in the book to raise more questions than it answers, despite its many merits on a general level. Elsewhere, Fortier claims insubstantially that, *emigrant leaders move between the two structures of local and national authorities. They return to the land of origin for national identification but work hard to integrate the local experience into émigré identity formation.*[184]She provides no evidence to support such statements and it would be impossible to seek. Fortier approaches the notion of festa and other commemorative events that some Italians in London attend as one that ascribes symbolic meaning to rituals when in fact the rituals are mere fragments of a life once lived (by some). In the rural towns and villages in Italy all family members attended the annual events and the family names would be visible in the streets and following the event. The memory of these lost times are re-enacted in the street processions and other ceremonies that are attended by some members of the Italian community. Those that currently attend these events in England would have barely been young adults when they attended an equivalent event in Italy. Time has passed and so has the located space. For many Italians, here I am referring to those from the first generation who were part of this *original* experience; do not attend these ceremonies in London (or elsewhere in England).

The codes and hierarchies amongst the attendees and non-attendees are important. Some do not have good memories of the events that they attended as youngsters[185]and have chosen not to attempt to replicate them in England. Others simply do not feel part of the performative stage that can be the nature of what it means to attend one of these events. Although it is an opportunity to catch up with

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[181] I attended these classes in various locations from the mid 1970s onwards. Professor Salamone was particularly dedicated and was a source of inspiration. He was paternalistic in his manner and this was something that was encouraged by the parents of the daughters who attended the classes

[182] Fortier, Page 82

[183] A term frequently used by the author herself.

[184] Fortier, Page 97

[185] One of those interviewed told me that she had "*Difficult memories about the festas in Italy. All of my sisters found husbands through these events since it was the only time that we were all legitimately allowed to be seen out, other than when we were attending church. Obviously all of our family was with us but the men could get to see the women and choose a wife this way. As girls we knew it was important to look our best and we would spend a long time making the dress we would wear to such an event. You did not want anybody to be critical of what you were wearing. I found it all hard work and still do. Why would I want to bother with all this all again in England.*" F.

old friends and other *paesani*, these events can be stressful since they also operate as arenas for gossip and voyeurism. One can be criticised for both attending (for example without ones husband) and not attending (if one behaves outside of community step, this can often lead to unfair judgment - for example not doing what all others do can be deemed as an expression of self importance). Some second and third generation Italians still attend these events hoping to meet potential partners[186]whilst others purposely do not attend since they do not want to adhere to familial expectations. So the codes of behaviour during these events are very strictly adhered to by all generations that attend. *The Madonna del Carmine* event at *St Peters* church in Clerkenwell is now attended by fewer and fewer people since the first generation of Italians (mainly women) that helped to create the event are slowly dying or are no longer able to commit themselves to the sewing and washing of the costumes, etc. Fewer Italians attend since perhaps they increasingly no longer feel the need to *perform* their rituals in the streets of London.[187] Using the chronicles of both *La Voce* and *Backhill*[188]by their recording of the various events, Fortier feels that the structure of the occasions could be labelled as *London Italian time*[189]. I hope to have shown that this label could only be applied to some Italians since so many of them do not feature within this *calendar structure*[190]Additionally the *label* is too over loaded with complications since many of the events are determined by the Catholic Church or simply by geographic location or finances. Those that exist outside of Fortier's calendar are not visible here and since a large majority of Italians in London do not attend these events they are not visible within the hypothesis set out. They belong in no place within the parameters set out here so statements such as *the calendar also encloses a geographical reconstruction of Italian diversity, which all comes together in October, at the annual FAIE*[191] *dinner dance*[192]becomes a statement that is both exclusive and redundant at the same time.

For Fortier, the organisers of these events are perceived as actively creating the community whilst for some members of *this community* they are perceived as being marginal. This marginality can be understood to relate to a complex set of relationships. Those from the various Italian communities in London that do not attend these events are no less part of this community, they look to other aspects of the world in order to see their identity reflected. Countless Italian immigrants would not dream of attending the *FAIE* dinner dance but display their Italian roots in a multitude of other ways. Equally, they take part in other types of re-enactments although Fortier assumes events such as those followed in her book are representative of the entire community rather than a small (and very specifically grouped) minority. Their daily lives may come up against versions of retelling and reliving, re-enactments are part of the lives of many immigrant lives and the Italian community in London as it is perceived in this book is quite reductive in this light. She uses the articulations of the Centro Scalabrini and their self-representations as the basis through which to make many of her assertions and final conclusions. She says, *what interests me (here), are the forms of self-representation that circulate in the Centro Scalabrini and that construct its identity as a collective belonging.*[193]I would argue that this is *collectivity belonging* is actually not present. Some (an increasingly small amount)

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[186] Maria and Antonio are a married couple that met at the annual Madonna procession at *St Peters Church*, London. (interviewed in London 12.12.01)

[187]'Before I used to come to Italian events as I wanted my children to see what was important to us Italians. Now they are all grown up and have no need to be shown these things. They don't come anymore either so my grandchildren are not interested. They want to do other things like play on the computer with their friends. When my children were little they saw their friends at the church or at the festas, they met other Italians and although times were difficult, they enjoyed coming to these things. Times are different now." G.

[188] Journal published by the Catholic Church

[189] Fortier, Page 105

[190] Fortier, Page 105

[191] *Federation of Italian Associations, England.*

[192] Fortier, Page 105

[193] Fortier, Page 107

Italians feel that they are reflected in the collecitvity created (or rather imagined) by the Scalabrinis, but many more do not. Some first generation Italians can no longer negotiate their ambivalence about their own status within the church, particularly in relation to their own children's' changing behaviour. Some second and third generation Italians are not marrying with the blessing of the Catholic Church, neither is they baptising their children in the same way that they were baptised. Fortier does not acknowledge that the Scalabrinis are describing and reproducing a moment that is perhaps stuck rather than continuously evolving.

Other Italians in London do not attend any Italian cultural events at all but prefer to visit their *paesani*[194] at their homes or for them to be entertained at their own homes. The socialising would include all manner of *Italian participations* (including the coffee that is drunk, the type of biscuits consumed, the original recipes from 'back home', the 'home grown' vegetables shared, the stories re-told, the dialects spoken, etc) and yet they would not feel the sense of belonging that Fortier assumes in her book. Many of those I interviewed were scornful of the Scalabrinian version of Italian identity and saw it as being something old or even imagined[195]but importantly, they did not see this reflection as being a source of identification for them. They do not see their realities reflected within the context of the Scalabrinian Italian but this does not render them any less *Italian* than those who do relate to the Scalabrinian representation. Italian emigrants to London have developed newer frameworks for how their identities are inscribed culturally and the reductive (and often exhaustively Catholic) model that operates in this book via the Scalabrini Order is outmoded at worst and at best is representative of a small minority. Some of the other frameworks will be discussed in my chapter elsewhere. *Routes and roots intermingle as they seek to recreate a familiarity in order to facilitate the smooth transition of migrants into a social environment*[196]would prove a significant analysis if the parameters outlined did not speak for so few.

Through her research on the work and aspirations of the Scalabrinis, Fortier concedes that *the community cannot be created from families alone*[197]and quotes the work of Parolin[198] to implicate the important work facilitated by the Catholic Church. Once again, the self-absorption (some might also include self-importance[199]) leaves little room for those of Italian origin and indeed the children of its very parishioners that do not attend to subscribe to the religious Order. Also, even for those that perhaps do still engage with this Catholic way of life are heavily influenced upon by either their rural origins or those of their parents. The growth of this development is not acknowledged by Parolin despite his assertion that religious practice *will be anchored to memory and become functional to family life.*[200]. Religious participation is paramount in the creation of the *community* for Parolin, and

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[194] This is the term used for a member of the Italian community that is from the same region in Italy.

[195] Those interviewed would often remark that those involved with the church were *stuck in time* and did not reflect what it meant to be an Italian in the contemporary world. Their claims seemed to me to be less about authenticity and more to do with those interviewed not feeling that they belonged within this version of the community, as it is understood in exclusive terms by Fortier.

[196] Fortier, Page 107

[197] Fortier, Page 109

[198] Padre Gaetano Parolin lived in London between 1974-1994 and resided at the Centro Scalabrini in Brixton. After its founder Umberto Marin retired, Parolin ran the newspaper *La Voce Degli Italiani* from 1979 until 1994. In 1979 he completed an MA in Theology at University of Canterbury where he wrote a dissertation about Emilian emigrants in London.

[199] The lack of influence on the second and third generation Italian is rarely considered. Large cores of these groups never attend mass nor take part in any other aspect of religiosity. They live their lives in England following 'the British lifestyle' although others still allow Catholic teachings to influence their actions but do not ever attend mass or perceive themselves to be *Catholics*. Catholic representatives were often deemed as self-serving rather than actually engaging with the realities of living in Britain. This tendency was more consistently felt by the third and second generation Italian.

[200] Unpublished MA dissertation, P6, 1979.

Fortier interprets this, as *village churches were stages for nurturing a form of community awareness that seems to be withering away in the context of migration,*[201]hence the need to create this Italian community. This logic omits those that it cannot claim to influence. Fortier adopts methodologies that do not tease out these particularities (dressing as a waitress in order to participate in an *Italian event* is problematic if not patronising) and some of the ideas are overly burdened by tenuous theoretical applications. Key facets of the implications of this approach make the overall *findings* frustrating to follow and lead me to question the version of the *Italian community in London* that is presented here. The sociologist as outsider (Fortier) adopts a very ambivalent position in this book and theoretical discourses utilised often serve to obscure the fact that some of the research is not credible in its assertions. Other than the specifics outlined above, much of the writings could similarly be applied to other immigrant communities in London and I sometimes asked myself why the statements being made were particular to the Italian community. Indeed, I began by asking why is this research about Italians in London and I find myself concluding none the wiser. The reader is left a little more frustrated and certainly patronised but unable to understand why this writer selected the Italian community as the subject matter of this research other than wanting to apply contemporary *identity discourses* to a so called *invisible community*. The weak theoretical discourses are of paramount importance in this book and this is the central importance. Many of the links made between lived experience (even in its limited understanding as I have argued) and theoretical links are very tenuous and at times rather puzzling. Some of the language adopted is opaque if not simply inadequate and the use of the writer's diary of her fieldwork adds to the overall feeling of the anthropologists dissecting the natives. Allegedly many of my criticisms form part of a credible methodological approach amongst contemporary sociological discourses, but I hope that my need to register my own discomfort helps to provide some significant areas for concern about *Migrant Belongings.*

The most recent book that looks at the issue of Italian immigration in Britain (and London in particular) is *Patriarchal Structures and Ethnicity in the Italian Community in Britain* by Azadeh Medaglia[202]. The author sights her Iranian background, together with her marriage to an Italian man as being specifically relevant to her defence of why she is dealing with this particular subject matter. The book is a sociological analysis of the impact of a version of patriarchy, as it can be understood within the Italian community in London. This fragmented Italian community is homogenised in this book and key questions arise in relation to methodology. The writer uses key data collated by her and this primarily consists of interviews amongst women (no men are interviewed in this book) of various ages. It is difficult to account for the lack of consistency as to who these women are 'within the community' as they are all treated as representative of a particular understanding of what the community women think. Key issues arise in relation to translation and interpretation of this data. Linguistic nuances are missed but more importantly often a degree of misinterpretation and lack of recognition (regional interpretation of words) is apparent in the writing. Significant theoretical tools are used in order to support rather tentative findings and often there is no real evidence to support why the writer makes certain claims. Medaglia does not make it clear whether the interviews were conducted in English or Italian. If they were conducted in Italian, which regions are represented and why? Did the writer conduct all of these interviews herself and if so, did she fully understand the various dialects? What are the implications of some of these questions?

The book begins with a strong overview of the various feminist perspectives on patriarchy and reads much like a student text that lists all of the voices on this topic. This introduction is rarely attached or understood in relation to how patriarchy might be understood in (contemporary) Italy or indeed no

[201]Fortier, Page 109
[202] Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001

Italian feminist perspectives are considered. The various lists are only occasionally contextualised in terms of the subject matter actually under discussion and this happens at the end of significant paragraphs that do not provide clear evidence of the facts claimed. Issues that surround patriarchy,[203]such as domestic violence or even the changing nature of patriarchy are given a perplexing status within the book. Generic statements stand in for *all Italian men* and cross-generational differences are never given any consideration. The issue of domestic violence for example, is raised only to be dismissed by those interviewed. The writer pays some attention to why the majority of the women interviewed[204]feel that violence between men and women does not occur in their community but then swiftly moves on to the next interpretative data that addresses another topic. Evidence is often lacking in the claims made and the data in question, answers often asks more questions about the methodology used rather than raises questions worthy of investigating further.

The role of women's power within the family is completely missing in this book. Whilst the author is intent on proving her hypothesis that Italian women are oppressed within their community, key cultural signifiers are missed. Before I move on with this critique, I must further probe Medaglia's understanding of *this community* by questioning how this grouping (as interpreted by the writer of the book) is understood to have been formed. The community's formation in London is historicised through traditional means (although interestingly the writer makes no mention of Sponza's work on the development of the London Italian community) and significant numerical data is (re) interpreted to fit the model that best supports patriarchal dominance. Those interviewed may not necessarily recognise the power that they have over the men in their family. So for example, when the writer states that *there is a high demand for educational facilities amongst Italians*[205]this is an important issue to consider in relation to the motivation of the parents. It would be problematic to suggest that both mother and father would have the same attitude to education (and especially for the daughter(s) of the family). Also, a key factor here would be the role that education had played on the father or mother and in turn either are not necessarily in accord with the importance of education and its value in relation to their children. Additionally here the fact that women do not recognise their power in this context: it should not be thought that they have none. Medaglia does not know the role actually played by women other than through the information that they provide in a direct sense and this is a concern in relation to the overall methodology of the book. Italian men are lost without their wives and mothers but their loss rarely visible or overtly recognised. A cultural interpretative model is useful when negotiating codes of meaning within visual forms, so for example *The Godfather* (Part 2[206]) is understood as being about the fall of a patriarchal empire. It is not noted that the outgoing *Godfather* (played by Italian American actor, Al Pacino) cannot function without the help of his sister Connie (played by the third generation Italian American director Francis Ford Coppola's sister, Taglia Shire) with whom he is reunited at the end of the narrative.

Medaglia is accusatory about the Eurocentric determinism amongst some of the academic community that claims that she should in fact be researching her own Iranian community[207]. In order to help defend her position, she adopts an historical perspective with which I fully agree, *developing countries are indebted to many Western social scientists for having meticulously and most usefully researched various aspects of their societies and I believe researchers from developing countries should have an equal opportunity to investigate aspects of Western societies. Wider multicultural horizons can only*

[203] The book "*...highlights the debates on theorizing patriarchy and on changes in gender relations in the Italian community*", (Introduction) p1, *Patriarchal Structures and Ethnicity in the Italian Community in Britain* by Azadeh Medaglia.
[204]91% of the sampled group of women claimed that there is no domestic violence within the Italian community, (Fig 4.21) see P106 in Medaglia.
[205] Medaglia, Page 139
[206] 1974
[207] Medaglia, (Introduction) Page 4

enrich social investigations.[208] However, the methodologies adopted by Medaglia are at issue here. Having taken on traditional modes of methodology, she has fallen into the same problems as Eurocentric researchers. Since she is working within a Eurocentric (academic) context, she is using the accepted tools often used by contemporary social scientists. Since I do not write from this position and in this context am critiquing the details of her findings, I will now go through the main areas of concern about her book.

The issue of translation is where I would like to begin. There is no way of knowing how Medaglia went about collating the interviews conducted. One has to assume that either her respondents spoke English (at least to an understandable degree), which would contradict my own research or perhaps Medaglia spoke to them in Italian. This being the case, all manner of problems arise, since those interviewed would only have spoken in their own dialect and would have a limited understanding of the Italian language as those who have learned it through study speak it. This is not to say that there are not even further complications here. Those of the first generation community would indeed understand *Italian* to some degree, but this is not as easily the case amongst those from the second and third generations (also interviewed in the book). The samples used in the book are often small and there is no information about how they were collated. Were those interviewed from the same region in Italy and could they have been related? Simple questions such as these would have impacted upon the types of responses given to Medaglia's questions. Younger members of the group would not have spoken as freely in front of the elder members of their community. Since the author is often interviewing women across generations, and had members of the group been from diverse regions, certainly the younger members of the group would have had some difficulty in understanding the *Italian spoken.*[209] These points are never absolute, but I write from experience and from the comparative position of my own research findings. Of course, Medaglia may specifically have sought those who posed no linguistic problem in relation to the methodology - in which case, this would have been important to know in relation to the findings. No methodology is pure and no interview conducted is completely neutral in relation to the complexities raised, but no grouping of this kind should claim to be representative of the Italian community. This is especially the case in the light of the author's misclaim that, *there are no reasons for thinking that there are significant differences amongst Italians in different parts of Britain.*[210]

As I hope to show in my own findings in the comparative analysis between the various Italian communities in both London and in the Bedford area, there are indeed distinct differences to be found. This claim is a generalisation that is of concern on many levels. Firstly, since there is no research or indeed are any comparative interviews conducted, it is difficult to find any supporting evidence for such a claim. Equally, the historical perspective provided by Medaglia mitigates her own claim since even the most banal of historical readings would point out the fact that Italians have lived in communities in London since the eighteenth century. The Italian community that is in the Bedford area and the Home Counties in general, belongs to the post war formation of emigrant communities and this in itself displays significant cultural differences. Many of these particularities are outlined elsewhere in this thesis, but one immediate issue is to my concern with language. Those communities that have historical links to London are much more likely to be able to speak the English language to an understandable degree compared to those from the Bedford area. The generational longevity within

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[208] Ibid

[209] The linguistic model adopted by the first-generation community is little researched and the multi regions of the South of Italy are representative in a single speech pattern. Since many of the first generation have now been here for nearly fifty years and have mixed exclusively with others from other regions in Italy, they often speak a mixture of regional Italian. It is quite common that they should mix Sicilian with Neapolitan and also perhaps with the odd sprinkling of 'English'. This is much to the amusement of the family members 'back home' when they hear it spoken during the usual annual holidays spent by the first generation and potential other generations.

[210] Medaglia, (Introduction) P4

London is particular to its historical dimension, so a pensionable Italian woman in London may well have a much more developed linguistic ability than her equivalent in Bedford. She will have been more exposed to the English language (perhaps through the employment that she had which meant she had to converse with English people rather than amongst other Italians[211]) and hence more able to express herself to a non- native speaker. Equally, since the author does tell the reader the age of those interviewed, a twenty year old (and probably of a second-generation) woman who went to *doppo scuola*[212]and spoke *Italian*[213]at home, was more likely to express those sentiments approved of by those women who were also part of the collated group in Medaglia's sample, than another second-generation woman who only spoke English to her parents. Here the Italian community has to be understood as fluid and incredibly diverse in its make-up and this is particularly the case in relation to where those communities exist now but also how they have evolved historically. All of these considerations must be taken into account in relation to Medaglia's findings and hence led to a feeling of unease as I followed the writing.

Whilst indeed praising the ultimate sentiments of the book and the importance of a sociological study that exclusively focuses on gender relations within the Italian community[214] (albeit one that neglects to speak to any Italian emigrant men as a representative group). Whilst considering the parameters of *this community* as the author understands it, she raises some key concerns about the prevalent power of patriarchy with the multifaceted communities that are Italian in their *original* make-up. The comparative work between British and Italian women is important in understanding how an invisible labour market was formed in post war Britain and one that was feminised as well as culturally specific. The teasing out of the importance of the *Italian (Catholic) Church* is interesting but again has to be seen in the light of the London community having access to the church. Catholicism has a comparable importance in the identity formation of the first generation Italian woman in the Home Counties but she may not have had access to an Italian (Catholic) Church.[215] The declining attendance of Italian mass is due to the lack of involvement on the part of the second and subsequent generations (of both genders) and this is also the case in *Italian Catholic Churches. The Italian Catholic Church* in Bedford has seen a rapid decline in its attendance with those from younger generations only being present at significant occasions such as weddings and baptisms (usually those that they are directly involved with[216]) but this is the case for church attendance across denominations[217].

Medaglia quotes Christolini's cross-generational work amongst Italian emigrant women in Scotland. [218]However, her ability to take on other findings as being generic is an overwhelming concern. Without resorting to overstressing my critique of this type of methodology, she states that *the cultural characterization of Scottish-Italian women would apply to Italians all over Britain. They have identical ethnic traits and there are no reasons for thinking otherwise*[219] Christolini makes it clear in

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[211] Italian women in the Home Counties were much more likely to be working amongst other Italians and have very little to do with English speaking people.
[212] Italian language and culture classes held especially for the children of Italian emigrants
[213] Here, I mean her regional dialect
[214] See p5 where this fixing of the term *the Italian community* is laid out
[215] Interestingly in Aylesbury, Italian priests from 1962 until 1995 conducted Italian masses once a week in the local British Catholic Church. These masses were terminated as attendance declined. This is also the case in other regions where there are various Italian communities, for example Bletchley in Milton Keynes or Peterborough.
[216] So for example, in order to be eligible to marry in the Catholic Church, couples have to show their commitment to their faith through regular attendance. So it is a common occurrence that second or third generation Italians that have never regularly attended mass have to attend on a weekly basis in order to be married in the church of their choice. 'Their choice' is often influenced by familial desires rather than their own
[217] Since the confessional has now taken the turning towards *reality* TV, the confession box acts as an archaic formation outside of experience. The spiritual is now something to be immediately felt rather than contemplated
[218] Christolini Sandra, *Donne Italoscozzesi*, (Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1986)
[219] Medaglia, Page 81

her research that women came to Scotland to join family members that were already there and here there are indeed comparable factors with other Italian communities. However, the specific characteristics of the Italian Scottish experiences as Christolini has interpreted them cannot be so easily said to be replicable to those of other Italian communities. The complexities in-between, some of which I hope to have raised, make the fixing of any community problematic. Christolini does not claim that her findings speak for the whole of the community and seems more concerned with understanding the inter-relationship between daughters and their generational connections as the women themselves understood them. Their own understanding of the role that cultural diversity plays seems to be of fundamental importance to Christolini. Although similar methodologies have been adopted, the two sociologists use their findings in significantly different ways and this results in quite diverse but ultimately quite fixed conclusions. It is important that Christolini does not only privilege her own voice and allows those interviewed to be part of the dialogue of self analysis that makes up some of the books findings. Sadly, Medaglia actually tends to replicate the very concerns that can be easily levelled at the more traditional anthropological approach to studies of diasporas and silences those being *represented* through rendering them further invisible, or at best misrepresented.

This chapter has attempted to provide an overview of the various literature which addresses Italian/British diasporic history. Some of the methods through which the writers have arrived at their conclusions have been investigated together with some of the premises for their work and the issues raised. It is apparent that all the available literature has both major strengths but also some considerable weaknesses. It is hoped that the points raised throughout are beneficial in providing a critical context for some of the key questions in relation to what makes up cultural identity and how this formulation actualises itself. Fortier's concluding chapter[220] not with standing, it is interesting that so little of the literature available on the topic of Italian diasporic identity addresses the function of cultural memory in the development of this identity. As the later chapters go on to show, cultural memory and the function of cinema in particular, is implicit in how Italian migrants have made and continue to understand their own sense of identity. The following chapter, *Frank Capra and Anthony Minghella - Comparative Links Through Masculinity, Family and Community*, begins to address this aspect of cultural formation through a case study that investigates cultural construction within film analysis. Taking the traditional methodological approach that begins with the film reading, the two film directors selected, are both from an Italian diasporic community albeit from different continents and time spans. These directors and their films have been purposely selected in order to test out the limitations of this particular approach. The following chapter will explore how far one can go in understanding cultural identity formation within a diasporic context, if one begins with the cultural products themselves, in this case the films.

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[220] See Fortier, p157, *Memory, Location and the Body Motions of Duration* in *Migrant Belongings* (London, Berg, 2000)

Frank Capra and Anthony Minghella - Comparative Links Through Masculinity, Family and Community

In this chapter, which I would like to be treated as a case study, there will be a more traditional analysis of the common links between the work of Frank Capra[1]and Anthony Minghella[2]. Through working across the range of comparative links that make these directors and their films relevant to the overarching theme of this thesis, it is hoped that the theoretical framework provided will inform further thinking. How far can beginning with the cultural products themselves take us in understanding the actual role that films have in shaping ones sense of identity as an immigrant? Both Capra and Minghella were Italian immigrants, the first to America and the second born in Britain to Italian immigrant parents. What most interests me about their work and what I want to focus on is their apparent denial of their ethnic roots within their works. This was a common experience for male (second generation) immigrants - assimilation being differently complicated for sons than for daughters. What might it mean to have Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life* (1946) as representing America's most famous Christmas movie, whilst Minghella's *The English Patient* (1997) represents the ultimate doomed romantic love story as seen through the fog of Englishness?

These two films were hugely popular, the first by a (poor) first generation Italian-American (male) filmmaker and the second by a (middle-class) third-generation Italian-British (male) filmmaker. Additionally, like Minghella's *The English Patient* in 1997, Capra's *It Happened One Night* also went on to win all five major Oscars in 1935. Another link that I will explore is the depiction of women and ethnicity in these directors' works and how this might relate to their comparable experience in their own relationships with their mothers and sisters and other women in their lives (not necessarily their wives). What connections can be made between Capra's visualising of the fragile maturing of the male hero, as typified by James Stewart or Gary Cooper and the romantic, introverted male identities such as Ralph Fiennes or Alan Rickman in Minghella's work? How does their shared Catholic belief get pictured and read by non (Catholic) identifying audiences? I am drawn into considering the Capra family on the filmic set (in *It's a Wonderful Life* and his other populist works) as comparable to Minghella's constructed family in the doomed desert in *The English Patient.* Both directors are linked by their use of the *word wonderful* in individual film titles, even though three generation and a continent separates them. When discussing their childhoods, Frank Capra spoke about assimilation, whilst Minghella describes

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[1] 1897-1991.

[2] 1954-. Minghella became Chair of the British Film Institute in London in 2002.

difference. The focus of interest here is in these commonalties, but also in their non-similarities and the contradictions that their works and lives raise.

Particular attention will be given to the earlier works of Frank Capra and only the filmic work of Anthony Minghella, as this is where I feel both directors have been at their most experimental and at their most interesting in relation to cultural and sexual identity. Capra's life and works spanned many decades, whilst comparatively; Minghella the filmmaker is still in relative infancy. To begin with, I will give a little background chronology to both directors and then I will pursue their common links both within their work and in its critical reception. I will commence with Frank Capra in order to give some historical dimension to the area. In this chapter, I am less interested in the details of how Capra became part of the film industry and why he was such a success at this. I am more interested in the images that he created and the sense of *Americaness* that his films exude. I intend to explore what lies behind this veneer of WASP American filmmaking and will also look at how the films were viewed in their own time. The particular films that I will refer to are his populist early works - *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), You Can't Take it with You (1938), *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Meet John Doe* (1941), and finally, *It's A Wonderful Life* (1946). I feel that this selection best represents his work and offers up a range of questions in relation to ethnicity, and sexual identity. In addition to these, there is one specific film that despite attempts it was not possible to locate, *So This Is London*, (1930).

Similarly with Anthony Minghella, there is more of a concern with the *Englishness* of his work and although he has had a much shorter filmic career, it is intended to explore this idea as perceived both within his work and within the British film industry[3]. In order to do this the focus will be two of his feature films, *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1991) which was originally made for BBC television, and *The English Patient* (1996) which was adapted from the 1992 *Booker Prize Winner* novel of the same name and written by Michael Ondaatje. As I will go on to illustrate, both films had incredible popular appeal and won Anthony Minghella a level of attention that catapulted him into a very different league of British film directors. Complexities of identity are at the heart of both of these films and this is also a central theme of Minghella's theatrical, radio and television work. After an analysis of his work, there will be an exploration between the comparative links that bind both Capra and Minghella. This analysis will address the cultural determinants that enable a comparative address of key film works, and go on to seek answers to the question of how these two significant directors went about visualising a distinct national identity within their work.

[3] Despite the subject matter of an Italian-American character starring the actor Matt Dillon, I will not be looking at Minghella's (Italian) American film, *Mr. Wonderful* (1993) in close detail since in many ways it replicates the issues apparent in the two films that do form the analysis of this chapter.

Frank Capra came from Sicilian origins and was brought over to America as a small child. He came from Bisaquino, a small peasant village and found his way to America through his elder brother. His brother Ben, had disappeared whilst herding sheep and was not seen or heard of again for five years. This is a typical story that immigrants carry with them in order to illustrate the drama that their lives have so often carried. Then a letter arrived from this absent brother informing the family and the villagers that had been praying to Santa Lucia for his safe return, that he had in fact fled to America. He refused to ever go back to Sicily and told his family that if they wanted to see him they would have to go to Los Angeles. This story, as read to the Capra family by the village priest (the Capras' were illiterate) was dramatised and repeated as family folk lore and my own family (and most immigrant to all places less poor than the home left behind) have a comparable one to tell as the many documented oral histories will testify.

So this was how it came to be that a six-year-old Capra came to sail to America in 1903, never to return to live in Sicily again. Or rather this is the version that Frank Capra prefers to tell us in his autobiography, *The Name Above the Title*[4]. He writes dispassionately about this experience, in the same way that it was born out in the oral interviews of second-generation sons which I conducted, who insisted that they felt no different to other English children as a child growing up in England[5]. This is a common denial that is expressed by male immigrant Italian sons[6] and one that is often difficult to understand by their sisters[7]. When describing his arrival at the station in Los Angeles to be met by his brother, Capra writes: *Mamma and papa kissed the ground and wept with joy. I cried, too. But not with joy. I cried because we were poor and ignorant and tired and dirty.*[8] He goes on to talk about the value that he placed on education and educating himself: *Oh, I loved my family and respected their thrift. But how could they know what I knew, that sure I was born a peasant, but I'd be dammed if I was going to die as one*[9].

It is during this description that Capra shows both love and shame - the contaminated poor immigrant emotion. A strong love for his parents and their roots, whilst at the same time acknowledging what must be forsaken in order to become properly civilised into the 'host country'. From this early age, Capra recognised the importance of assimilation and the power to be gained through it. The forever disenfranchised illiterates would never again belong whilst Capra was intent on integrating into his new home/land. Freedom allowed in Italian-American (immigrant)

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[4] Frank Capra, *The Name Above The Title*, Originally published in 1971 (New Yor, Da Capo Press, 1988)

[5] "I remember having to have a fight against some boys that were calling my sister a Wop. It was the first time that I realised that they had been thinking of me as not being like them. I always thought I was one of them". H.

[6] "I knew I was Italian but that did not mean that I was treated any differently to my English friends. I think this was different for my sister, I don't know why". I.

[7] I have explored Italian-British assimilation and gender in the following chapter, *Cultural Identity and Assimilation.*

[8]Frank Capra, *The Name Above The Title, (New york, da capo Press, 1988) P5*

[9] Ibid, P6

male childhood created many possibilities, ones rarely shared by the sisters. We will never know how intent Capra's sisters were in assimilating into their new home/land but their ability to explore was undoubtedly rigorously controlled. This typical familial high drama is still being re-enacted today within immigrant (Italian) communities whilst the sisters and the daughters remain the repositories for linking that home with this home.

He lived the typical struggled life of the Italian-American immigrant and hence his only salvation was through education. This experience of education was quite rare for the Italian-American male of this period. It is difficult to gage exactly what it is that leads some immigrant Italian children to recognise the possibility of life change through education, whilst others continue to recreate their parents (illiterate) idea of home in the new host country. Unlike other immigrant communities, Italian immigrants (usually from the South) have tended not to value education in the way that other communities do. Is this because there was such a high degree of illiteracy during the parents' generation? Or is it their superstitious mistrust of the written word? Due to America's differing and lengthier immigration pattern, it has been a little more common for Italian-Americans to be educated compared to their British counter parts. Also, as I have explored else where, Italian immigrant male possibilities far outweighed and still outweigh the possibilities of Italian immigrant females.

This is further illustrated by the fact that Capra has little to say about his sisters, other than they were dutiful, illiterate and worshipped money. Italian daughters were and still are expected to maintain the cultural stability of the community and transfer this into their children, men are usually absent from this ritual unless they are overtly controlling that it is happening (see also my research on women and the family/mafia). There is so very little written evidence of the Italian-American woman's experience of immigration and virtually none about British-Italian women. Indeed, Capra's attempt at exploring female (ethnic and sexual) identity is so tremendously compelling partly due to its uniqueness. How did an Italian-American from that period view his sisters, and how has this image developed and changed? Does Ida Lupino have to be the only woman to qualify as the Italian woman film director? Capra (like Scorsese two generations later) also has little to say about his mother. He gives us only minor details about his relationship to his mother and in fact often writes about her as though she were a character in a novel. There is little sense of any identification with his mothers' (or sisters' for that matter) suffering and makes reference to her belief that it was God that made her so strong[10]. He writes about her only as the archetypal ethnic female (mother) stereotype and he persists with this image of her when giving this account - my strong, patient mother was tough in the clutch. Seven of her fourteen children had died in her arms. No, no panic in her when faced with pain or death. Nor

[10] Frank Capra, *The Name Above The Title*, (New York, Da Capo Press, 1988). P11

did she run to doctors[11]. The obvious resonance's with the long suffering Virgin Mary later appears in some of Capra's own depiction of women in his films, and is a theme that he constantly seems to refer to in his autobiography. It is a typical worshipping of the mother by the Mediterranean (and obviously not just the Mediterranean) son. This is then continued in their relationship to their wives as is evident in the lives and works of all other (male) Italian-American film directors such as Scorsese and Coppola and to a different extent, in the work of Capra.

Much of Capra's work focuses on the *Mr* in the script going out into the world and sorting out its wrongs. (*Mr. Deeds*, *Mr. Lincoln* and *Mr. Smith*, whilst not counting *Mr. John Doe* and the main Mr. protagonist in *It's A Wonderful Life*). He gives a detailed attention to these men and their maturity and this is of interest to me because of their populist dimension. Audiences are swept into identification with this underdog who turns into a 'hero' by the point of conclusion of the narrative. Unlike Scorsese's men, Capra's protagonists are rarely glamorous, they are men of the people, and fighting for a cause they believe in. What makes Gary Cooper the hero in *Meet John Doe* is the populist notion of goodness and proper (meaning American) behaviour. Capra's male protagonist is usually young, naive but likeable, however as Gehring argues in *Populism and the Capra Legacy* (1995), America has an ongoing, insatiable appetite for flesh-and-blood idols[12].

I am also interested in the idea of Capra's construct of the (cinematic) male hero as being the alter ego of the director himself. He wrote rather confidently about himself as being seen as the hero of the family y and as "the family hope for fame and success". (autobiography) This strong sense of self worth is recognisable in the male characterisation that Capra went on to create in Clark Gable. There is much of the stereotypical cool, charming, self-confident 'Romeo' in the film *It Happened One Night*(1934) when Clark Gable is begrudgingly dividing a room in order to create a make shift bedroom with two single beds, one for himself and the other for his co-star, Claudette Colbert. It is interesting to note that Capra thought this to be the only performance that Gable had given where he was allowed to play himself. .... *The fun-loving, boyish, attractive, he-man rogue, that was the real Gable*[13]. In another male characterisation, Gary Cooper in *Meet John Doe*, offers us both innocence and wisdom as though they always belonged together in the same characterisation and masculinity type.

In this Caprian world, this passionate and stereotypical, the good Catholic boy parallels 'Romeo'. He knew that what he would like to do and what he had to do were two different things. The sinner and the saint cross paths with each other in Capra's male protagonists and they emerge as the likeable friend, one always hoped existed (out there in the cinema world and inside the emotional make up of the spectator.) Likeable and with a sense of humour, this hero had paid his

[11] Ibid, P12.
[12] Ibid, P72.
[13] Ibid, P170

dues and deserved recognition from his community, from both within the frame and outside it. Although cinema history has overwhelmingly discussed Frank Capra within the terms of being the genre director of screwball comedies, Capra was in fact using humour to mask and diffuse the immigrant struggle and pain. *The archetypal author of the populist film comedy is Frank Capra, whose key works fully showcase cracker-barrel Yankee American humour*[14].

He used the defensive strategy of humour to hide behind, whilst grappling with a mixture of strong denial (of his heritage) and confusion. It is within this denial that I feel that Capra's work speaks so visually of the immigrants' losses and gains. Through Capra's insistently repetitive *all-American* good guy, with no trace of ethnic roots that are personal to his own, perhaps he reveals more than he intends. The young, and naive male protagonist in Capra's films forever acts out (literally) an idealised behaviour and is rewarded by being well liked and followed. This is akin to the admirable behaviour (for example standing up to corruption) of the peasant in Sicily being rewarded by recognition and full respect within the community. The importance given to this characteristic within male behaviour in Capra's work is comparable to the importance given to the up keep of this mentality within Sicilian culture, both historically and in the contemporary. Ones family honour is upheld through one's behaviour within the community and certain acts are valued above all others. How one is perceived amongst this community is of paramount importance as ones sense of identity comes from what other members of that community thinks of you (and by implication your family). Capra explores the malleability of the masses (the community) and their ignorance and he reproduces the centrality and influence of mass appeal (consensus) in his characters. He carefully recreated this notion in his works and gives the idea of community a central place in the stories that he wishes to tell. In his autobiography[15], he candidly wrote - *My films had to say something. And whatever they said had to come from those ideas inside me that were hurting to come out.* The closest Capra came to explaining his ethnic social vision were his ideas of production and comedy. Traced back to their origins in the Italian family, these ideas were the basis of Capra's filming[16].

The Party politics that Capra deals with in films such as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and *Meet John Doe* (1941) is quite in keeping with the *cracker-barrel Yankee* often referred to in film history. The key elements that allow Capra's heroes to belong under this category are the characters' political involvement, a small town mentality and home, they also had to be in paid employment and had to have fatherly leadership. It is interesting that Capra's work still seems rebellious and even courageous compared to the work of any contemporary Italian-American directors who never deal so explicitly with any aspect of Party politics. This is without

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[14] Jim Leach in *The Screwball Comedy*, in *Film Genre: Theory and Criticism*, ed Barry K. Grant, Scarecrow Press, 1977. P75
[15] Frank Capra, *The Name Above The Title*, (New York, Da Capo Press, 1988)
[16] Lee Lourdeaux, *Italian and Irish Filmmakers in America*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1990) P132

discounting Coppola's Vietnam filmic works, and the obvious references and scenes to corrupt politicians, there is perhaps a very brief appearance of overt Party politics in *The Godfather*[17], when the Michael Corleone Godfather, played by Al Pacino is driving through the Cuban uprisings of the 1970's. This piece of the narrative simply as images that Coppola thought useful to the causal plot detail, as no commentary is offered as to what is going on, and *The Godfather* cruises through untroubled by what he (we) witness. To a certain extent this scene can be read as exhibiting a version of reverse exoticm. Whilst contemporary directors such as Scorsese, Coppola and Ferrarra and to a different extent De Palma, are prepared to be personally political, they tend to keep Party political references out of their frames. Minghella, rather distinguishingly manages to exclude any overt references to both issues from his work despite the obvious Second World War backdrop to *The English Patient*[18].

Capra's critics have written about his films in such a way that denotes an apparent ease with the idea of the director *becoming American and underestimated the complexity of surface assimilation in his works*[19]. He only ever used WASP, blonde American female actresses and all-American male actors in his major works. On some level this could add to a superficial understanding of his work and its lacking of any ethnic (personal) dimension. However, his films still connote an *Italianess* within them for me. The identifications that Capra makes possible operate on multi levels and this is exemplified by the appreciation his work was given by both ethnic and American (Anglo-Protestants) audiences. His earliest works[20] repeated clear themes that were pertinent to the Italian-immigrants' sense of self and which I will identify as being part of the ingredients that help to give Capra's work its Italian sensibility.

These films dealt with the battle between the powerless and the powerful (the general public versus the ruling classes, or his factory worker parents versus their factory owner) and this was sometimes illustrated by an authoritative person or an aristocratic family within the heart of the narrative. Capra would include the WASP; (often) blonde American female who worshipped money, status and success above all else and she would be in unison with a likeable but naive man. This female protagonist would represent Capra's own ambiguity towards his family background and about assimilation. She would have the ideals that Capra's own mother and sisters would espouse and at the same time she would incarnate his own fantasy about the *American women and immigrant sons* escaping from their oppressive familial links through relationships (marriage) with one of these women.

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[17] *The Godfather*, Part Two, 1974. *The Godfather*, Part One was released two years earlier, in 1972.

[18] This idea is more fully developed later on in this chapter.

[19] Lee Lourdeaux, Italian and Irish Filmmakers in America, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1990)

[20] Those films made before 1936.

It is important to note here that Capra writes so little about his own family's' personal life, although he does reveal that his first wife was a WASP American. In these pre-1936 films, strong individualism would be paralleled along side community spirit and family ideals. Despite the male protagonists' own nativity and the inexperience within his life, he was the over-riding influence in these women's lives. The married couple would act out the (the typical of its time and still continuing in Sicily) emotional (woman) mother, with the emotionally absent (man) father scenario. Capra would write about this being his own parents' relationship. Seemingly opposing beliefs within the public and private are exposed to highlight the contradictions faced by WASP consciousness and Catholic (Italian) values.

In the same way that Capra's *Ladies Who Lunch* (1930), made Barbara Stanwyck a star, *Platinum Blonde* (1931) made Jean Harlow a star and is typical of Capra's films from this period. Stew Smith (Robert Williams) a newspaper journalist, marries Ann Schuyler, a young socialite (Jean Harlow) despite the knowledge that his colleague Gallagher (Loretta Young) is in love with him. His newspaper editor professes his future and concludes that he will become *a rich wife's magnolia - a bird in a gilded cage.* Smith quickly gets very bored and lonely by his new wife's friends, the excessive lifestyle, and the enormous lavish house and is further isolated by writing from home. Conversely, his in-laws are horrified by his friends and demeaning about his newspaper activities.

During one pivotal scene, Mrs. Schuyler is belittling of his verbal skills in a newspaper article where he is quoted as saying, *I wear the pants, and her shocked reaction is: Pants! Not even trousers!.* The Schuylers are further scandalised about the fact that Gallagher (his ex-newspaper colleague) is now working for him in his marital house. In an amusing passionate attempt at illustrating his defiance of all that they stand for, he walks out of the house together with Gallagher. This leads to Smith divorcing from his wife and the Schuyler family, and inevitably the concluding component of the narrative sees him directing his affections towards Gallagher. Smith neatly acts out the power struggle between the ruling classes and the powerless, whilst at the start of the film also being the likeable but naive male stepping into the web of the money and status obsessed Ann (Jean Harlow).

A comparable narrative is imaged in *It Happened One Night ht* (1936). Peter Warne, (Clark Gable) a journalist on a bus journey from Miami to New York, meets and falls in love with an upper class woman. Ellie Andrews (Claudette Colbert) is attempting to run away from her rich, oppressive family who had been holding her against her will in order to convince her to marry a man they deemed suitable. He recognises her through her picture in the newspaper and convinces her to let him write a diary of her day-to-day movements on the run, and in return he will ensure that she is not recognised and caught by the authorities. Much of the humour that this story provides is

centred around the class differences that are apparent and explored during their journey together and in one scene Warne teaches Andrews how to dunk her doughnuts into her tea. Capra teases the WASP American worldview and pitches it immediately against a different (and often colliding) perspective. Human kindness is credited far more highly than the trappings of success and privilege. The limitations of the latter are constantly illustrated and mocked. Capra's own distaste of the immigrants' obsession of wealth (and power) is clearly echoed in these works. In another scene, caught in a rainstorm, the couple are forced to share a room to sleep in, divided by only a blanket hung by a cord; Warne teases the innocent Andrews unmercifully. He is un-impressed by her privileged background and amused by her inability to see beyond her own expectations and her strong sense of individualism. She softens during their time together and gives way to his frank and prosaic personality. His initial teasing develops into something more meaningful and by the conclusion of the narrative, Andrews' family give in to her wishes and she is finally allowed to marry the man of her choice. Andrews spoilt persona and ignorance of the harshness of life is harmonised by Warns' level-headed protective manliness. Capra points towards the shared connections between the two of them, whilst at the same time illustrating their world (cultural and ethnic) differences.

These narrative fixtures have been critically interpreted as representing an idealism and a sentimentality about America and have located Capra as being part of the Anglo-American Romantic tradition which would also include writers such as Faulkner and Mailer. Raymond Carney, align Capra to this tradition without taking into consideration his Italian-American history that therefore presents a misreading of his work or at least a reading that is partly superficial[21]. Capra deals with sentiments but does not sentimentalise America (or Italy), on the contrary, personal self-sacrifice and struggle is embedded within his entire filimic history. Capra's own personal struggle to understand how cultural differences between Italy to America had helped to shape his sense of identity was accumulated through this visual imagery. His family's own self-sacrifice through the immigrant legacy is documented in his work and has left us with a social-historical voice into that experience. Capra used satire and comedy as the emotional tool through which he could discuss these issues. However, films that come under the comedy genre in film history, like Capra's screwball comedies can be easily dismissed as not containing anything serious or important within them. This era of Capra's work acts as a testament to the social-historical complexities that make up ethnic interior and exterior spaces.

His later works (post 1936) were maturing developments of these established themes. In critically evaluating this body of work, Lourdeaux claims that Capra grouped his key figures in 1936 to define the core conflict of his hyphenated immigrant identity, a conflict between a young

[21] Raymond Carney, *American Vision; The Films of Frank Capra* (New York, New York University Press, 1986).

couple with implicitly Italian values and avaricious members of the WASP ruling class[22]. Through a re-working of the original play by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's, *You Can't Take it With You*, (1938) Capra has the central protagonist of the unconventional Italianate grandfather, Vanderhof (Lionel Barrymore) being pitched against the rich and ruthless WASP banker, Kirby ((Edward Arnold). Lourdeaux sees the grandfathers' portrayal as being that of "the ideal Italian mediator for community" and certainly this manifests itself in the way that he influences his granddaughters' relationship with Kirby's son Tony (James Stewart) and in turn this influence changes the way that the other conflicts are managed in the narrative by the conclusion of the film.

The Vanderhofs' differences as a familial group make identification with them more possible (and not only from an immigrants' perspective) when compared to the dull conventionality that the Kerby's represent. At the closing few frames of the film, and with both sets of families around the dinner table, Grandpa Vanderhof speaks the words from the title of the film, "*You can't take it with you! The only thing that you can take with you is the love of your friends.*" The old, kind patriarch attempts to pass on his wisdom and critiques the (New York) wealth obsessed cultural norm. Capra used this critique as his way of verbalising a way of life that (Italian-American) immigrants had stepped into and learnt to worship and hence the grandfather acts as a symbol of a different possibility. Grandpa Vanderhof is a marker to both WASP and immigrant communities that the striving for wealth and success is a debilitating and unworthy pursuit - the love of your friends and family should be given more value. As Capra said in his autobiography, "An honest man will reach deep down into his God given resources and come up with the necessary handful of courage, wit, and love to triumph over his environment". The words "You Can't Take It With You" act as the English translation of a linguistic expression used by immigrants during their most despairing moments, and one that is still in common usage amongst both American and British Italians. "Managia a le soldi e cu li stira, cama fare ci l'amo aportare cu noi"? "You can't take it with you, as the spoken expression would be (and still is) countered by "Without money there is no bread." ("Senza soldi non ce' pane") - they were the two worlds that Capra's works portrayed.

Capra's *Its A Wonderful Life* (1946), his most uplifting and American's most famous (ethnic) Christmas story, deals with ethnicity and cultural identity in a way that marks this film his most personal work made. He represents what we originally perceive as being known filmic cultural stereotypes, but as the narrative progresses we see these characterisations develop into something else - something more than just stereotype. WASP fears about Italian and Irish identities are established in a way that makes them recognisable (reference to garlic eaters, drunk Irish) and it is only during the course of the narrative that we see the fundamental changes in them as people. The film problematises perceived ideas about the sum that makes up the part

[22] Lee Lourdeaux, *Italian and Irish Filmmakers in America* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1990). P143

of people's sense of selves and offers up an alternative perspective. It is interesting to question how we might account for the huge popularity, in both America and Britain that this film enjoyed. It touches on our insecurities as people and the fact that it is love, myths, memories and mementoes that give us a sense of who we are in the (immigrant) world.

In Anthony Minghella's *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1991) and *The English Patient*[23] (1997) there are many parallels in relation to Englishness racial identity and with the work of Capra. Minghella is a third generation Italian whose parents owned restaurants/cafes and became ice-cream manufacturers. He grew up in Ryde in the Isle of Wight and attended Hull University as a student and then taught medieval drama and European history there. Whilst a lecturer at Hull University, Minghella made his first film that was about his own family in the Isle of Wight and certainly all of his early television, radio and theatrical productions had direct autobiographical content. Minghella has spoken about his family being the mainspring of his being and creativity[24] and of his parents he has said "they have worked together every single day of their married lives and they have a wonderful, wonderful marriage. Their marriage is a phenomenon really." His first television drama series What If It's Raining (screened on Channel 4 in 1986) was about the traumatic break-up of his first marriage. His observations into his own family have continuously reoccurred in his main feature films and in an interview that he gave he spoke openly about always feeling an outsider[25]. Both *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1991) and *The English Patient* (1997) are highly emotional films that capture the essence and the significant minor details that occur in relationships between people. Both films deal with the potency of love between human beings and with the bearing that this has on ones sense of self-identity.

In *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1991), the film that transformed Minghella into an internationally known film director, Nina (a part specifically written for the actress, Juliet Stevenson) has to confront her grief at the loss of her partner Jamie (played by Alan Rickman). This confrontation becomes literal when Nina visualised her partner who 'comes back to life' to haunt her and in order to help her deal with her loss of him. Her inability to let him go is painfully re-enacted in his claustrophobic presence and their love affair is grounded in both the real and the imagined. Minghella talks about his own home life as a child as being claustrophobic[26] and this atmosphere is certainly recreated in this film. Nina's sobs are for what has been lost and for what has been gained. She has to learn how to live her life without Jamie but she is granted this additional time with his (whilst dead) in order to be able to accommodate her self both physically and emotionally to being without him. Minghella focuses a mirror at how this couple lived (and live) their lives and

[23] This film was based on the novel, *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje, which won the Booker Prize in 1992.
[24] Personal interview conducted with Anthony Minghella in London, 2001.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Observer. 10/10/93. This description of childhood claustrophobia is also discussed during with Minghella during our interview together in London, 2001.

the pain that they both carried with them in both life and in death. He speaks about his own sense of never feeling that he belonged, of feeling an outsider[27]. Indeed the location of the middle class North London, Highgate suburb where *Truly Madly Deeply* is set is very close to Minghella's own home. His identification with the mores and worldview of both Nina and Jamie is such that it is not too dissimilar to his own lifestyle. This begs the question for me of what might it acutely mean to seemingly 'belong whilst 'not belonging'? What can it mean for Minghella to be 'at home in north London but never 'at home' emotionally? Minghella has talked about *the tears of the world are a constant quantity. When one starts, somebody else stops. That has always excited me as a dramatist*[28].

Nina (Stevenson) acts out the typical Italianate, but particularly Southern Italianate (and Catholic) superstition that the dead never really die but form part of and influence our lives for ever more. The greatest importance is placed on the dreams that include those that have been grieved over, and each dream has a very specific meaning attached to it. The dead enter our night worlds in order to inform us about our day worlds. Their influence is paramount and their respect to be courted through daily prayer there after. Many a story telling has its roots in the potency of the dream and the accuracy of the information imparted. Women pass on old superstition rituals between each other. These rituals can easily be mocked by contemporary ideas but can none-the-less, actually determine physical results on demand. These rituals and customs are very much kept alive in immigrant Italian communities (as well as in contemporary Italy) and most certainly are known of by Italian immigrants in the Isle of Wight.

Nina (Stevenson) acts as the emotional vessel with liquid being released from her tears, her nose and her mouth. Her cries are sobbed out alone and in company and echo the mourning period witnessed and experienced by one's friends and family when a loved one dies in the Italian community and in (Southern) Italy. The women form the space that is occupied in the immediate days preceding the death when they act out the physical sobbing. The men form the quietness of an adjoining room and the space that they occupy has to be separate from the wailing to be heard near by. Close friends and family visit these spaces to pay their respects and to listen to this wailing - different periods of days are given to this display of emotion depending on the hierarchy within the family of the person that has died. The front door is left continuously open and a black symbol (perhaps on the door) is left to mark the openness of this wailing and of the mourning ritual. Visitors are invited to be acknowledged, then either take part in this emotion or be a witness to it. This painful if unaccustomed, display of high emotion is to be expected within the community- silent (dignity) is only expected of the men.

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[27] During our discussion together, Minghella goes into some detail about how he understood his childhood and the sense of isolation he felt from English life, as being a paramount aspect of being the child of Italian immigrants. London, 2001.
[28] The Independent, 6, March. 1998

Nina (Stevenson) is allowed to have Jamie (Rickman) in her life for the amount of time it takes her to tell him all the things that she did not have time to say due to his sudden and unexpected death. She is given time to savour his presence for what she must recognise as the last time in her lived life and she is able to accommodate his death in her life, in his own presence. In some ways this is a film that is about the importance of friendship and how identities can bind together to form something new, She is forced to live an unexpected emotional independence and the audience is invited to share in both the pain and the joy of her life. Minghella said at the time that he was interested in telling the stories (about London) that never get told[29]. Certainly there is a very strong sense of place in the film and in Nina's relationship to her home. She has to re learn how to mend things that break down that Jamie (Rickman) would previously have dealt with and she has t deal with the rat that awakes her in the middle of the night.

Whilst considering *The English Patient*, Minghella said, *I'm slightly ashamed of the fact that I read Michael's book and recognised the sensibility. I felt recognition, discovering a fellow traveller*[30]. Indeed Ondaatje has talked about wanting to make an *anti-war book* in *The English Patent* and has talked about how his own family's personal escape from Sri Lanka's expected attack by the Japanese[31]. Minghella made some distinct changes in his script of the book and Ondaatje (although in close collaboration) said, *the script had to be something new...its not my story anymore. It's Anthony's version but on a grand scale*[32]. The book has five different narrative points of view, with an observer and then four different characters' perspectives, but with very little dialogue. The narrative takes place across four different continents and moves backwards and forwards in time between 1930 and 1950. So indeed, Minghella's first task was *to find a narrative line on which to hang his film*[33]. He then had to decide which aspects of the book to include and which to exclude, together with this he had to (re)create a narrative that would make sense from the written page and onto the (visual) screen. I will explore some of Minghella's important omissions and additions to *The English Patient* before I go onto discuss the film as a critical text.

From the outset Minghella decided to use the doomed love story between Count Ladislaus de Almasy (Ralph Fiennes) and Katharine Clifton (Kristin Scott-Thomas) as the main focus of his films' narrative. This is different to the book in that Katherine does not appear in the narrative until quite late and towards the end of the narrative, the reverse of the film happens in the book and Kit and Hana (the nurse) form a more central romance. The film is divided in its time frame

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[29] Own personal interview with Anthony Minghella conducted in London, 2001
[30] The Independent, 11, March 1997.
[31] Ondaatje discussed this during the course of various newspaper interviews, including Evening Standard, 11/1/1996.
[32] The Independent 11, March, 1997
[33] Creative Screenwriting, Vol 4, 1997.

between the dying and scared (monosyllabic) Count Almasy in the Italian villa and the desert cartographer (monosyllabic) Count Almasy. He acts as the main protagonist in the film and he opens the film when his plane is shot down over the desert. The Kip and Hana romance operates within the Italian villa time frame whilst the Caravaggio character keeps the two time frames and their narratives inter-connected. It is between these two joining worlds that Minghella is able to create the context for his reworking of Ondaatje's book. The dying and burnt Count Almasy is used as a metaphor for the whole narrative and also for all the main characters contained within it. His body is the cipher through which every possible human emotion is played out and his scaring and ultimate death acts as a pained apology for *the fundamental tragedy of war as a historic force*[34].

Caravaggio, the angered Canadian pours his frustration into the dying Count Almasy and is his visual reminder of the things that he would prefer to forget, or at least pretend to have forgotten. His tortured limbs that stand in for hands force his inability to forget his past, as does his addiction to the injection of morphine. The Germans tortured him and (due to their belief that he was in fact a spy) had his thumbs cut off, and he in turn attempts to torture the English patient with his (visual) stories and memories. In the book he believes that it was Count Almasy that had killed both Katharine and Geoffrey Clifton, but he is corrected. Hana is the listener to everybody else's stories and her own is left unsaid. What we learn about her is through whisper and sobbing and through her love affair with Kip the Sikh bomb demolition expert. Overwhelmingly, what we learn about her is through her relationship to the men in her life, both her father and her fiancé had died in the war in Italy. Whilst in the villa in Italy, (1944) she tells her (dying) patient, "I must be cursed. Anybody who loves me, anybody who loves me...(dies). I must be cursed." She continuously saves lives whilst her lover, Kip is forever risking his. In the book, the narrative perspectives keep changing although Kip, Hana and Caravaggio tend to dominate the first half of it and the latter half is dominated by Kip and Count Almasy. In the first half of the book, Count Almasy is a mysterious figure and remains one until much later on in the book. We learn much more about Kip than we ever do in the film. In the book we learn about his Sikh community and village life and he shares his memories about his bomb demolition training in England.

In Minghella's script distinct continents divide the characters and they move backwards and forwards between North Africa and Italy. In Italy we see only Hana, Kip and Count Almasy and in the North African sequences we only see Count Almasy, Katherine and Geoffrey Clifton (who is later discovered to be a British spy) and the team of desert explorers. In the original script we do not meet Caravaggio until much later. Minghella's main narrative invention is the sandstorm that allows the romance between (Mrs.) Katharine Clifton and Count Almasy to develop, however,

[34] Creative Screenwriting, Volume 4, 1997.

we learn very little in the book about how the romance is initiated and by whom. The couple are forced to retreat into the disused broken truck car to shelter themselves from the sand and wind and Count Almasy tells her the Arabic names for different types of winds. Before this sandstorm we witness the beginnings of their mutual attraction and it is their survival of the sandstorm that leads to the subsequent development of their love affair.

Since this love affair is the centrepiece of the film, Minghella had to involve the audience in their dilemma, to portray the sense of passion that overwhelms their reason. It gives the script a powerful undercurrent in which their good intentions are played out against their deceptive behaviour[35]. In Ondaatje's book we do not know how Katharine's husband Geoffrey finds out about her affair but in Minghella's film he decides to surprise her on their first wedding anniversary by pretending to be working away from where they live for a few days. As he returns to see her unannounced, he sees Katharine leaving their home and over hears her telling the cab driver to take her to the hotel (where she is secretly meeting Count Almasy,) safe in the knowledge that her husband is away for the night. Geoffrey spends all night crying outside their home, and he waits until the morning when he sees his wife hurriedly returning to and entering their building. Overnight in his car he drinks what was to be their celebratory champagne on his own, whilst cutting love hearts into the tissue paper that he had bought his wife as a symbol of their first anniversary together, and we, the audience are invited to share in the pathos of this scene. In the Ondaatje's book, Caravaggio claims that the British Intelligence officers all knew about the affair although this is never made clear in the film. However, whilst in bed and clearly amused by the idea, Count Almasy tells Katharine that Maddox (the head of the British Intelligence Unit and who later commits suicide) might suspect of their affair, *he keeps talking about Anna Karenina. I think it's his idea of a man to man chat!* Count Almasy's arrest by the British army in their belief that he is a spy and all that follows from here on give the film script and the book similar narrative contents. The book's racism is not overtly dealt with in the film script however and it is something that is more implied than discussed.

In *The English Patient*, the importance that is placed on Hana's own identification with mementoes is explored very early on in the film when she is prepared to walk right onto a land mine in order to retrieve her dead friends bracelet. She wanted to keep a memory of her friend and fellow nurse that was killed in the car just in front of her own as it rode over a land mine. Hana's own potential death is echoed in her determination to retrieve the bracelet. She is prepared to stay alone to look after her dying patient whilst the others head for *Lake Horn* (Livorno in Italy) and she reinvents the abandoned villa into becoming a vibrant living home. She plants new vegetation and feeds Count Almasy the plums from the garden,..*it's a very plum, plum*, he says to her whilst she is feeding him. Her youthfulness and strength is constantly apparent to us, from when she

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[35] Creative Screenwriting, Volume 4, 1997.

decides to cut her long hair herself and when she plays hopscotch alone in the villas' grounds as her patient sleeps. When her patient comments on the absurdity of how much happier she is since the fellow Canadian, Caravaggio, has arrived at the villa she replies that where you are from is important and echoes all immigrant experiences upon meeting somebody from the same country as oneself.

I would like to move on to looking at Minghella's treatment of racial identity within the film by focusing on Kip's relationship with Hana, and his relationship to the other characters in the film. I will then look at Count Almasy's relationship to Katharine and in turn, his relationship to the other characters in the narrative. The first time that we meet Kip we see him at work as a bomb demolition expert, a curious profession made more interesting by the fact that it is done by a Sikh male. This is a rare vision in cinematic history and one that is a refreshing representation due to its uniqueness. Hana's feelings for him are made evident before we know them to be reciprocated. He remembers that he has met her before (during the bracelet incident), but she pretends that this is not possible. When Kip (re)discovers her playing the piano in the villa and she tells Count Almasy that she will probably marry Kip, since her mother always told her that she would summon her husband by playing the piano. Here the power of familial folklore is mixed with fantasy and intended desire and this is repeated when later on Hana goes to give Kip a cup of olive oil for his hair. *Is this for my hair?* he asks her unaware of what to do with the oil. She spontaneously decides to give him the cup full of oil after she watches him from the villa window, washing his long hair, and we the viewers are also forced to become voyeurs in this act of intimacy and see his wet hair untied from his turban. This simple gesture on Hana's part symbolises both the feminine and the cultural, but is mostly erotic. This white Canadian nurse attempts flirtation towards a male colonised Sikh bomb demolition expert and the moment is made further compelling due to the simplicity of the act. The olive oil will moisten the condition of the hair and make it more malleable, their developing relationship moves from the shy unknowing to the reciprocated desire. *The heart is an organ of fire.* The poignancy of Hana's own relationship with Kip is felt when she reads out these words that her patient had written on the wrapper of a Christmas cracker that he had kept as a memento of his lover. Hana acts as the narrator to her own doomed relationship as well as that of her dying patients'.

Read me to sleep, asks Count Almasy to Hana (in the very final moments before he dies). Hana tells Count Almasy that, like her, he is in love with ghosts. At the end of the film it is Hana voice that we hear, as she is reading out Katharine's final written words to her lover, the English patient, Count Almasy. The images of Hana reading to her dying patient are intercut with images of Katharine's final moments before she also dies. *She died because of me. She died because I had the wrong name*, Count Almasy tells Caravaggio echoing a million other wars between worlds and people. Here Minghella skilfully conveys ones sense of difference

and how this can be experienced through ones personal name and other's relationship to it. The narrative functions in such a way that we are forced to question our own identification with location, one's country, and one's home. After being assumed to be a spy by the British, Count Almsay is returned to them in Italy. *Isn't it funny, after all that, I became English*, he exclaims, in a spoken sentence that secures irony but known collusion on the part of any British immigrant. His characterisation serves to problematise what it means to be English and at what point this identity is conspired into being and existing. This theme of the potency of words and names is repeated through out the film and Minghella uses it as a device that records the characters own relationship to history and the power of memory within history.

We witness the gift of the sewing thimble (it was sold full of saffron from the market) that Katharine wears around her neck and see it as a reminder of Count Almasy. As spectators, we can formulate an understanding between the object, the thimble and Katharine's will to be loved through wearing the thimble. She tells him that she has always worn it because she has always loved him and much later when he attempts to sew her torn dress she tells him that women should never learn to sew, as it will become their skill to be oppressed by. This idea is contradicted when we see Hana sewing out of necessity in the villa. Again these images act as constant reminders of the wondering immigrant whose mementoes from *back home* are worn or kept safe as solid proof of ones roots. The metaphor of sewing as potentially oppressive and yet a much needed (creative) skill is also one that most women from different ethnic groups will recognise. This is a skill that has been transported for centuries across different continents and has been an indicator of a woman's maturity through the ownership and completion of a dowry. It has also often been the important bread earning attribute in immigrant families lives and has been well documented in the work of Roger D. Waldinger[36].

You can't kill me, I died years ago, Count Almasy tells Caravaggio referring to Katharine's death and at the same time to what else is lost in oneself through any period of mourning. Loss is tarnished with gain and the immigrant's lived experience will suffer this tarnish in its many varied forms forever more. Minghella deals with the contradictions of human experience and movement and how we protect ourselves from any additional pain, through his characterisation of the English patient. Count Almasy tells Katharine that he hates ownership and that she should forget him as soon as they (attempt to) physically end their affair. Minghella has his audience collude in this impossibility whilst wishing it if only to stop his obvious suffering at the parting. On the contrary, the pain that is felt in and of her absence proceeds in being much greater. Le Goff has written

[36] Roger D. Waldinger, *Through the Eye of the Needle: Immigrants and Enterprise in New York's Garment Trades*, (New York: New York University Press, 1986)

that memory is the raw material of history[37] and it is in the English patient's relationship to both his history and his memory of this history, that we are forced to question our own histories.

We're the real countries, not the boundaries drawn on maps with the names of powerful men. An earth without maps... wrote Katharine in her lovers' notebook in her final dying moments and before her torch light flickers itself off. The detailed accumulations of elements make up our memories and identities and Katharine's final written thoughts act as visual illustrators to her lovers' anguish (and our own). Hana's narration of these thoughts, to her dying patient, provides us with an understanding of the death of something loved and real and further complicates the (emotional) value of the notebook. It was the object that Count Almasy carried with him during all of his travels and acted as a visual diary and written record of his journeys. He leaves this much loved possession with the dying Katharine's as proof to her of his intention to return with hospital aid. Indeed before they begin their affair she offers to give him some drawings to put into his 'scrapbook' and he initially declines the offers telling her the drawings were "*too good*" for his book. It is this notebook that gives Hana an insight into her patient when she looks through it with him at the villa. Small photographs of him as a child and of other loved ones contextualises her patient and gives both her and (the audience) a sense of the life that is nearly ending in front of her (our) eyes. Minghella has Hana continue to read Katharine's words on the notebook to Count Almasy, as the film draws to an end, *the light's gone out, I'm writing in darkness* and these final images (both spoken and seen) leave us alone and with our thoughts also.

In conclusion, both Capra and Minghella have created visual works that seem to locate them as critics of the countries that they live in. Capra appears to be critical of the American (dream), success ridden culture in which he grew up in and similarly, Minghella is picturing the narrow constraints of what it might mean to be English. However, after closer and more detailed analysis it is possible to see in their works an exploration of ethnicity together with questions of cultural and sexual identity rising to the surface. Both directors have visualised their own experience of transience and cultural diversity into their filmic works and produced visual histories of self-identity, which are similar to the works of Scorsese and Coppola. What I initially found to be both problematic and personally disappointing in their work, and quite unlike other (predominantly American film directors that I have discussed in other chapters), was their lack of any overt references to Italianicity. Although Capra has a much larger chronology of film making than Minghella, they can be located within comparable points in their treatment of this subject matter, even though Capra was working and living in America and Minghella is living in England and working in both England and America. Capra's childhood poverty seems to be prevalent in his work in much the same way as Minghella's relative privilege is in his works. Both directors are sensitive when dealing with differing components that have made up their families' histories and they do

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[37] Le Goff, *History and Memory*, (Columbia, Columbia University Press, 1996)

this with an acknowledgement of both the pains and joys that make up their fractured personalised perspectives of the world.

In their own words both directors talk about the influence of their (Italian) families and of growing up between two culturally different (and often opposing) worlds. Capra seem more comfortable in his *choice* of assimilation both in his own life and in his works whilst Minghella is still relatively youthful in this experience (both in age and in filimic output). Although I have not wanted to be drawn too much into an analysis of Catholicism as I do not feel that it is as relevant in these directors' works as others that I discuss in other chapters, a lot of the critical reception that both Capra and Minghella have been given does not hesitate to imprint this interpretation onto and into their works. In the critical reception of their works, both directors' suffer obvious stereotyping and amusing cross referencing as to who they are as host citizens of their respective countries, and are sighted as being an American and separately as an Italian director in the case of Capra or as an English director (sometimes of Italian parentage) in the case of Minghella. Often journalistic over sights such as two different writers for the same publication will refer to the same director as being either one nationality or another, but will be different to their colleges' choice of nationality. This gives some notion of the complexity of understanding that is needed to assess the inherent meanings of these *great works* and of the human beings that produced these 'great works'. Whilst locating a superficiality of integration in works such as *It's A Wonderful Life* (Capra, 1946) and *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (Minghella, 1991) this can avoid the more complicated (ethnic) involvement that the films actually portray.

Whilst American directors such as Scorsese and Copolla have chosen to celebrate their Italian heritage in ways that are more easily identifiable to their ethnic as well as non ethnic audience, Capra and Minghella have made an alternative choice. Both directors have tended to be quieter about their personal backgrounds and have seemed less comfortable in their works for having felt the need to be this quiet. This silence in relation to Italianicity in *The English Patient* (despite part of the narrative being set in Italy) makes the subject matter of Englishness all the more potent for me. As I have illustrated, Minghella's lived understanding of cultural identity is shown through the way that he chooses to visualise the diverse ethnic relationships in his narrative. As I have explored, similarly in the way that Capra forcibly pulls together such contrasting and to some extent clashing people in a film such as *It Happened One Night* (1934), highlights his own struggle with and lived reality of (cultural) difference. This attempt at *self-imposed* silence, as experienced by somebody who was an immigrant to America through poverty, at the turn of the century (Capra) is complex when pitched against the silence of a more privileged living *British* director (Minghella). I have tried to investigate some of this complexity through the similarities and differences in their filmic works, together with formulating an understanding of their clear contrast to other Italian directors that openly picture images of *Italians* such as Scorsese and

Coppola. In final conclusion, during this investigation, it has become apparent that the consummation of ethnicity and its potent exploration in the works of both Capra and Minghella is actually made more complicated by the fact that the works under scrutiny have been made by (male) immigrant Italian film directors.

What is made apparent in this case study is that the comparative methodology which takes the film product as its starting point can be a useful tool through which to understand some aspects of the role that films have to play in identity formation. Aspects of the auteur approach[38], although quite rightly now discredited, can be an interesting starting point in engaging with the complexities that are involved in the film production process as well as the more general issues of representation. Indeed, in their own words, both directors provide a useful framework for an entry point into their own sense of what they were creating and how their films had evolved. However, what is additionally made apparent here is the limitation of this approach. If one is to begin ones analysis with the cultural product, the film many potential dimensions are excluded. Overwhelmingly this approach does not allow for the dimension of experience that will go on to be explored in the second part of this thesis. Audience's experiences of the cultural form that is both the cinematic experience and the journey in between the before and the after time period that is fundamental to the impact that film can have on audiences lives. Minghella himself has acknowledged the complexities involved in the way that audiences participate in the cultural specifics that make up cinema viewing and has considered the importance of cinematic recalling. His own memories of the types of Italian films that he enjoyed watching conform to a standard notion of *Italian Neo-Realism* and *Italian Art Cinema*[39]. As has already been explored, cultural memory plays a significant role in his film work but to begin with the films that both Capra and Minghella have made reduces the possibilities for how those films are actually consumed. In the second part of this thesis cultural experience will be the starting point for the development of this analysis and the mode of investigation that follows will reverse the mode of analysis that has ensues in this chapter.

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[38] Auteur theory was popularised by the writers and filmmakers of the journal *Cahiers Du Cinema* in France and Andrew Sarris in America during the late 1950s and 1960s.
[39] This was discussed during the course of a personal interview in London, 2001.

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ASSIMILATION

In the western philosophical tradition, there is a pervasive prejudice against, and a deep fear of, any consideration of the individual as a category of our experience and knowledge. *What is individual or singular is always relegated to the level of idiosyncrasy, and thus, by definition, outside knowledge and theory*[1]. With this in mind, this chapter will address the notion of cultural assimilation through looking at the actual experiences of the diasporic Italian/British community members. As the previous chapter illustrates, the consumption of cultural expression comes out of a complex set of relationships between the focus of this expression and the actual experience of cultural formation. A variety of different aspects of this experience will be considered and both the historical and cultural markers of the Italian presence in Britain are considered throughout. Cultural stereotyping and its representation will be investigated alongside other mediated versions of the Italian diasporic experience in Britain. Throughout, this chapter will be formalised through an analysis of the narrativised journey of the second-generation Italian-British son and daughter.

What can assimilation mean when duality and fluidity are the realities of experience? A key question addressed in the writing of Stuart Hall,[2] is at what point does *other* 'become incorporated within the mainstream. In his writings, Hall has given emphasis to the ambivalent push and pull of loyalties involved in negotiating multiple identifications in becoming black and British[3]. The following chapter wishes to address some key questions in relation to cultural identity and more specifically cultural assimilation. How do notions of the mainstream or dominant culture in contemporary society impinge on the actual experience of the diasporic Italian community in Britain? Together with this, it is the aim of this chapter to challenge definitive notions of what assimilation can mean to the existing Italian community in England as well as what the implications are for them in the future. Of course, it is problematic to homogenise *the Italian community*, since, for example, the Italian community in London does have some different characteristics to the one in Bedford. Some of the differences between the various communities will be analysed by giving a brief historical account of their formation[4]. After this analysis,

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[1] *Language and the Female Subject* by Patrizia Violi in *Off Screen, Women and Film in Italy* (eds. Giuliana Bruno & Maria Nadotti, Routledge, 1988). P145.

[2] Hall's earlier writings used his own experience as a vehicle through which to explore issues of identity and new ethnicities. The opening up of this thinking by other academics is made evident in *Without Guarantees, In Honour of Stuart Hall* (eds), Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg and Angela McRobbie (London, Verso Press, 2000)

[3] *A Sociography of Diaspora*, Kobena Mercer, in *Without Guarantees, In Honour of Stuart Hall* (London, Verso Press, 2000), P236.

[4] Lucio Sponza, *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth Century Britain: Realities and Images (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1988)* gives a full account of the immigrant experience in the previous century, but I am looking at the post-war period and more specifically at the second and third generations' experience.

there will be a series of shorter interrelating writings that address cultural experience and assimilation from the perspective of the second-generation Italian-British.

The London Italian community is an older community than the one in Bedford[5] and for the purpose of this chapter I will refer to these two larger communities only. The post-war mass immigration from the South of Italy to England happened due to economic expansion on the part of England and this growth resulting in difficulty finding home grown labour. Together with this, the inefficient economic, political and social structure of southern agriculture, upon which most people were dependent[6], was in disarray and decline. The devastation of the second world war in Italy and particularly the South of Italy meant that there were many eligible (male) workers living in poverty and starvation and hence desperate for employment. The living conditions that they inhabited often meant that aspirant migrants were created and shaped from an early age. After the obligatory military service, they would register their names with the local employment ministry (Ministero di Lavoro) and wait for their name to be called for work[7]. They would stipulate that as well as anywhere within Italy, they would also like to be considered for employment abroad[8]. Many of the Southern Italians that emigrated during the early to mid-fifties were so grateful for the opportunity of a job that would enable themselves and their families to no longer starve that they were not always too concerned with the working conditions that they went on to encounter (in the mines, brick works, etc)[9].

The London Italian community has a different legacy from the Bedford one. This is mainly due to the fact that the London community is the first and older community (Glasgow has a comparable history) and so its formation is different. The majority of the Italians that emigrated from the nineteenth century went to live in the Clerkenwell/Holborn areas of London (there is still evidence of this in contemporary London - this is discussed in another chapter). As is made evident in the work of Sponza[10], the first generation would move to the same areas as their families and friends and the local Italian church acted as a social pull in deciding where one should live in London. The first generation of Italian immigrants were in fact the prisoners of war that stayed in England after the war and were soon to be joined by the mass group of immigrants in the 1950s. It is this group that I am most concerned with here as they went on to shape the contemporary Italian community in England. The community in London tends to represent different parts of Italy (although there is a large presence from Piacenza) where as the Bedford community is almost exclusively from the South of Italy. There is more diversification of labour in London - the catering, café, and restaurant industry forms a large part of the employment amongst Italians.

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[5] See Sponza
[6] Colpi, 1991
[7] *See Bicycle Thieves, de Sica, 1948*
[8] *" We were waiting for a job to go to, it did not matter where."* A.
[9] *" The work was hard but we didn't complain - how could we"?* A.
[10] Sponza, Lucio. Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth Century Britain: Realities and Images (1988)

The Bedford community's employment was and still is almost entirely made up of the Brickwork's for the men and neighbouring factories for the women (or other types of manual work such as cleaning or sewing work). It is probable that the communities outside of London experienced a different type of racism than those living in London (see case study) and stories of overt racism are more commonly heard in the Bedford community than the London one.

The 1950s saw the invention of the teenager and the youth culture movement in general. This gave rise to a level of affluence and independence that had not been seen before and hence free spending and leisure activities became more commonplace. People were eating out a lot more than they had previously done and the rise of the café culture went hand in hand with this newfound affluence. Customers made the consuming of coffee into a lifestyle and were tending to spend more and more time being seen in these cafes and making them a focal point of their lives. The proprietors soon realised that they could capitalise on this new lifestyle choice through introducing customers to new ways of spending their money whilst in the cafes. Through offering Italianate foods to accompany their coffees, customers had even more reason to spend their time (and money) in these cafes and the new form of trattoria style of restaurant was born in London[11]. Many of the Italians that came to London to join family that was already working within the catering area, came with their own ideas of the type of business that they wanted to set up.

The 1920 Aliens Order helped to maintain the flow of immigration and like the workers for The London Brickwork Factory,[12] potential workers could enter into Britain only if they had a work permit that had been issued to them by the Italian Ministry of Labour. The potential employer would request the work permit that they would then send on to the potential employee when received. The work permit allowed aliens to reside in Britain for four years in continuous employment and they were not allowed to change jobs during this period. They could also bring over any family only if they could guarantee their upkeep and provide a home for them to stay in. After four years (and as long as any change of address details had been given to the police, no other law had been broken and any request for a medical check up had been adhered to) these workers could be granted residence permission and be allowed to stay in Britain and to change employment. It was fairly common that workers that had not been granted a work permit to work within the catering arena would take on another type of job (usually agricultural or industrial) until the four-year period elapsed and then they would join the (family) business that had been their original intention.

Clear contact with the English public meant that the language skills of the Italians that worked within the catering industry tended and still tends to be higher than the Italians in the Bedford

[11] See Colpi
[12] This company was the single main employer of Italian men from the South of Italy and Sicily in particular, from the year 1951 -1960.

area who worked only amongst themselves in the factories and had little (if any) contact with English speakers. This coupled with the fact that many of the Italians that came to England in the 1950s had weak literacy skills (it was fairly common for them to have left formal schooling at about the age of nine and gone to work on the land in order to help their parents) made learning a new language rather difficult. It is still common that the level of spoken English can be poor but the level of reading skills is non-existent. Unlike their *home county* counter part, the Italians in London were exposed to vast cultural shifts in the 1950s London and this is often reflected in their acute knowledge of the workings of *business and entrepreneurship*. The citing of the restaurant and cafes in contemporary central London are testament to this, as are examples of more recent ventures such as the *Costa Coffee* café chains that were set up as recently as the 1980s and the current, continuous expansion of *Pizza Express* (which first appeared in the 1960s).

Overwhelmingly the Italians that immigrated to London would either have family there already or certainly immediately become part of the increasingly large network within the Italian community. This was not the case for the Italians that moved to the South East and more specifically into the *home county* areas in and around Bedford. They found themselves as fairly isolated figures that were called to form a new cultural landscape in an area of England that was neither welcoming nor helpful. They were strangers to themselves (it was unlikely that a Sicilian had ever met a Neapolitan before and so they did not understand one another's dialect[13]). More specifically despite some seventy men being (re)moved from one entire small town in Sicily and being (re)located within and around the same Bedford area, many of these Italians had never met each other before. The men had originally come to the Bedford area to work for the London Brick Company and after four years tended to stay in the same factory and so it was common that this unskilled labour would form their entire life's work. Many of the men worked in the same job, from the 1950s, and with this same employer, until the factory was closed down in 1984.

During and after the four years of employment the men would send money back to their family in the villages and small towns that they had left behind. It is important to note that before the men left their *homeland* they were all provided with a special and particular official document that would allow them to swiftly send this money back to Italy. Was this a cynical gesture on the part of a war torn Italy that had finally found a way of boosting their economy or was this a planned aid given the lack of literacy skills amongst the workers? Certainly it had always been the men's intention to either return when they had saved enough money (the money acted as help for the parents and younger siblings that had been left behind but also as a security deposit so that the men could afford to build themselves a home when they returned). Of course this illusion of *returning* was mixed with the reality of having found a paid job in a foreign land - something that looked less likely as a possibility in Italy as the four-year contract came up for

10. "***When we moved into Mrs Sienna's house we had trouble understanding each other, I'd never met anybody from Naples before***". J.

reviewed consideration on the part of the employee. Of the seventy men that left Aragona (a small town in Sicily, province of Agrigento) that went on to settle in the Bedford area (Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire) sixty-seven of them returned after the four years to marry a woman from the same town and brought her to Britain to live with them[14].

Prior to this the men had usually remained in the hostels[15]that they had been provided with when they first gained employment with The London Brick Company, or had rented rooms with each other or alone. The newly married couple would not only have to adjust to a life together but also to a life in a new country. The women did not speak English and were not used to travel outside of their town quite apart from foreign travel. Rarely had they ever had the need for a winter coat[16] but little could have prepared them for the fog and the dark nights in a country with even stranger habits and norms. Their manual labour was also a necessity and so they found themselves working outside of the house for the first times in their lives. The types of manual employment that they did tended to capitalise on their *home* skills of cooking, cleaning and sewing and hence they tended to be employed within local factories as general manual workers or cleaners, etc. All of this would aid the bigger plan of accumulating more money to send *back home*. This meant that their working life formed a central part of the couple's social life, and not having been used to going out in their home town their only socialising would be with each other or any *paesani*[17]that they may already have known (unlikely) or had recently met. This further alienated them from their new *home* and its language.

The women that joined their husbands and families in London from Italy would utilise the Italian church in Clerkenwell as a communal space through which to enhance their knowledge of the (new) local area and its members. They tended to learn English more rapidly than their counter parts in the Bedford area and though working very long and tiring hours in the family catering business had a degree of flexibility at work. To a certain degree they tended to be shielded from the overt racism faced by the community of Italians in Bedford and its surrounding area. The level of racism was often pitched within the actual working environment and the *guest workers* as they were often called within their factories, were at the mercy of bullies and bigots. They would often be discriminated against due to their lack of language (and hence spoken understanding) and their overall vulnerability in needing their job and not needing to be seen to be in any trouble or indeed to be seen as *the trouble.* Within the London community there was a definite level of

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[14] Women's experience here is discussed in another chapter. Case study of a Sicilian mle who married an English woman who learnt Sicilian dialect.

[15] These hostels were former army barracks.

[16] During the course of the various oral interviews amongst women from the Italian community in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire it became apparent to me that this first coat buying experience was something many of the women remembered as a marker of their integration into the English way of life. Additionally, it was soon revealed to me that it was unlikely that the previously unmarried daughter could have afforded a new coat before coming to England.

[17] The term used for a member of the Italian community in Britain that comes from the same region in Italy.

discrimination amongst the community itself and this could also be found in the Bedford community. For example it was not uncommon for a (Italian) restaurant owner to deduct a fee from their (Italian) employees salary for having got them their work permit and this *fee* being partly due to the fact that perhaps the employee was in fact Sicilian and not a real *paesan*[18]. It is still common today that Italian waiters in fashionable cafes will be hired at very cheap hourly rates (less than their English equivalent) due to their lack of skills in spoken English and their desperate need for a job[19]. *It is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other*[20]. The Bedford community tend to share stories of the discrimination that they faced [21]as both a release and nostalgia for the time when they had not yet realised what world they had entered into.

Many of the tales of racism will now reappear as folklore amongst the community and it is something that the second generation experience only in its more subtle form. Similar to the West Indian community that came to England at the same time, many of the Italians that tried to find accommodation were discriminated against due to their nationality (no foreigners allowed'[22]) or if they had children, or would be rented rooms under the most racist of conditions (food would often play a large part in this racism). This gave rise to a level of multiculturalism within the *home counties* (*whose home*?) that helped to shape a different kind of England and one that in the twenty-first century can be said to be taken for granted in some parts of London and the South East of England. Not only was it unlikely that a Sicilian had ever mixed with a Neapolitan, it was even less likely that they had ever met a West Indian before. Although London was already forming itself as a cultural melting pot for and of difference this had yet to happen in the Bedford area. Whilst this mass migration (although originally 2000 men from the South of Italy had been employed by the London Brick Company, this figure became 40,000 Italians by the mid 1980's) of Italians had taken place in the 1950s other communities were also moving into the area. The larger migration tended to be from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and these communities were attracted to the Bedford and Buckinghamshire area in general, due to the Vauxhall car factory in neighbouring Luton.

These communities began sharing a world that they were (unconsciously) helping to shape. They would respect each others values and beliefs and although they would rarely directly mix with

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[18] The term used to describe a member of the Italian community in Britain that came from the same region in Italy.

[19] "*I hire them cheaply and I get rid of them cheaply. I provide a service for them since when they leave me their English is better and they go onto a better-paid job. I get no end of offers to work here, nobody complains about their wages*". This café owner in Soho, London did not wish to be identified and was interviewed in his café in December 2000.

[20] Frantz *Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (London, Paladin, 1970)*

[21] "*I remember not being allowed to cook spaghetti because my landlady thought it made the house smell*". K.

[22] "*We would go knocking from house to house where we had been told accommodation was available. We would have the door closed in our face or told that the room was no longer available. We understood what they were saying, they did not want somebody that was not English staying with them*". K.

each other were often happy to accept one another as their children would play together and go to school together. Many of the religious values, although obviously diverse were similar in form. They tended to share the same differences and accept their similarities. Their common ground was their lack of belonging and an understanding of their newfound home. Together with this they tended to have a shared attitude to children, childhood, family and community. As more and more Italians (and Asians) started to be able to afford to buy their own houses, they would live in close knit immigrant communities where these communities would be made up of various migrants and few English people. They would look for housing that they could afford and where they could be near to their employment. Consideration about local schooling came later, but quite quickly home ownership became the goal for the immigrant Italians. This was particularly the case once they were married and could have two incomes coming into the household (a future family with children became a later priority[23]). An example of this is the number of Italian homeowners in a single street in the centre of Aylesbury (Buckinghamshire) which rose from one in 1960 to five by 1971 and six by 1981[24].

The London Brick Company

After the Second World War labour resources were needed in order to 'rebuild' Britain and so the British government came to an agreement with the *Italian Ministerio del Lavoro* to allow Italian workers to come to England to work in the areas where there was a shortage of local labour. Specific industries were targeted and as many as 2000 workers at a time would be sent from Italy to work in the foundries (men) and in textiles (women). By 1951 the bureaucratic system had evolved and as I have already mentioned, this led to the actual employer applying for a work permit on the employees behalf. Those that came under this bulk recruitment scheme[25] had in common their youth and health and unmarried status, but they represented a vast range of geographical and hence social origins"[26]. It is important to additionally consider the wave of female migrants in 1949 that were recruited for the textile and ceramic industries in the north of England (Norwich, Wolverhampton, Coventry and Lancashire). Although some of these women that were recruited in bulk had originally been given work contracts as cleaners or domestic helpers, the majority worked together in the textiles and ceramic factories and tended to be in their early twenties and unmarried[27].

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[23] Many of those interviewed said that they waited until they had some economic stability before having children, and indeed my own parents did not have children until four years into their marriage.
[24] Own research conducted via oral interviews.
[25] Terri Colpi, *The Italian Factor*, Mainstream Publishing, London and Edinburgh, 1991. P89
[26] Ibid. P90
[27] Ibid. P92

The London Brick Company became the sole employer for the vast groups of young (Southern) Italian men in the period from 1952 until the 1960s. Freshly out of military service[28] and with no employment prospects in their small villages and towns, these men were often at the prime of their health and strength given that they had been eating properly and having regular (working) exercise for the first time in their lives. The new English employer was to welcome a strong and over eager young man in to their work factories and was to take full advantage of these men's' body strength. It would soon become common knowledge that the immigrant recruits from Italy were particularly hard working and strong and so were specifically employed with the heavier types of jobs in mind. These jobs would often involve the heavy lifting of brick loads from one side of the factory to the other, or the loading of bricks on to trucks, and with the minimum of machinery to aid them. The working conditions were hazardous by today's standards as the men were often working in the outdoors in the rain and all other types of weather conditions. Despite the obvious shock that the English weather must have given these men, they tended to invest in work and weather proof clothing that would ensure that they did not get ill. However, many of the workers have extremely coarse hands with scarred skin as a testament to their working lives. Together with this, an above average amount of these men suffered the most horrendous work accidents (wet machinery falling on them, brick presses catching them unawares due to their speed having been activated to go even faster without prior consultation) and were rarely, if ever compensated. Many of the men today still suffer the consequences of these working conditions, with back complaints being the most common repercussion due to the repetitive lifting that so many of them endured.

The *harder* jobs were exclusively given to the Italian workers who did not complain - they were both grateful for the work and equally did not want to be seen to be a problem. Much of their working lives were governed by their allowing themselves to be mistreated (or at least not to be treated fairly). For example, if the weather conditions were too poor to work outside the men would not be paid for that particular night shift, whilst the (English) drivers would still be able to drive their trucks and hence would always be paid regardless of the working conditions. Huge advantage was taken of the fact that these men did not speak English and they were often accused of having misunderstood a demand. One *allowance* that many of the workers insisted on in their later years of having worked in the factories was to take all of their annual leave in one go so as to be able to visit their family in Italy. This *allowance* only became negotiable once the men had a proven track record of being hard workers and those who had taken sick leave (ironically often due to having had an accident within the factory) were often discriminated against. Once the men had got married, their wives would also have to negotiate their annual leave and would be put under similar pressures within their own employments. It was not generally understood amongst the English workers, (and some of their managers) that it was not appropriate to visit

[28] Military Service was then still compulsory in Italy for a minimum period of twelve months.

Sicily for a week given that it took two night and three days to get there. The 1960s was obviously still a time when air travel was costly and hence uncommon amongst poorer people. This would at times cause tensions and accusations of favouritism amongst the non-Italian workers[29].

SCHOOLING FOR THE SECOND GENERATION

At times the start of schooling would be delayed since many of the Southern Italian regions that the families came from and had been visiting were nether easy to get to or to return from. Due to the language issue rarely could this easily be properly communicated to the schoolteachers who would often casually assume a degree of indifference on the part of the parents towards their child's education. The children would often be stigmatised for having arrived back at school later than the other children after the school summer holidays by both the teachers and their peers. It was not uncommon for these late arrivals to be put in remedial classes simply for having missed the first week of the new term. Having said this, the new migrant children, despite having been brought up in England would often be put into *special* or remedial classes as a matter of course. These classes were full of other or troubled children that were rarely given any individual tuition. Little concession was ever made for the fact that these children could not speak English due to their own parents not speaking English and that they needed to be exposed to continuous spoken English in order to learn it as a language. These special classes would be a mixture of Italian children, children from various Asian backgrounds who had a similar experience to the Italian one, newly arrived children from various countries, children with learning difficulties, and children who were being punished. Although the children might recognise each other from their neighbourhood or from their parents knowing each other, they would rarely be able to communicate - they would often be locked into speaking quite distinct dialects and so had trouble understanding one another. This kind of situation of not understanding one each others dialects would be repeating itself with their parents usually within their various employment's since many of them worked together. Together with this integrating and being understood soon became the difficult journey that the children knew that they would have to undertake and so they would not want to be seen to be speaking in their native language.

The integration into mainstream schooling would happen very quickly. The children would soon adapt to the classroom and enter from the fog of silence into the world of being visible as a child. They would learn to behave in the expected way and would start to exhibit signs of behaving as the English do in order to be accepted, for example pretend to enjoy the school lunch or that you too had plenty of toys at home to play with. The truth for both of these examples was quite different as often the child would be completely unaccustomed to shepherds pie and would rarely have many toys. Toys were deemed an unnecessary luxury and many immigrant children learnt to

[29] *"They (English workers) did not understand that we were only taking the leave days we were due but taking them all in one go. I think some were just jealous but we would never have said anything then".* E.

invent their own toys or learnt to play with one another. English parents seemed to place a lot of importance on buying their children large toys and this was not something that the children from the margins could or did expect. Poverty was a reality that expressed itself in many ways throughout the immigrant childhood and it is certainly the single thing most remembered by them as adults.

How can one begin to assess the affect of this experience? What prevailing signs are there left upon the adult? The memory of poverty is stored in different ways inside ones mind. Some reject it as something that it would be impossible to return to, and indeed perhaps those early immigrant losses and the reality of that particular poverty is gone forever. It is common for immigrant children to be rather obsessed with making money - consider the current news about the thirty under thirty Asian British millionaires [30]. Certainly they are a product of the Thatcherite moneymaking mentality but there is also something far more complex at work here. These children were exposed to huge sacrifices that were made by their parents in order to provide them with an adequate style of living - something that they themselves did not have. The parents would be visualising their children's childhood as being something outside of their own experience. They would not have had the material wealth that their children assumed and nor would they have experienced the level of economic stability that their children took for granted - schooling was a huge indicator of difference between the children and their parents. Often the parents had little or no schooling at all as it was very common for children to not attend school at all pre-1950 and the level of illiteracy was 95% in the South of Italy[31]. Those who had some level of literacy would be at the mercy of the skills that they picked up before being forced to leave schooling forever. This would usually happen at the age of eight or nine or as soon as they were deemed strong enough to be able to work on the land and could help the family economic structure. This illiteracy or poor level of education was brought to their host country with them and in turn their children were often able to be at a higher level of literacy than their parents were at a comparable age.

Those children born to immigrant Italian parents would speak their parents' Italian dialect first before attending English schooling and it would not be until another sibling or a degree of confidence had ensured that the child would be fluent in their new language. The English language would not be spoken at home and would start to become practised only between the siblings at home [32]. The children were left to live in two very different worlds - language being one of the many clear markers of difference. The parents' dependency on their children's literacy would

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[30] *The Independent*, 23 Sptember, 2000

[31] This data can be found in the Official Records of Employment Documents (1950-1960) originally stored at the Ministero Di Lavoro Municipal Offices in Aragona, Province of Agrigento in Sicily and moved to the local library in 1998. Consulted in September 1999.

[32] "*I remember it was like being in a bubble at school. I could not understand them and they could not understand me. I cried everyday for ages, I hated school then*". L.

start to increase at this point since the children would have greater entry rights into the new homeland. It would not be uncommon for young children o be reading complicated tax forms on their parents behalf or visiting bank managers to act as translators for their parents. This onus of responsibility was assumed by the parents and would often be a difficult task for the child - difficult language would have to be understood, translated and then verbalised in a dialect whose selected words the parents would understand. The burden of translation became a multi-faceted one. The very act of translation would act as a metaphor for power and disempowerment, childhood and an un-signalled entry into adulthood (and the place of difference).

Immigrant daughters could never be allowed to be children and indeed the imbedded sense of difference was at once most acute when one looks at the experience of childhood within the Italian immigrant context. As has been already stated often the parents themselves had not had a childhood akin to an English one and so the preferred route to childhood was the one experienced buy the parents themselves. This was almost exclusively gender divided and culturally and regional specific. Daughters were taught to be traditional wives and this learning was instilled in them from an early age and certainly before the daughter could in any way be influenced by English culture[33] Whilst the notion of *play* within childhood is a common idea amongst the Western world it was not given the same importance amongst the immigrant community. Playtime was seen as a luxury or worse - something akin to being *English* or certainly something that the *English* did with their time. At best play time was something that was only allowed after all of the domestic chores were done - and these were never really finished and so it would be hard to argue for any free or play time. Stable categorisations of identity can be understood as being the product of a comparison. Whenever another is imagined, the bases of the concept are the categories and images that reflect the culture familiar society and that other is translated into terms with which one is already acquainted[34].

Together with this, it was not regarded as correct behaviour for a daughter to be seen out playing and amongst the watching community unnecessary assumptions could and would be created as to the type of wife the daughter would make, given her desire to be seen out playing[35]. This bore a complicated level of pressure onto the daughter; resentment that her brothers could do as they pleased since their behaviour would not impinge on the family name nor their marital status, the confusion of wanting to do what the other (English) girls did and hence be part of the host domain, the issue of wanting to please their parents also helped to complicate the desire for play further as did the humiliation if you were seen by the watchful (and judgmental) eye of the community. It would be expected of the daughter to complete rather complicated tasks at an

[33] This was the usual term given for the direct impact of the host country and in this case the direct influence of the daughters' English friends.
[34] Gribaudi, Gabriella, *Images of the South, The Mezzogiorno as seen by Insiders and Outsiders* in *The New History of the Italian South, the Mezzogiorno Revisited* (eds), Lumley, Robert and Morris, Jonathan. P83
[35] The notion of family honour is very important.

early age and often this would counter *English* expectations of the daughter. Whilst English daughters could stay over at their friends houses this was seen as being 'shameful' with the Italian community particularly as it was expected that the daughter would contribute or cook for a family and this ritual could never be broken. Daughters could never stay away from home unless they were married - this was the case for the parents and these values were instilled into their children. The most obvious clash of values occurred as the daughter matured into teen hood. They would not be allowed out in the way that it was normal for the English daughter to do so. To be allowed out was to be given a privilege that was deemed too powerful for a daughter in a strange and corruptible land. The notion of corruption is to be understood very specifically in terms of the impact and direct influence that the host country could have upon the daughters if they were allowed to do the things that English girls did. Daughters were shielded from the corruptible and it was deemed necessary to do this at all costs and was indeed seen as being the strong symbol of parenting amongst the Italian community to enforce this. Italian daughters would all share the mutual secret about the non attendance of the end of year school discos - it was an event that only those who belonged to England would attend and these daughters would forever be outsiders. The daughters would be protected so that they could be equally viewed as being potential wives for the sons of the community and the boundaries of perfection that could so easily disqualify the daughters potential gain was something that was to be jealously guarded at all costs.

With little if any evidence of the lasting impact of the feminist movement,[36]together with the clash with modernity as a result of these daughters' dual nationality, the insistence on purity and virginity[37] is still expected even today. It is far more common than is ever discussed within the liberated and modern world that is contemporary England, that a daughter is to be a virgin if she is engaging into a marriage within the community and to another Italian[38]. Therefore, it is not unusual for the daughter (still, regardless of age) to be completely sexually inexperienced in adulthood and that unlike the host country's attitude to sex (and indeed sexuality) her knowledge will come from her English friends rather than through lived experience. Although the experience of modernity and the modern world as it is commonly understood, makes this fact seem difficult to believe, the truth of it lies within the Italian community as an unspoken weapon that will be pulled out when ever differentiations need to be made. Differences between them (*L'Inglese*[39]) and them (Italian daughters who have or are assumed to have had sexual relationships) are still often argued over as points of honour in the year 2003. Giuseppe Mantovani's notion of the encounter where the outsiders' lived situation is not known and hence cannot be understood, is key

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[36] Which seems to have left the Italian immigrant community unscathed.

[37] This is still the case for daughters but has never been the case for sons.

[38] Importantly, the politics of feminism in Italy of 1970s arrived too late for the immigrant

[39] *The English*

to comprehending the flux between diasporic identity formations here[40]. Some members of the Italian community see this unspoken inexperience as a power. However, it is something that the daughter is forced to endure, and is something that is in constant collision with her entry into the modern world - something that her brothers have a privilege to and something that she cannot be a part of until she is married. She cannot engage with modernity because her own body is the source for somebody else's power and she in turn is left powerless to do anything about it. Her own mother assumed this burden and it is expected that she will do the same and that she will not be swayed by non-Catholic dogma that prevails in the contemporary English world.

The behaviour of the sons was not monitored in childhood nor in teen hood in the same way - their potential gain would be one of these protected daughters and their behaviour did not tarnish the family name usually (regardless) of what ever they did. Virginity in women is often regarded as the sole distinguishing factor as to whether she has become *English* or remained a traditional Italian - no other identity is permissible amongst the community and status can be governed by word of mouth alone. Neither identity prevails in contemporary Italy although the *casa e pane* (*home and bread*) daughter is still a common feature of Southern Italian communities as is the virgin spinster aunt/and daughter. In England sons would be expected to do as their father's did (use prostitutes in and from neighbouring towns and villages or become sexually active during military service when they were away from home for the first time) except it was and still is a common assumption that English women would be more inclined to enter into a sexual relationship with their partners. The fathers of these immigrant born sons would very often be rather sexually inexperienced themselves and this bond of experience was transmitted onto their sons although it is far more likely in the contemporary world that the son would now be more experienced sexually than the father would have been at the same age. This sexual experience is expected to be achieved with English girls and Italian daughters are not usually expected to be sexually active with their partners unless they are to be married. This fact is explored in some detail in the film *True Love* by Nancy Savoco[41] and in a more overtly political manner by Spike Lee in the film *Jungle Fever*[42]. Both of these films deal with the claim over a woman's sexual purity in the contemporary world, together with how old world values clash with the modern ones where female sexual behaviour is concerned. No sex before marriage is to be understood as a Catholic requirement but within the Italian immigrant community it is a requirement deemed necessary to be upheld almost exclusively by women. The counter part of the Southern Italian spinster aunt or

[40] Giuseppe Mantovani in *Exploring Borders, Understanding Culture and Psychology*, (London, Routledge Press, 2000), P21.

[41] Made in 1989, this film starring the Italian-American actress Annabella Sciorra, had moderate critical success and deals with issues of immigration through family and generational ties.

[42]Made in 1991, this film also starred the Italian -American actress Annabella Sciorra who is characterised as one of the central protagonists, an Italian -American daughter. The film dealt with the politics of race as it was experienced by the Afro-American and Italian communities and was received with huge commercial and critical success.

daughter who is sexually inexperienced is visible within every Italian immigrant community and her honour is being kept for the husband that still may appear.

This unspoken demand placed upon the daughter is a fading one - to a degree. Third generation Italian daughters are much more likely to play a fuller part in the host community and make choices about the parts of their cultural heritage that they will keep and those that they choose to disregard[43]. However they will often still be more cautious about their sexual relationships and it is interesting that amongst the national statistics for underage pregnancies there is no percentage record for how many of those pregnancies are from ethnic groups[44]. It is very unusual for an Italian daughter, across any generation, to have a child out of marriage and the impact of their own parents' attitudes towards sex does still have an overarching influence on them[45]. Gender roles are still rather incriminating given the context of the third generation children's own parental (lack of) experience and this is often the populist characterisation within contemporary media[46]. The known stereotype of backward glances given by jealous brothers and fathers to men that may figure in daughters and sisters lives has a context in Southern Italian codes of behaviour and has been played out in countless real life lived experiences in Italian immigrant communities in England[47]. Daughters are still at the mercy of this stereotype and their depowering is as prevailing now as it was in post-war Southern Italy, that this context is still inhabited my daughters in contemporary England is the issue that is being explored here.

Generational discord is often illustrated through cultural differences that are in turn re-enacted between grand children and grand parents. The third generation daughter is far more integrated than her grand mother who still speaks little if any English and adopts the manner more in keeping with the pre-modern world of post war Southern Italy. The grand daughter is unlikely to speak Italian as her parents did not speak it to her and she will often never have visited the country of her heritage - this despite her appearance and Italian name[48]. Her cultural values will be from the integrated and translated world and she will be no nearer to understanding what has been lost than her own parents were. They spent all of their time working to provide a stable home, as did their own parents. This was often at the expense of their own individual happiness and had little time for nostalgia, whilst this third generation never knew the Italy of their grand parents. The

[43] *"I'm very proud to be Italian even if I can't speak the language. I can cook Italian food but I can cook Indian and Chinese too".* M.
[44] The Governmental Statistical data lists this information via age categorisation and not ethnic grouping. See Public Records Office, London. Consulted this data 1999.
[45] From the interviews conducted amongst unmarried daughters, the only daughter to have had a child outside of marriage became pregnant by a family relation after her first sexual encounter.
[46] For example the soap opera set in a mythical part of London, '*Eastenders*', in June/July 2000, had the story line of the Italian brother defending his sisters honour by beating the man accused of having sexually assaulting her.
[47] During the mid 1980s, I can remember being forced to act as a chaperone to my cousin and her fiancée since her brother insisted that they should not be allowed to go out in public alone.
[48] *"I hate going there (to Italy) because it is never a holiday and I find it quite stressful. We have to keep visiting lots of family members that I don't know and who I don't even understand".* N.

cultural shift happens easily over a single generation and what is lost is unspoken and remembered only in memories by those few who need to keep alive the sense of belonging. It is more than likely that the grand parents spent longer in the immigrant home land (England) than in their country of birth (Italy) given that mass bulk immigration began in the early fifties and yet their adopted home is still the in-between place before they *go back*[49]. They will consider going back to a country that they will no longer recognise and will no longer belong to - they too have become displaced from Italy. Unlike their granddaughters who, to some degree can embrace modernity, they belong in no place, neither here nor there.

Marrying Out and Inter-Marriage

Second generation Italians are still expected to marry within their community and there is a great deal of family pressure to conform to this cultural norm. Often the sons and daughters are known through their own family status and employment (usually manual or low paid work although this is now changing[50]). There have been some small changes to this attitude, the unmarried daughter or son is usually expected to marry somebody from their own community or not marry at all. Often this pressure point leaves the second generation quite bewildered as they are still, as adults, not being allowed to flow into the modern world (something that that they themselves feel mixed about needing to do[51]). Having to negotiate parental expectations (pre modern world ones) as well as their own self expectations leaves them with little option but to have to take part in post war Italian dating rituals in contemporary England. This chapter will focus on St Peters Church and Club in Clerkenwell, London but is a comparative analysis that is repeated in Bedford, Peterborough and within other Italian immigrant communities in England. Italian social clubs were set up in the 1950s so that Italian immigrants could have a focal social point and were used as a communication centre for newly arrived Italians. Employment information could be exchanged as well as other more prosaic things such as sharing stories from back home and otherwise mixing with other paesani[52]. These social clubs were usually attached to the Italian church and would serve as a framework for the social activities pursued by the Italians - from playing card games learnt in Sicily to meeting potential (Italian) future spouses. This traditional social centre has remained in existence today and is still providing the social structure for both first and second generation Italians as well as for the growing third generation. St Peters Roman Catholic Church

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[49] *"I have been here forty-four years and I left Italy when I was twenty-one. Yes, I have been here longer than there but I will always be Italian. Where you are born is who you are".* O.

[50] *"I'm in hairdressing and my brothers both work as estate agents now. I went straight into hairdressing but my brothers tried being mechanics and one of them worked in the same factory as my mum for a while. Then Franco got a badly paid job at the estate agents and then he worked his way up. Then he got Mario (the other brother) a job there. They were lucky because they had few qualifications, none of us liked school".* P.

[51] *"Sometimes I look at my English friends and I think they just don't know how lucky they are. I am 32 and live at home. I can't go out anywhere without having to explain my whereabouts. I no longer bother trying to socialise and be like my (English) friends".* Q.

[52] This is the term used for those from the same region in Italy.

in Clerkenwell, London was built in 1960 by Italian immigrants and is has constant Italian speaking mass with a priest provided by the Italian Government especially for the community and in order that they can still worship in the language of their homeland, weddings, baptisms, etc from within the community are held here as well as the procession for the churches' patron saint, *St Peter* in July of every year. The procession is a national event for the Italian immigrant community as a whole and many are 'bussed in' from the various communities up and down the country although they tend to arrive predominantly from the South East of England.

As with most social occasions within the Italian community, there is a constant protective eye cast on the daughters (their honour and behaviour will always reflect on their families[53]). Together wit this it can also be the time when groups of men from with in the community can freely mix with women from the same community - these occasions can be crucial to the socialisation of the community as a whole and are treated with the utmost importance and respect[54]. The social games that are being played by all generations are known to all of the players within the social sphere. Respectful daughters will be treated with respect and wayward sons will be reprimanded by whichever elder member of the community thinks they have the right and role to play the autocrat. Of course wayward daughters will be treated with the disrespect deemed necessary - spinsterhood was often the result of judgements put upon the woman within the village context and this idea is reinforced and reanimated within the contemporary community. In post war Southern Italy if a woman was seen to be the instigator in the break up of an engagement (usually the stage where couples would be getting to know one another before marriage was assumed) then it would be more difficult for her to find another potential husband - this type of judged situation is still common. Although often the couple have a lot more say in who they chose to become engaged to, from within the community, it can be difficult for a woman to be fully respected and to become engaged once again[55]. It is common that the daughter will have to take *second best* if she has been the unfortunate instigator in the break up of an engagement and might mean her having to choose a man who has been married before or even somebody from outside the community[56]. The behaviour of the man is rarely accounted for in this context - the woman is almost always seen to be at fault despite the genuine reasons why she felt unable to commit herself to the stranger that she had become engaged to. As her mother had

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[53] *"I could never relax at those Italian social events. I always felt on display somehow".* L.

[54] *"If I wanted to go out with my friends then I was never allowed to go, I was never allowed to go out freely outside of family social things. But when it came to an Italian fest or whatever, then I was expected to go, whether I wanted to go or not".* L.

[55] *"My mum warned me that if I dared to call it off with my then fiancée, nobody else would have me. Of course she was right, although I could have married an English man if I wanted to but would never have done that so I am still alone".* Q.

[56] *"I'd been engaged back home but this had broken up. When I came here I married my current husband via proxy, some of us had to do this otherwise nobody else wanted to marry us".* M.

been given little choice about what to expect of a marital relationship it is still assumed that the daughter will be pressured into repeating the same 'mistake'[57].

The example set by the daughters' parents was very often the marker through which their children would judge their own potential relationships[58]. Divorce for the first generation Italians is virtually unheard of, but it would be fairly common for children to witness prolonged unhappy marriages. Interestingly, *L'Inglesi*[59] behaved differently; and, as a consequence, different standards were applied to them[60]. The codes of the Catholic community would prevent the dissolving of these marriages even if they were of the unhappiest kind. The secret code of silence meant that children were often the witnesses to the most extreme cases of cruelty between father and mother (most often the father subjecting the mother to acts of beatings[61], infidelity[62], gambling[63] and other behaviour deemed unacceptable within an English context). The rigid codes transmitted through Catholicism and the assumed rituals (as assumed by the immigrant Italians) are still deemed worthy of being upheld only by the woman of the community. Hence the notion of suffering in silence is a well-accepted chore within the community and something that most second and third generation immigrant children will understand in some form or other. For the first generation marriages were and are still kept together at all costs and the children within the community know this dogma, this in turn provides the manipulative tool deemed necessary for the correct marital partner to be selected.

It is interesting to look at the rules that govern the lived experiences of the second generation Italians and how these rule shave evolved and changed. It was most unusual for the first generation male to marry an English woman, *most men were anxious not only to find an Italian spouse, but to marry a paesana.*[64] Interestingly some men married by proxy[65] or it was more often

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[57] "*It's different now I know, but then it was the done thing to marry really young to someone your family approved of. Since I never had a boyfriend before my husband I didn't know what to expect. My English friends told me things but it was not the same as when I went through it for myself and by then it was too late, because I was already married*". N.
[58] "*There are no divorces in my family at all and I did not want to be the first to go down that road. I know it is OK for English people to do this but it is not for us. That's why I only wanted to marry an Italian man.*" G.R.
[59] This literally translates as *the English* and is the generic term used to refer to English people and English culture.
[60] Palmer, Robin. *The Italians; Patterns of Migration to London* in *Two Cultures, Migrants and Minorities in Britain* (Ed) Watson. James, L. (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1977). P263
[61] "*We all knew that my aunt got hit by my uncle, she was unlucky. Some men are just like that. She would never have done anything about it, you wouldn't want people to gossip would you*"? O.
[62] "*I told my daughter to forget about it (her son in law having had an affair) because it doesn't really matter. Her father did it too but you didn't catch me talking about divorce. You (young people) are too quick to go for divorce. Life goes on and no matter what you should never break up the family. Nobody needs to know your business, what kind of figura is there in that*"? P.
[63] "*I count myself lucky that my husband did not have any of those bad habits like gambling. So many of them are at it and what can the woman do but put up with it? Men can do as they wish, it's the woman that has to put up with everything*". Q.
[64] Colpi, p156
[65] Photographs were sent of girls that had been *recommended*'to them or else they would marry girls that they had known before emigration,

the case that they would return to their hometowns and villages to marry and would return to England with a new wife. This rather practical approach to marriage was an acceptable route and the idea of romantic love and courtship is something that the first generation Italian immigrant had to learn about within their new country and it was something that put into conflict the values that their children were being exposed to in England. What this shows us is that the idea of marriage is key to ones social standing and the notion of marrying into the *right family* where the key members of that family are known within the community, was something that was attempting to be reproduced within the second-generation community[66].

It is certainly still the norm for second-generation children to marry within the doctrine of the Catholic Church unless they are marrying outside of the community. It is far more common that the second-generation son will marry an English partner than for an Italian daughter to do so[67]. Statistically the second-generation daughter is much more likely to marry from within the community. The visible result of this is that the divorce rate amongst second-generation sons is high when compared to that of the daughter where divorce is still minimal in comparison. It is still much easier for second-generation sons to flow in and out of the community at will and at the very least have a degree of freedom in relation to his behaviour. This can mean that he can live with his English partner and then return home when this partnership dissolves only to marry an Italian daughter from the community - this could never happen in reverse as the daughters honour would be in question and in turn so would her family's social standing. It is very unusual if not unheard of for second generation Italians to live together before marriage although this is not the case in contemporary Italy or for Italians that immigrate to England in the twenty first century. In this respect the first generation Italians will brush off their dislike of their sons living with their partners as it being something that is required of them if they are to have an English partner at all[68]. The overt hypocrisy in the different treatments between the different genders has no currency within the community. It is still prevalent in smaller Southern Italian towns and villages and in the immigrant communities both in England and in other countries where there has been a large degree of Italian immigrant settlers.

Few second generation children break away from the community altogether, although there has been a small shift in this in the South East of England and the Home Counties and London in particular. Often children are tied to the family business and it is expected of them to help out

[66] *"My brothers both married English people but I wanted to please my parents. It's important to me that my husband is Italian, I just can't even imagine being with an English man".* R.

[67] *"I think that because my brother had a lot more freedom than me, he felt more comfortable amongst the English so he ended up marrying an English woman. Of course, they are now divorced which no one is surprised about. I would never have married an English man".* L.

[68] *"Of course I don't like my son living with his girlfriend, it's not right and I know everyone is talking about it. But if it was my daughter it would be much worse, damage is visible on a woman in a way that it is not on a man. Women should always remember this".* J.

until they themselves are old enough to take it over completely[69]. In other cases where there is no family business manual employment's are very much encouraged amongst the first generation who are often inclined to value the type of job that would have been deemed useful *back home* and hence be of considerable value should the family decide to return and migrate back to their towns and villages of origins. A large degree of second generation Italians have gone into the hairdressing trade and the entrepreneurship that is evident in the exceptionally talented and successful *Tony & Guy* hairdressing franchise[70] or cluster of exclusive and exemplary Italian restaurants in London (for example *San Lorenzo*[71] or *Zafferano's*[72] which are both in Knightsbridge) are the visible successful end of a much ventured field of expertise. The subtext of these very successful and media famous businesses is dealt with else where but other areas of manual work are also very common features of the second generation employment reigns such as car mechanics, domestic and catering services and other forms of self-employment's or manual work are still prevalent. Manual work is usually the only type of work known to the first generation and certainly in the parts of the *Home Counties* where Bedford and Aylesbury are located it was not uncommon that the elder members of the second generation Italians would follow in their parents footsteps and into the same factories as their parents. For example some sons followed their fathers into the brick works but few, if any, remained there as they found the work too hard and the working hours expected too arduous and long[73]. In essence the idea of transportable work is still seen as being a pull factor in the types of professions that are respected after the rare occurrence of lawyers, or teachers or doctors, which are sadly still very rare within the community even at the third generational stage[74].

It is worth noting the meagre experience that the first generation have with any of the professions and hence their attitude towards those in authority or with *respectful* jobs such as lawyers or doctors. In the same way that many post war Southern Italians were forced to emigrate to the North of Italy or to another country altogether in order to have access to any employment at all, second generation Italians are forced into an ambivalent position if they choose to follow a professional career route. In sharp contrast to the way that a strong sense of the identity of the South[75] has been moulded through its dialogue with the North[76], since so few

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[69] *Bar Italia* in London's Soho is a good example of this where in the late 1980s, Tony Polledri took over the overall running of the still fashionable café from his father.
[70] Francesco Mascolo, father of the two sons that make up *Tony and Guy* came to England as a hairdresser in 1956 from Scafati, near Pompei. The first *Tony and Guy* Salon opened in Clapham, London in 1963 and is now a multi-million pound business. Source, interview *Tony and Guy* PR, 22.07.02
[71] This restaurant opened for business in 1963.
[72] This restaurant began in 1994.
[73] "*The sons were not like their fathers, they did not like hard work and were very unreliable. Few of them ever lasted very long*". LBC Clerk.
[74] I interviewed one Italian family in the East End of London. The four second-generation male children had become either lawyers or doctors with the help of Catholic Scholarships provided for them to attend private school, which in turn enabled them to attend university. The two daughters married at the age of 18 years old.
[75] In Italy the South is additionally called; Sud, Mezzogiorno, Meridione

second generation Italians go to university, those that do are catapulted into a different world completely. This is more specifically the case for those living outside of London and the only choice for those from the *Home Counties* discussed in a previous chapter. It is still vary rare for a second generation Italian to enter into a professional career as few from this generation enter into higher education at all. The unskilled work already discussed is the most common feature of the employment pattern amongst second generation Italians, and since the manufacturing industries are not as prevalent as they once were, the service industries and low level clerical work are where many Italians are to be found. Some second generation Italians have gone onto higher education, and it is far more possible for the third generation to enter into higher education and hence a professional employment. As has already been established, the first generation Italians brought with them very particular views on the function of work and the notion of enjoying ones work was not a luxury that they could collude with. Also, the idea of additional years of studying (as is common thinking within some working class communities [77]) would incur an additional burden on the family finances and so was not something that would be encouraged by the first generation. This coupled with old world ideas of children only leaving the family household when they are about to enter into marriage, has meant that few second generation Italians have furthered their potential educationally and professionally. For example for an Italians daughter to leave home to go to University was unheard of in Britain in the 1970s and like other immigrant communities this possibility is greater in communities, for example, such as London, where daughters could remain at home and travel to their place of study.[78]

The first generations' lack of interest in education and old world attitudes towards it needs to be seen in the context of their own lived experience in Italy. Unlike other communities, for example the Asian community, who were more likely to have arrived in Britain in the 1950s with an education, their literacy level was generally very poor if existent at all. Within their own communities in the South of Italy it would only have been the wealthy sons and daughters of the towns and villages that would have played a significant part in higher education and professional employment. Education and professional employment rights were very male aspirations as well as being the code of social expectation within post war Southern Italy and to a lesser existent is still held today. Although women from some parts of Southern Italy did indeed travel alone or in groups to work in England[79], codes of behaviour in relation to working outside of the home were

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[76] Gribaudi, Gabriella, *Images of the South, The Mezzogiorno as seen by Insiders and Outsiders* in *The New History of the Italian South, The Mezzogiorno Revisited* (eds), Lumley, Robert and Morris, Jonathan (Devon, University of Exeter Press, 1997). P82

[77] This is detailed in Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy; Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainment* (London, Pelican, 1981)

[78] "*I know my English friends don't really understand but there was no way I would have gone to university if I had to leave home. My dad would never have let it happen. I can't complain though because I would have missed my family too much. I've never been away from home*". T

[79] "*I came with my cousin and we were coming to stay with her family here (England). There were four of us from the same family, all women*". U.

very clear. The women that came to England having married an Italian that was already working here would never have worked outside of the home (and for an unknown employer[80]) before. They used the skills that they brought with them in order to find employment here and unlike their children had very little prospect of working within a professional capacity due to their lack of language and education. They came to this country to make money and this attitude was instilled into the second generation Italian. Born into the persuasive Thatcherite ideology of money worshipping the old world and the new- world were in agreement for a change. With the move away from the standardised A Level route into higher education and the acceptance of more vocational types of courses, more of a range of students were able to participate in furthering themselves educationally and may be the reason why more third generation Italians are now going onto study at university level. Having said this, the percentage of third generation Italians going on to higher education is almost impossible to quantify as is the equivalent data for second generation Italians. In all attempts to find out these specifics, often the information available was reliant on equal opportunities monitoring forms where students were asked to pick a category that gave their racial origin, as being black or white - Italian does not feature in such categorisation.

It is more likely that an Italian presence within the professions will be an Italian born post 1970s migrant from Italy, although there are of course exceptions to this. An example of this exception would be the intervention of the Catholic Church in the late 1960s that would on occasion give financial assistance through scholarships into Catholic boarding schools to Italian immigrant with large sibling groups. Interestingly these scholarships although available to any gender were only taken up by the male children from a family and it would be common that the daughters would be left behind to attend ordinary state schools[81]. Indeed the Italian Hospital in Queen's Square, London[82] was set up in 1884 for Italians in Great Britain and was paid for by the Italian Government that sent its own doctors to England. Just like the Italian teachers and priests that were sent over to serve the communities in the 1970s, home grown Italian doctors from within the immigrant Italian community did not yet exist.

The Presence and Influence of the Italian Church in England

In her book, *The Italian Factor*, Colpi talks about the Italian Church of St Peter's in London, being established in 1864 and she felt that it owed its existence to the high absolute number of Italians who were at the time clustered in Clerkenwell[83]. Indeed the church has a long history

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[80] "*I had helped my aunt with sewing dowries but I had never worked for somebody outside of the family before. I found it very strange but I knew this meant I had to be extra careful with the money that I earned since I was not giving it over to my mother like the sewing money*". J.

[81] See footnote 46 in relation to this.

[82] The hospital was closed in 1989 and is now part of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, London.

[83] *The Italian Factor*, Terri Colpi, P56

but in this chapter I intend to focus on the church's relationship as a whole to post war second generation Italians. Colpi presupposes that a large Italian presence would be attracted to an Italian Catholic Church and her evidence would lead us to believe that this was in fact the case at this time[84]. However this can no longer be assumed in contemporary Britain. A smaller percentage of first generation and second generation Italians go to Church than in any other time since the Italian presence was first felt in England in the eighteenth century. There are various reasons for this and I will attempt to explore some of them. Although there was a strong determination on the part of the Italian authorities in Italy to ensure that Italian mass would be held for the benefit of the Italian parishioners who would other wise be attending a mass that was in a language that they did not understand, after the initial larger attendance in the 1960s the numbers started to lower. In communities that were regarded as being smaller (by the Italian authorities in Italy) than main immigrant groupings for example Aylesbury versus Bedford - both in the *Home Counties,* as attendance slowly dwindled, it was gradually no longer seen as worthy of the cost of having an Italian priest sent specially. So the larger Italian community such as Bedford still has the Italian mass read and is attended by a large Italian presence.

Many women that arrived in England and the *Home Counties* in the early 1960s would have been newly married and with a young family - they might have been working part time if at all at this point. It was common for Italian women who were brought over to England by their husbands, as soon as they were allowed to marry,[85]to try to find some kind of part time work if they were without children. This was not an easy task as they did not speak English and, as has been explored, often did not possess adequate reading and writing skills. If the women had children quite rapidly within the early stages of their married lives or if they had been married in Italy and already had children which they brought over once their husbands were allowed dependants, they would be the main child carers whilst the husband worked in his manual employment. These families would endure harsh, cramped surroundings such as a single rented room with shared amenities with the owners of the house as well as other immigrant families. Although many long lasting friendships came out of these living conditions, so did much resentment and upset. Many a family are still not speaking after some squabble that occurred during this period when they first arrived in England[86]. Indeed some of the owners of these houses were Italians who may have arrived just a couple of years earlier and having been frugal with their salaries were able to buy their own homes only to exploit their paeans desperation. Since it was difficult for any foreigner to find rented accommodation it was even harder to find a home for a family grouping and so

[84] *Ibid,* P90

[85] As previously discussed above.

[86] "*She (referring to a member of the community) always felt she was better than us because she owned a house and we rented from her. She was older and had been here a year or so longer than us. She would overcharge us to use the telephone. We did not understand then that we were being ripped off, we'd never used a telephone before".* J.

often these first generation Italians were left at the mercy of their *paesani*[87]. The homeowners would additionally act as the first point of contact with the new world and would impart the benefit of their knowledge of England in the 1960s. The 'swinging sixties' that has entered into common cultural folklore and in fact acts as a metaphor for a particular defining point in England, never addresses the plight of the newly arrived.

The women would have been used to the tradition of attending mass on a Sunday and were keen to keep up this tradition despite being in a foreign land. In this sense the Italian Church played a huge role in socialising those newly arrived and they would meet others from the same village as them and other Italians from parts of Italy that they themselves had never been to. Interestingly they would recognise faces from their own towns and villages and would be able to forge links with named associates which would further their own potential in many different ways. Employment was a typical concern at this point and the code of word of mouth ensured that many Italians would 'recommend' one another to their existing employer and this would help to form clusters of Italian work forces that were completely self-initiated. Unlike their husbands who overwhelmingly all worked in the same factories and worked the same long hours, the women had more flexible work but other than the Church on a Sunday would rarely venture out alone at all. As their children became old enough to go to school this had to change somewhat but these early years within the first generation Italian immigrant household meant a total lack of social life, and this would have been quite in keeping with what would have been expected of them if they had still been in Southern Italy. The *casa e pane*[88] tradition was very much part of the late 1950s and early 1960s thinking where women would only be allowed to go to Church or to visit their own family. The concept of a social life for a woman was standardised behaviour in the England that these women arrived to but was something that was completely outside of their own experiences. In the late 1950s unmarried women would not be allowed out unchaperoned and under the guise of Catholicism was dually frowned upon by them in relation to English women and their social habits.

The money that was earned was obsessively saved and served as having a dual function. It would be saved up so that a home could be bought but also so that money could be sent *back home* to the poorer and ageing relatives. This money that was being sent back often became a focus of tension between the husband and wife as the husband would have been quite used to sending money back to 'his family prior to being married[89]. If the woman worked she would have been earning relatively little money compared to her husband and the husband would have seen this money as being for purchases relating to the children or the family upkeep in general. Women were expected to be most frugal in their relationship to money and it was very common for them to be

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[87] The term used for a person from the Italian community who came from the same region in Italy

[88] This is literally translated as home and bread

[89] "*We always had to live on very little since he (her husband) had to send a lot of the money to his mother and sisters. Seven people were living off one salary and this did not include the children*". J.

rather enterprising in falling back on the skills that had been instilled in them as teenagers. They would sew their own clothes, which were often made out of remnant pieces of cloth brought with them as part of their wedding dowry and other personal belongings. It was not uncommon during this initial stay in the *Home Counties* that these women would not have brought themselves any 'luxury goods what so ever'[90] of maturity (an unmarried daughter never wore lipstick) and of extravagance (something that my mother was unused to). The woman was often feeling unable to provide her own direct family in Italy with any financial benefit from her having immigrated to a *better world.*

As has already been explored elsewhere, these inexperienced women would have been quite sexually unaware and would assume that their husbands (in some cases virtual strangers) would lead the way. The Catholic teaching excluded any kind of contraceptive and so they would soon find themselves dealing with motherhood in a country that was not yet *home.* The horror of giving birth not understanding the language as well as not always understanding what was happening physically has led to many stories that have become part of the folklore for the *suffering* that was endured so that the second generation child could be born into a better world. Indeed women would go into labour alone if their husband was on the obligatory extended shift or was working nights - they had had to learn to become very self sufficient and were reliant on the elder member of the Italian community from within the community who would often be the landlady of the house! It was unlikely that the father would have attended the birth of the child even if he had been available to do so. If there were other children to look after then this would have been seen as his natural role another female member of the Italian community was deemed a more appropriate source of help for a woman going into labour. The woman herself would not have attended any type of antenatal classes due to not understanding English and so her access to information would have been severely limited. This coupled with the pervasive cultural norm (still apparent within the South of Italy) that women should not be told about any aspect of sex and sexuality, and indeed about the workings of their own bodies, meant that the women were in rather vulnerable and frightening situations. Factually, the second generations' daughters would be much better informed about the workings of their bodies than their mothers would have been until they gave birth for the first time. First generation Italian women had become reliant on their daughters imparting their taught knowledge (freely given with modern sexual education and the comparative openness in relation to sex and discussions about it amongst young people) and basic facts had to be explained to the mother by her young daughter. This privileged information would be frowned upon and deemed something to be proud of in equal measures. It would be frowned upon because young girls should be sexually innocent until married, but it was a source of pride that entry into the modern world meant that the next generation could benefit from the

[90] "Indeed I can remember my own mother still owning the first lipstick that her sister had bought for her as a gift during the second year of her marriage - this item served as a memory of *home* of identity and belonging (to her sister)."

education that the first generation could not afford. This contradictory response to their children's plight would resurface in many different ways and none more so than with their children's ambivalent attitudes towards the Catholic Church. The father would often be absent from this dichotomy and it would be up to the mother to negotiate the rituals in accordance with her expectations from back home. The ritual of church attendance was a female claim and something that the men expected of the women but not something that they in turn had expected of themselves.

The Church would again be a pivotal force within this context and the rituals of baptism, Catholic teachings and first communions for their children acted as a guiding light for them. The children would become the central focus of the woman's life and often at the expense of her own happiness. The severe codes of behaviour imposed on women in the late 1950s in the South of Italy were being reinforced in Home Counties England and were often at odds with the 'host country's' expectations of parenting. The second generation born child would almost exclusively be baptised, if not in Italy, then in the local Italian Church or the nearest Catholic Church and have paesani as Godparents - often only recently met, if not a known family member. This stage in the life of the second-generation child has to be seen in the context of the possibility of return migration as being a significant feature in the life of the family[91]. The early childhood of the children was governed by the desires of the mothers and they would take their child/ren with them to mass on a Sunday. The changes to these circumstances have a multi impact on the importance and role of religious ceremonies and the Catholic mass in particular amongst the Italian community in general. As the children grew up they were less inclined to understand the significance of regular mass attendance and so it would be harder to attend mass as a family (although it was quite acceptable to attend without the man of the household - but as is often made apparent, his behaviour would often get special dispensation[92]). The code of 'la bella figura[93]was rigorously followed and ones family status as church attendees was an implicit part of upholding this. What is made apparent here is the way that the coding was such that *la bella figura*[94] was upheld by the woman's behaviour in relation to the children and rarely by the fathers'. The children would be mixing with school friends from all over the world and hence they would be exposed to religious perspectives that their own parents had no understanding of. This gap in knowledge would be one of many that surface at this stage during the identity forming age for the second-generation immigrant child.

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[91] In my own childhood, I always felt a sense of temporality about our home life. For example, since we would be going 'back home', there was no point in owning a telephone as it could not come with us and was very costly.

[92] "*It was accepted that the men did not attend church, since this was also the case back home. Men in Italy only attended church if they were looking to get married and so since they were already married they carried on not going to church when they were in England. My husband might come at Christmas time or for another special occasion but I go every Sunday*". J.

[93] How things look to the outside world and how the impression given then impacts on ones standing within the community.

[94] The image that one projects of oneself (and family) through ones mode of conduct.

The first generation Italian female would have competing demands on her time and it was necessary for her to earn subsidiary funds to her husbands' salary (especially if she was used to working before having had children). Sometimes she would work from home (dressmaking or other skilled crafts that had been transported and translated from *home* was not uncommon) but more often than not she would go out to work. The work would often involve long hours or additional over time and this might mean working during the weekend or very early in the morning. Communal life became more pressurised too and the expected codes of behaviour did not necessarily meet with the demands placed on the working mother. It was not always possible to get the children ready and dressed for mass and have a cooked lunchtime meal ready particularly if the woman was also working. It is interesting to note that the women who did not go into domestic paid work or the catering industry were more likely to be seen at mass and this was also the case for women that worked in their own business[95]. This regularity of attendance was not always achieved by the Italian migrant women since it depended on the type of job that they did. This started to result in fewer women being able to attend the Italian mass provided by the Italian Government for immigrants' abroad and there was a significant drop in attendance from the late 1980s onwards. The work legacy pushed by the Thatcherite government meant that those at the lower end of the working ladder had to work even harder than before and with the power of the unions being eroded, it was often immigrant workers that were forced into no choice situations. This meant that workers were less able to reject the (unreasonable) demands placed on them by their English-speaking bosses - their children would act as ciphers and interpreters in the language of bullying and exploitation[96]. Poorly understood regulations and a flexible work force has proved lucrative for the post war British economy - but at the expense of its immigrant workers. The change in focus that was now given to work meant that the impact of the Catholic Church was lessened still further. Rituals would still be undertaken such as *important masses* like Palm Sunday Mass were attended if possible but church attendance took a back seat in the evolving journey of identity translation[97].

Italian Cafes and Visual Images - From Boxing and Football to Santa Maria and Frank Sinatra

The popularity of Italian cafes and restaurants grew in post war Britain as the economy boomed and teenagers could freely express themselves for the first time in living memory. For the first

[95] *"I was always aware that Mrs Bisogno went to church every week. She just shut her shop and did what she wanted. I could not do this; I had to go to work. It must be nice to have your own business, nobody telling you what to do".* V..

[96] *"My mum had not been getting paid whenever she was off sick, I had to go down there and sort it out otherwise she was convinced they did not have to pay her. That all changed once I went to speak to them, they had been paying her wrong amount and so paid her all the back pay they owed her. She didn't even know".* L.

[97] *"Since I am a cleaner at the hospital everyday, it means I can't get to Church anymore. It depends which shift I'm on but I usually work on Sundays because I get paid double time so I have become a bad Catholic. I think God will have to understand".* J.

time young people had their own money to spend on themselves and they could choose how to spend it. The exoticism of anything foreign that occurred during this period has to be seen in the context of this teenage revolution. Post war traditional Britain was alarmed to see their offspring rebelling against everything that had previously been held within stable known codes of behaviour. However the New Britain that was emerging rarely credits the impact of mass immigration within this cultural framework. The recent work on the *Windrush Ship* and the Jamaican immigrant experience served to highlight the plight of one particular set of experiences and I am attempting to discuss another experience that was happening at the same time. The important work that has been done by scholars such as Stuart Hall and others on the notion of race and cultural identity has always allowed me to make connections whilst at the same time highlighting the lack of visibility that the post war Italian immigrant experience has been given. This has often struck me as being ironic given the huge impact that this presence has within the cultural domain, from fashionable café bars to important fashion designers. *Bar Italia* in Soho, London has its roots in late 1950s Britain, as does the very successful fashion designer Antonio Berardi whose parents emigrated from Sicily to England in the late 1950s and who is now one of the leading designers who represented Britain abroad.

The cultural icons valued by contemporary second generation Italians such as the singer Madonna or the football player Baggio are those shared by other members of their peer groups. The identifications made are often different; Madonna as pop and feminist icon to non Italians but beautiful Italian female and proof that immigration was an appropriate choice to contemporary Italians. Baggio is a highly skilled football player to non-Italians but to Italians he is a signifier for the very essence of what it means to be an Italian male in contemporary Italy through the eyes of second generation Italians. Baggio is the cypher through which Italian identity is trasmited to a genertion who have been disinfranchised from their roots and can only hold on to images in order to place themselves in the contemporary world. Interestingly the identifications that are made by immigrant Italians can often cross over with those made by Italians in contemporary Italy - Madonna acts as a symbol of a successful second generation immigrant whilst at the same time also being an inspirational tool. Her hagiography is commonly known to include references to her (American) mother having died when Madonna was a child but very little is ever discussed about her Italian father.

The cultural imagery that is to be found scattered on the walls of Italian cafes and restaurants will usually be dependant on the age of the café. Certainly older cafés such as *Bar Italia* still hangs black and white images of Joe DiMaggio's winning contest portrait and well as a publicity photograph of Sofia Loren circa early 1950s. For a café that is forever deemed fashionable it is interesting that it has not made any concession to modernity other than its refurbishment in the early 1990's. This included a wider television screen that further enhanced its reputation for

being the focal meeting point for both Italians and non-Italians during the *World Cup* and European football championships. Situated very close to the oldest Italian restaurants (*Quaglino's, Bertorelli's* and *Quo Vadis* all originate from the very first wave of Italian immigration in the 1920's) it is a testament to the work ethic instilled into the second and third generation Italians and it is currently run by Tony Poledri who is the grand son of the original owner. Frequented by both newly arrived Italians and those born here (as well as non Italians who have their own identifications with the café), the owner was born into the cafe and restaurant culture and he consciously sells back to his customers an image of themselves that reminds them of their *greatness.* Only employing newly arrived Italians (overwhelmingly predominately male) that do not speak a great deal of English (if any), the owner easily recreates an image of Italy that is acceptable to both Italians and non-Italians. Poledri operates in the same sphere that his grandfather was forced to participate in the mid 1950s - he pays his work force very little and is never short of potential employees who learn their trade at *Bar Italia* and will then move onto better paid employment but usually remaining in the catering industry. As they dust and clean photographic imagery often purporting to show an aspect of *Italians* that they themselves (usually in their early twenties[98]) were not born into, it is important to note the nostalgic function of the selected imagery. Neither the owner nor his employees can account for the significance of the mediated representation of Italians when asked (other than to give credence to the images always having been there) and yet the customers immediately associate the imagery as being representative of Italians as one single homogeneous mass.

The more upmarket Italian restaurants previously mentioned stopped being owned by Italian families during the last recession and more specifically due to the high rent increases that were enforced in the Soho area of London by Westminster Council. The Italian origins of *Quo Vadis* are virtually non existent today despite the new owners attempt at keeping some of the original architectural features of the building. Serving fashionable Contemporary European cuisine and more recently owned by the acclaimed French chef Marco Pierre White and now owned by the Conran Chain, it bears little resemblance to its origins in any shape or form. Walking past the dark exterior that is still part of the existing building the Italian flag that hung from its roof is no longer part of its identity and many that frequent the restaurant do so in ignorance of its past history. The same can be said for the restaurant *Quaglino's* (also now owned by the *Conran Chain*) whose huge expansive spacing and minimal eating arrangements are quite in keeping with contemporary restaurant design. Despite keeping its original name, the restaurant does not serve Italian food but much like *Quo Vadis*, Contemporary European cuisine and there are no visual displays that would define any specific cultural heritage. Interestingly, both restaurants

[98] I interviewed a total of 8 waiters in July 1999 and all of them were aged 20-22 and had come to Britain straight after military service. Over half of these waiters had a very limited level of English language but insisted that this was a skill they would pick up through working in Britain.

mentioned employ a large percentage of non-English waiting staff (predominantly male) with a large proportion of them being recent émigrés from Italy.

The relationship between modern living and non-English accents is worth scrutinising here. The interplay between this often highly sexualised exoticm and the serving of food by a stranger to this land is not lost on the restaurant owners despite their much publicised claims that they are unable to find '*home grown* labour that possesses the equivalent skills and aptitude necessary for waiting. As already mentioned above, often these émigrés are newly arrived and are often dependant on word of mouth for any type of employment that needs minimal (English) linguistic skills and olive skin. The more newly arrived for example is from former Yugoslavia and it is a common façade for them to pretend to be Italian in origin in order to favour with customers[99]. With foreign travel being so affordable (particularly with the inception of low cost airlines that fly to exclusively Northern Italian destinations, other than *GOFly* who have introduced cheap flights to Naples and Palermo) and Italy being the highly publicised preferred holiday destination for the middle classes (for example, the current prime Minister Tony Blair's repeated family holidays in Tuscany) the restaurant owners are rather inclined to recreate the holiday experience and fantasy at home. The preferred memories of well spent holidays often consist of the ritual of food and the surroundings in which it was consumed. The restaurant culture that has evolved in London and the South East of England in particular, has allowed for restaurant owners to further cultivate and privilege the (English) master (foreign) servant. Iconic visual images do not pervade the walls of these exclusive restaurants but in their place we have the live spectacle that acts out the known stereotype.

The Italian Waiter and Food

In populist chain restaurants such as *Pizza Express* the waiting staff are often told to exhibit stereotypical behaviour from their country of origins and so it is quite a common feature to see groups of female customers being entertained by their Italian male waiter in a manner that is unseen in contemporary Italy. Despite claims made that multiculturalism has given Englishness some understanding of communities outside of its own experience, it is not uncommon for English customers to expect their waiting staff to exhibit ideas of Italianness that match pre formed stereotypical notions of behavioural traits. Together with this, pockets of Italy have been bought and are owned by the monied English and areas of Tuscany and Venice can no longer be afforded by locals. Of course it is important to note that the *rustic features* made so famous by the romanticised fictions embroiled in print are often the very things that the privileged English will dispose of as soon as they arrive. Quite used to the many privileges that local Italians do not have (running water or practical plumbing systems, for example) at great expense they will ensure

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[99] Sugar Reef, London, waiter, July 2000

these amenities are made available to them - usually at the expense of the rustic greenery that surrounds them. Ironically they will be living *the peasant life* that actually bears little resemblance to how the local Italians live. The interesting anecdotes by writers such as Tim Parks (living in Italy and married to an Italian) tell us little about the politics of Italy other than that which is easily marketable to an English audience. The reproduction of the known stereotype is peppered with outsider interest that legitimises exoticm amongst the English middle classes. The media coverage of Tuscany, the holiday destination for the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, is enveloped within known racial characteristic behaviour and the Blairs are constantly contrasted with acceptable notions of what it means to be Italian and hence different from the English (Blairs). The appropriation of particular foodstuffs is mentioned repetitively as are descriptions of clothes and the weather. Known standardisation of the image of Italy is reproduced for consumption only to be questioned by its subjects in amazement - the image portrayed bears little resemblance to the country that they know.

The exoticisation of all things Italian can be traced back historically, it goes back even further than the *Grand Tour*[100] and is evident in more contemporary literature as well, although it is important to stress that this literature has almost exclusively focussed on the North of Italy and very little is (still) available on the South. It is not uncommon to see yet another English writer fictionalise their experiences of '*bella Tuscany* or other Northern regions of Italy and this printed matter serves as a tool through which the act of knowing a county is made possible. The performative nature of the *strange ways* in which the local Italians are often described serve at once to normalise English behavioural patterns whilst at the same time exoticising the other. It is this known (privileged) construct that the monied English take home with them and then attempt to live with when entering their (English) local Italian restaurant. One of the first generation Italian women that I interviewed for this thesis, told me that at her place of work, she is regularly asked to produce exported Italian dishes with meaningless names such as *Pasta Napolitana* and *Pasta alla Romana*.[101] Despite both dishes only existing in the non-Italian's experience since Italian food is regional, this is the language of the restaurant eating middle classes and not one easily understood by the Italian immigrant worker. The service workers that will enable *the English abroad* to have a comfortable existence whilst staying or indeed living in the more fashionable parts of Italy (the local plumber, the local heating engineer) have much in common with the Italian immigrant service worker in England. Facial and bodily expressions taking the place of verbal language is the stuff of many printed fictitious narratives takes for granted - as is the level of humour that these un-English expressions can generate. As has been already touched upon, multiculturalism in England has not fully embraced diversity, and diversity of expression and the (comical) faces pulled by the Italian immigrant worker in England are also all

[100] The image of the Grand Tour is popularised in films such as *Room With A View*, Directed by James Ivory, 1985.
[101] Q is a cook at a Trust National Health Hospital.

too often misconstrued. Italians within these writings are described as the foreigner, although a non-Italian (in Italy) is producing the writing and this assertion is reproduced and constantly repeated within the context of the Italian restaurant in England. Many of these restaurants are closed during the August period when the immigrant Italian will return *back home* (although it is not uncommon in central London to see hairdressers, cafes and even Italian run fish and chip shops also closed for the duration). The magic that is experienced during the Italian holiday is sought by the English middle classes upon their return and hence the popularity of specific suppliers of Italian cuisine.

The River Café, which despite its name is in actual fact an expensive restaurant in West London, is an interesting case study in relation to Italian (*peasant*) cuisine in England. Founded by Ruth Rodgers, (whose mother in law is Italian) the restaurant is a visual testament to the lived possibility that 'cheap food' can be made to look and taste expensive. Based on what the restaurant calls rural Italian peasant food this is the acceptable face of exoticism that is experienced and endorsed by its passing and regular clientele as well as the food critics who especially favour this type of cuisine. Simple dishes such as spaghetti with olive oil, basil and Parmesan cheese have been reinvented into a culinary delight and no concession is made to its origins as cheap food that would cater for the larger family that was still popular in post war Italy. Unlike today (where Italy has the smallest birth rate in the Western world) post war Italy saw families that had four or more children. These children were often deemed necessary in order to ensure the smooth running of the land. Agricultural work in post war Italy (and still in some parts of contemporary Italy) was the overwhelming employment possibility for any family and the more hands available then the better it was for each of the families involved. Importantly, it was this type of work (seasonal and casual) that gave pre immigration males the sole work experience (usually pre military service) before coming to work in factories in Britain. This type of cheap food could be plentiful however little money each household had and it is to the bemusement of the post war Italian immigrant to Britain that this food is being sold back to the monied English at vast expense.

Restaurants such as *The River Café* (and others) reconfigure poverty as aspiration. Claims that only specific suppliers are used from Italy for the ingredients, serve to further *authenticate* the imagined experience of rural living in rather a similar way to those (monied English) who reconstruct *'rustic* buildings in Tuscany. Reconstructing the fantasy that is *peasant living* assumes the degree of privilege that excludes immigrant Italians in Britain who rarely (if ever) dine outside of the home. Those who came here *chose* to get away from the very food that is now been served up as a culinary delight and through inventing a new life for themselves they could afford to eat a wider (and 'better) range of foods. Immigrant Southern Italians would have eaten very little meat and it was perceived as a rare delicacy reserved for Christmas and Easter. The

animal (usually one that had stopped serving its function, i.e. a chicken that could no longer lay eggs – the eggs would have either been sold or eaten by the family) would have been 'home grown, slaughtered and cooked in order that every part of it became edible. Pigs trotters and chicken feet were deemed an additional treat and this culinary experience was recreated in Britain by those that went on to emigrate here. The stock created from the cooked animal would be and still is used to make pasta soup - although interestingly this is not acknowledged in the *River Café Cookbook*, which advises its readers to use a processed stock cube. Within their original Italian context, the ingredients that make up *peasant cuisine* were those readily available to the community (olives picked from their own olive tree would be consumed if they were in season, and so on) and would invariably be produced on the same soil that would generate the family an income.

The commodification of foods stuff usually associated with the lived reality that was experienced through poverty in the South of Italy by those that came to emigrate to Britain, is comparable to the rise in popularity in Asian and specifically Indian foods, with Chicken Tika Masalla now being the most popular English dish consumed. This dish is an important barometer of the cultural trends permissible within modern Englishness. In the same way that this dish does not exist in India and has in fact been created for the English in England, there have been Italian inventions created in England that do not exist in Italy. Of the many examples an interesting case study is the invention of the *tomato pesto*, which is unheard of in Italy but sells very well in the best known supermarkets in England. An adulterated version of the known green pesto (a sauce made from basil and olive oil that originates from the Veneto area of Italy and is not normally consumed in any other region), the prescribed ingredients have had a tomato base added to them to create a new type of sauce to mix into ones pasta. Marketed as a traditional Italian sauce a mythical part of Italy is being sold to England, one that is unrecognisable to Italians in Italy as well as Italian emigrants that live here. An unreliable authenticity is being created that embodies ideas of the *simple life* with those of privilege without once acknowledging the politics of poverty and truth. This consumer led notion of authentic foodstuff allows for the appropriation of an essence of something imagined and goes on to reproduce it as fact rather than fiction. Wine producing areas of Italy suffer a similar treachery in that grapes produced in other parts of the world are labelled as *Italian* even when they have been bottled in far colder climates. Italian immigrants are still producing their own wines here in England with grapes imported from Italy, and this serves as another example where English people will experience something *Italian* that Italians themselves do not take part in. Since so many immigrant Italians produce their own wine they do not consume ready bottled wine and this is something that only the second and third generation are now experiencing. The Italian waiters that are serving in Italian restaurants such as *The River Café* are helping to replicate and chronicle the consumer love affair with all things Italian and they are often serving dishes that they do not themselves recognise.

Her mother ordinarily teaches traditional regional dishes to the daughter. The notion of the local, the traditional and the regional is problematic within the immigrant world. One exists between both worlds but often belongs to neither of them. English food becomes something that is other than the food cooked at home. Southern Italians brought with them the desperate need for self sufficiency in England and one of the key skills that this involved was their ability to grow their own food on their own land. It is very common that the council run allotment plots will be rented by a high percentage of Italian immigrants. These agricultural skills were often the only skills that the male migrants would have brought with them to England. The strength of their bodies has already been touched upon[102] and it was this commodity that made them originally employable in England. English rose gardens were transformed into vegetable gardens as soon as the immigrant workers were able to afford their own homes with some land at the back. The idea of a garden was very much an English notion of what to do with land, as was the idea that land should be decorative rather than productive. The different colours coming out of the gardens of the English neighbours harboured exotic flowers whilst the gardens of the foreigners would be specifically green and regularly ploughed. The allotment and the land at the end of the house were and still are the regular work that the male Italian immigrant does outside of his paid employment. Many localised Italian vegetables are grown in the *Home Counties* in Britain and they will often share particular seeds and crops from each other's region so as to be able to compare notes once the produce has grown[103].

Seasonal cooking then becomes the normalised structure to work within and specific produce is only consumed at particular times in the year. The modernised cooking advantage of produce being available to the consumer all year round via the supermarket is not something that is always shared by the émigré. It was only in the early nineteen eighties that Italian foods such as dry pasta, chopped tinned tomatoes and Parmesan cheese became available in the supermarket. It is during this period that the stereotype of Italian cookery became formulated - a limited range of cooking ingredients made available in England coincided with cheaper airfares to Italy. As more English people flew to fashionable Northern regions of Italy the Southern Italians that lived in England were still surviving with Italian family run shops that stocked a wider range of the necessary produce that they themselves did not grow (for example different types of spinach) or did not have time to make (for example pasta or bread). The *Italian van* toured the different parts of the South East of England and catered for the various Italian communities. For example, the *Mangieri* family's run van that was based in Peterborough or the van that came from Bedford and catered for the majority of the *home counties*, gave the Italian community the opportunity to buy food produce that had been directly (and recently) imported from Italy. The van would drive from *Italian street* to *Italian street* (this was the name commonly given to the

[102] See the research about The London Brick Company in the earlier part of this chapter.
[103] "*We plant the vegetables that we would have eaten at home. This is another way that we have saved money, we don't buy our vegetables from the supermarket or the market unless we really have to*". V.

streets that were known to have Italian inhabitants in them) knocking on the doors of Italian immigrant families offering them the latest produce that they had available. Families would stock up on large hunks of *Parmesan* cheese and fresh sausages in order to satisfy the desire for these foods to be continuously available in the way that they would have been *'back home*. The mythologising of 'back home' has to be seen in the context of the fact that rarely would these types of foods have been consumed *'back home* given the level of poverty that had ensured their émigrés status, and if these types of foods had been available they would have been home made. If the *Italian van* was unavailable (had returned to Italy to replenish itself) or if it was deemed too costly then it was typical for the Italian family to make their own sausages at home or to produce their own cured meats. It was not an unfamiliar sight to see different meat types hanging in the dry environment of the upper bedroom in an Italian émigrés home - this is a much more unusual occurrence today when such cured meats are much more readily available in England and the once poor immigrant now tends to be in a position to afford such products.

As air travel became more affordable and hence a more common occurrence amongst the English middle classes this forged an interesting change in the Italian immigrants ability to return 'back home' more frequently. Whereas previously they would have negotiated the family luggage with the food produce that they were additionally bringing back from Italy through train travel (from Sicily to England this meant a three day journey which also included two nights aboard a moving train) air travel brought new possibilities in relation to what could be defined as *hand luggage*. Fresh olives recently picked from a family members' tree served as a memory of that person as well as being something that would be consumed and different types of hand luggage would be needed depending on the food produce being brought into England (olive oil from family olive groves is probably one of the most common *mementoes*. Italian airports were (and on the whole still are) relatively relaxed about what was being brought in or being taken out of the country and this was often contrary to the English regulations where if the *importers* were caught, it could mean that some food produce would be destroyed or it may have been deemed as having weighed more than the legal limit and hence a fine would be incurred. Prickly pears were a particular source of amusement for the Italian immigrant returning home as the customs officials did not know that these foods had skins that were not to be touch by the bare hand, as this would result in a painful continuous itching and irritation of the skin. This forgotten history lives on only in the memories of the first and second generation Italian immigrant and is often completely removed from the experience of the third generation who buy their olive oil from the local supermarket as do the majority of the affluent classes in England.

Whilst the food consumed within the immigrant Italian home was regional and hence specific to the *homes* that were representative of the different parts of Italy, there was certainly a Southern Italian bias to the immigration and its foods. Comparative dishes were made at

different times of the year that would reflect the different local (and hence translated in England) customs and traditions from the various regions within Italy. Slices of a particular type of pie would be delivered as a sign of celebration and friendship to a neighbouring Italian family as would have been the custom *back home*. The *Home Counties* of Buckinghamshire would rarely be party to this invisible exchange of respect amongst the émigrés and would only become aware of it as they were slowly allowed within the homes of Italian immigrants. This usually occurred through school friends brought home by the second and third generations and these 'English children would become aware of this different world and its very existence. Shame and embarrassment at this perceived difference is something shared by the non first generation. The desire to be the same is so strong in children that they are so easily upset by their own difference. Variations on home cooking had to accommodate English foods so that a standardised normality could be exchanged within the school playground. The introduction of relatively new so called *convenience foods* meant that pasta would be the first course of a meal that would be followed by fish fingers and chips.

Ideas of difference and multiculturalism were not yet discussed within mainstream education and it was usual for the ethnic minority child (a term widely used in the nineteen seventies) to bring their own food for lunch at school. This would isolate the child who was at once already removed from the dominant group and would soon ensure that the child learnt to enjoy the food provided by the schools. This resulted in the only un-English main meal that the child would consume being be in the evening with their parents. Food as the very symbol of difference is something that children understand all too readily and nowhere was this difference so visible than in cookery classes that were taught at secondary level schooling for girls in the late seventies and early eighties. It was during these teachings that one was taught to *become English* and students were taught to cook traditional English foods such as *bread and butter pudding* or were taught to cook with ingredients that would never have been consumed within their home such as syrup. The enforcement of this knowledge through schooling helped to forge a notion of integration that was never truly felt by the second-generation daughter. Difference was felt in the very act of creation through cooking. Exotic ingredients such as syrup or the cooking of such an alien dessert as bread and butter pudding often lead to impossible translations at home as to what were the required ingredients for the following weeks class and what the end result was going to be. This exchange ran parallel to the cooking that the daughter was being taught at home which was usually seen as being of a more productive nature since it would ensure that the daughter would become a good housewife and mother. This assurance of the practicality of learning to cook that had indeed been the first generations' own mothers' experience was in direct contradiction with the schooling that was being provided for the second generation daughter whose philosophy was more along the lines of seeing cooking as being about pleasure.

Many of the traditional and regional dishes that were cooked by the first generation Italian woman are consumed less today. The second and third generation Italians are less interested in recreating foods that belong to an era from their past and more interested in commonality and convenience cooking. Many of the recipes for these dishes are in the memories of the first generation and rarely (if ever) written down and so it is only if the next generation have learnt how to cook these dishes that their survival will continue. Past and present ideas about what constitutes Italian food will vary depending on the Italian immigrant generation. It is more than likely that second and third generation Italian children do not cook any food that could be considered Italian and only consume what their English counterpart would consume. The English middle classes can be seen to possess knowledge of Italian food that would be unrecognisable to the second and third genertion Italain immigrant. A rocket salad is only understood to be Italian by the restaurant eating English middle classes and would be unknown by the second and third generation in the home Counties of England. Alienation from ones own roots is only understood to be alienation when it is an emotion that is truly felt and then some type of comprehension needs to occur. Difference in relation to food is felt between Italians from different regions (minestra[104] in the South of Sicily is different from that consumed in the South of Naples for example) and this is of course amplified in relation to 'English food. This sense of alienation is a normalised existence for the first generation Italian immigrant and something that is negotiated in the early part of the second (and sometimes third) generations' life but is some how lost as the child becomes an adult. Perhaps this needs to be perceived as integration, but loss seems a more fitting term as usually the sense of alienation is no longer felt because there is no longer any visible evidence of difference - no more foreign food is consumed.

Those Left Behind Looked at From Afar

It is interesting to look at the internal relationship and workings between those who migrated to England and those who decided to remain in their village of birth. It is common for the Italian immigrants who had siblings that did not emigrate, to speak about them having had a better experience and not having fared badly - unlike themselves who had had to leave home and become exploited workers. They might not necessarily define themselves as exploited workers but neither do they feel happy with the lives that they feel that they were forced to create for themselves in an all pervading foreign land. Their sense of alienation from their own children is often put down to the fact that they live in a country those values they do not really respect and their understanding of these values is seen through the spectre of things being better *back home*. This nostalgia for back home has been explored elsewhere but cannot be underestimated in relation to their attitudes towards their own children and those of their siblings children. The impact of Italian television through satellite has helped to alter their perception of the country

[104] Pasta soup

that they left behind but this has only happened latterly in the post nineteen eighties period when the third and fourth generation Italian son or daughter is unlikely to have visited Italy or speak Italian despite their Italian looks and surnames.

The satellite television revolution that occurred in the mid nineteen eighties gave Italian immigrants living in England the opportunity to see their homelands visualised in a manner that they had not previously been used to. The public face that Italian immigrants liked to occupy was that of having successfully manoeuvred their sons and daughters into stable marriages either from within the (Italian) immigrant community or from their own home towns and villages. Italian television portrayed a version of Italy that could previously have been disputed due to a lack of visual and other types of evidence. Second-generation sons and daughters would try to justify their behaviour which was seen as exhibiting an English influence by their parents, as only being comparable to their cousins behaviour in contemporary Italy. Of course the first generation's image of 'home' was exclusively through the nostalgic filter of amnesiac blindness (despite their regular return trips) and so their children's justifications were disputed as being further examples of the impact of a specifically English influence. Italian television gave rise to a representation of Italy that has hugely impacted on Italian immigrants perception of themselves as well as the family that they left behind. Modernity can only be imagined in the minds of Italian immigrants as something that has to involve displacement and more specifically immigration - from one place (country) to another (country). The non-agricultural mentality constantly played out and interpreted as perpetual displays of Englishness exists as the interplay between the modernised English worlds with the pre-modernised Italian world only as a backdrop.

The visualised world made possible through satellite television features aspects of the family that is unrecognisable within the idealised Italian immigrant world in England. It has served as a mediating force that has helped to determine the evolution of a different set of relationships between the first generation Italian immigrant and the second and third generations, as well as the relationship between these various generations and their family groups remaining in Italy. The images consumed on Italian television (usually the commercial channels Rai 1, Rai 2 and Rai 3) function in themselves as ciphers of modernity - it is only at this latter stage in the first generations' life that these images can be purchased and be made available to them. In the same way that English television served to alienate them from England, 'Italian television' in England serves to alienate them from Italy. The break up of the traditional family group that has always been seen as being part of the fabric of the English world as it was seen through the eyes of the Itlaian immigrant has materialised into being something that also exists in Italy and at an alarming rate. The Catholicism embedded within the lives of the immigrant community is overtly visible in Italy and something that was held onto by the immigrant community as being an example of a devout difference between the two countries and this overwhelmingly giving Italy an outright

status far beyond that of England. Although the overt Catholicism present in contemporary Italian television is indisputable, what is remarkable is its highly sexualised imagery that is deemed permissible by its eager (immigrant) audience. Patriarchs who forbade their daughter to wear mini skirts at the height of their fashion (in England) think nothing of consuming images of dancing girls on Italian game show wearing very little. The fantasy world that is Italian television (constant game shows disguised as family entertainment that last on average three hours at a time, or telesoaps that last twenty five episodes and are often dubbed from South America) is pitched against the gritty *reality* that is the Italian news programme. Images that would be severely censored on English television screens (corpses as they have been immediately found by unsuspecting bystanders, used weapons with the original blood still on them), are passed as having some degree of news value. They serve as a constant reminder to first generation Italian immigrants that Italy is not *home* any more.

The second and third generations relationship to the Italian television product, as has already been touched upon, is different to that of their parents. It can act as a visual metaphor for homogeneity whilst at the same time act as a symbol for difference. It was the intruder that would mean that they had to be cut off from the English world that they would otherwise consume - watching one country's television would automatically exclude the watching of the opposite country. Owning more than one television is something far more common in the contemporary world since the television was still seen as being a luxury item and they knew of some family members back home that had never seen a television at all. Often marginalised due to linguistic problems, the consumption of Italian television has meant that the first genertion Italian immigrants in England have had their level of spoken Italian improved but usually at the expense of their spoken English which was greatly helped by them watching English television (this was at times their only access to the spoken English language if they were employed amongst other Italians). The marginalisation through language has acted in the opposite way for the second and third generation Italian British born child. Their complete lack of entry into the world of contemporary Italy has resulted in them feeling quite disenfranchised from the notion of a lived experience that they can call their own as opposed to the one lived by their parents prior to immigration into Britain. The memories held in their parents minds have become translated memories that the British born Italian feels both a sense of loyalty towards as well a sense of alimentation. These paradoxical emotions are paramount to the reception that they give to the images that constitute Italian television and are consumed so avidly by their parents. They will not completely understand the spoken Italian and find the heavy emphasis on family game shows uninteresting in comparison to the English televisual counterpart. Neither understands nor feels that they recognise the world that is portrayed.

Their sense of alienation from the glamorous showgirls that serve as the visual engagement for the otherwise rather mundane game show, together with the manicured males evident in the advertisement of products that are usually not available in England, is heightened by their parents seemingly overwhelming engagement with those very images. It is a world that all sets of generations are outside of but one whose images present an ambiguous inter (dependant) relationship with for the first generation émigré. In their defence, they will privilege the function of their own language giving them accessibility to the (entire televised) world serving as a motivating factor behind their consumption. They will also give priority to the cohesion that the community shares in being able to discuss comparable television events that help to give them a sense of themselves as Italians. Festas, and events such as the *San Remo* (music competition) give them a sense of unity that is not shared by their children who experience a comparable sense of alienation should they be forced to take part on these occasions whilst holidaying in Italy with their family. The public and private worlds collide on Italian television in the way that they do on the streets of the Southern Italian villages - the comparative silence of the Home Counties English streets is deemed deafening. The quiet and more importantly, non-public world that structures the outside world of the British born Italian child finds them being unused to the obsessive aestheticisation of the body that is normalised through Italian television. The Italian world of la bella figura (ones image and hence social standing as it is deemed by those who consume how you look, i.e. the community) figures very highly on Italian television and much like the consumption of television in the capitalist era elsewhere, it sets the standard for what is deemed as the permissible parameter for acceptable behaviour.

This visual collision between the screened 'reality' that is Italian television for the first generation Italian immigrant and that is lived out amongst the immigrant community in England is the cause of a heightened sense of alienation felt by the second and third generation (not always willingly acknowledged). Their sense of Italy is shared by their English friends and owes much to American culture with *The Sopranos* (an episodical look at a contemporary Italian American Mafia family in crisis) being the latest American screened product to be consumed in England[105]. The conflict that the second and third generation British born Italian experiences in relation to their perceived identity make up is partly due to the contrasting images between the Italian American images and those that are constructed through Italian television. Although historically satellite television has become a feature of the Italian household more recently, the shift in relation to the impact on the second and third generation has to be deemed lesser than the possible impact had it been available when they were younger and their identities still forming. It would be hard to quantify what influence these images would have had (on the British born Italian) given that the strength of the family on the aiding of the formation of ones identity was of a higher perceptibility. Indeed, given the known degree of impact on the first generation Italian

[105] 1999/2000

immigrant, had satellite television been consumed by them in previous decades it may have influenced the choices that they made in relation to return migration or the purchasing of a second home (for holidays or in order to have somewhere to retire to). Due to the paramount importance still given to 'la bella figura' in contemporary Italy, there is no commonality of experience that is vocalised by return migrants, but in my research through case studies I have noted feelings of betrayal (not usually complete regret) and misunderstanding of the Italy that they had returned to - it was indeed the Italy from their nostalgic pasts that they expected to re visit and the harsh reality (evident on the televised images) was some what different.

Memories and Movies

In this concluding part to *Culture and Film*, I want to address the key role that popular cinema has played in helping to shape ones sense of self, as it was understood by Italian émigrés to Britain. In the following chapter I will be assessing what the impact of the films that they saw prior to arriving as bulk recruitment immigrant workers in the 1950s. Importantly, 1955 was the year that saw cinema attendance figures at their highest, with 819 million people going to the cinema in Italy [1]. In the same year that my father and many of his paesani[2] left a small town in Sicily (Aragona, Province of Agrigento) for reasons of both poverty and unemployment, Italy's economic miracle[3] happened. In part this economic miracle was made visible through the huge popularity of the cinematic experience[4]. As many were preparing to leave Italy, the cinema acted as a unifying factor in energising the creation of the memories that were to go on to have a particular role in the lives of the Italian diasporic community. This chapter will discover what some of these films were and will go on to question how one can begin to consider their impact on this diasporic community. It is a particular intention of this chapter to specifically address the films that were felt to be significant by those, Italian émigrés that I interviewed, since, the relationship to history must come from a particular point in the present, for both the distance of the past and the closeness of the present are necessary components of remembrance[5]. The films that were mentioned were not those canonical works that are more commonly understood to be significant by film historians (Italian and otherwise) of Italian cinema of the 1950s period. In order to be able to fully consider some of these questions, I will initially provide an analysis of where these films are located within cinematic history. Since they are not visible in their own right, other than in the minds of those that I write about, some of the findings will have to be seen within the context of other grander narratives of Italian cinema history. It is hoped that this part of the thesis will both highlight and provide evidence for, the impact of populist cultural forms (with a particular focus on the cinema of the 1950s) on those groups of people that became émigrés from the South of Italy to Britain and their subsequent generations.

The *Italian Neo-Realist* movement has both shaped our understanding of Italian history and of Italian film history as its filmmakers perceived it[6]. The legacy of this movement, in its many complexities[7] gave rise to the films that come under the label of *Art Cinema*[8] and again these films have been historicised in such a way that Italy forms part of the European Avant-Garde within the history of cinema. However, the genre of films

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[1] Robin Buss, Italian Films (B.T. Batsford, 1989), p14
[2] The term used to describe a person from the same *paese* (town).
[3] Buss, p35
[4] "*We had nothing but we could always afford to go to the cinema*", E.
[5] Rosalind Galt, Italy's landscapes of loss: historical mourning and the dialectical image in Cinema Paradiso, Mediterraneo and Il Postino (Screen, Vol. 43, No 2, Summer, 2002)
[6] Rossellini, De Sica, Visconti and others
[7] For example, issues of realism, narration of space, politics of Italy that then gave rise to mass immigration
[8] L'Avventura by Antonioni was released in 1960 and was Art Cinema's defining film, other directors that came under this label include Fellini and Pasolini.

that were popular amongst Southern Italians and the rural classes, many of whom went on to become the economic migrants to Britain, have not been recorded. The value of films in the grand narrative of film history tends to exclude films that were hugely popular amongst audiences. The artistic merit of films, together with their cultural significance is judged along very narrow parameters. Caldiron and Della Casa have argued that the peasants from the rural communities did not like the *Neo-Realist* films, precisely because they lack any hope for the future[9].

The populist melodramas of the 1950s, in Italy were treated very much in the same way to the corresponding films in America[10]. However, unlike the American films that were reclaimed under the development of feminist film theory in Britain[11], in Italy, many of the films that form part of the genre in question are buried in obscurity and not very easy to locate. With this in mind, the nature of what constitutes filmic, cultural and historical analysis becomes questionable, as does the degree of value accredited to one cultural output as opposed to another. The escapist material that is usually associated with Hollywood has been reconsidered[12] recently, although American blockbusters are as popular in Italy now as they were in the 1950s. Dubbed American films were and are the norm for film audiences, however home grown films were also very popular, as audience identification was such that, only the high emotions that were performed on the screen could guarantee an enjoyable evening out. It was to be the performative nature of the narratives that would be prolonged in their time span to still hold a large degree of importance to some Italian émigrés in Britain, some forty to fifty years later. The cultural context of these films, together with how they were seen to function in their own time is important to me here but has proved very difficult to research, given the unavailability of the original material. The émigrés treasuring of the material, so many years later, is important here, because its historical specificity parallels the treatment that the rural workers received in the 1950s in both Italy and Britain. The re-telling of the narratives seen, gave the films an importance to their consumers that is not easily accessible to those who are more usually the writers of film history. Equally, that this importance should have such longevity and cross both cultures and locations, is also key to an understanding of the diverse framings that cinema has had for a range of peoples who are often otherwise voiceless.

Pierre Sorlin has written about the huge success of the melodrama *Catene*[13] (Matarazzo, 1949) that was seen by six million people, one out of eight Italians. [14]This film began the popular appeal of the director, Raffaello Matarazzo's particular brand of melodrama. As a director he has been seen by some as (a label for) a certain kind of conscientiously achieved film. With Matarazzo popular audiences no longer thought they were scorned by filmmakers and given any old rubbish.[15] *Catene* was the first of a series of distinct melodramas (which included *Tormento*, 1950, *I Figli di Nessuno*, 1951, *Chi E Senza Peccato*, 1952, Vortice, 1954, *Torna!* 1954, *Angelo Bianco*, 1955, *L'Intrusa* (*La Moglie del Dottore*), 1955, *Malinconico Autunno*, 1958, (some of which I

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[9] Caldiron and Della Casa, Appassionatamente: Il elo nel Cinema Italianao (Torino, Lindau, 1999), Page 132
[10] See my writing on Sirk, starting from page 18
[11] I am thinking of the work by Laura Mulvey, amongst others
[12] Dyer's book *Only Entertainment* (London, Routledge, 2002) is a good example of this.
[13] This film title is translated from the Italian into *Chains*.
[14] Pierre Sorlin, *Italian National Cinema, 1896-1996* (London, Routledge, 1996), P107
[15] Sorlin, P108

shall discuss later on). It is exclusively this era of films made by Matarazzo that are mentioned by those that I interviewed. Matarazzo's popularity was to constitute an appeal that was to last well into the late 1950s and during this period, some of the last films viewed by those who went on to leave Italy for England were by Matarazzo. Part of Matarazzo's success was also to do with his choice of actors, who helped to exemplify the quality of the Italian melodrama from this era. The bringing together of actors such as Amedeo Nazzari and Yvonne Samson in particular, as well as Massimo Girotti (and to a smaller extent, Silvana Pampanini[16]) resulted in them featuring in some of the most memorable films made by Matarazzo. These actors' names featured regularly in the storytelling experiences mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, with one interviewee being moved to tears when I showed him a black and white film still of Nazzari[17]. During the course of the research it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between films from this genre since these actors would often be characterised in similar roles in other films. Being able to make this distinction has at times been problematic both with the historical research and the ethnographic work that I have carried out. Some of those that I interviewed would confuse films segments and characterisations, since all of the films that they mentioned seemed to follow a generic path and exclusively starred Nazzari, Samson or Girotti.

Nazzari was already a well-known actor to Italian audiences and when he reached middle age, he was happy to turn down quality roles in favour of starring as the lead man in many of Matarazzo's melodramas. It was in these films that he became established as the hero for a generation[18]. He was to maintain this type of role throughout the 1950s and it would seem the he is fondly remembered by some Southern Italian immigrant communities throughout Europe (and beyond).[19] He was popular with both men and women and redemption being made possible through Nazzari's unfailing love,[20] was often mentioned by the women that I interviewed.[21] As an actor, he had an established career that began in 1935 with Ginevra Degli Almieri (Guido Brignone[22]) and he was one of only a few actors that did not follow the comic tradition. Marco Girotti and Franco Fabrizi played similar roles to Nazzari and these three are distinctive in their appealing good looks and

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[16] Pampanini starred in other films such as *Un Marito Per Anna Zaccheo* (De Santis, 1953) with Amedeo Nazzari. De Santis's work more clearly followed the neo-realist tradition and he claimed that this film was about, "*the exploitation and objectification of female beauty in a capitalist society*". Quoted in *Giuseppe De Santis and Post War Italian Cinema* by Antonio Vitti (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996), P71.

[17] This was an image from the front cover of *Amedeo Nazzari* by Giuseppe Gubitosi. (Italy, Il Mulino, 1998), 22/08/01, E. aged 72, arrived in England in 1955. He said that he had not seen a photograph of Nazzari sine he left Sicily as a young man. When I asked him how it felt to see this photograph, he said he didn't but that seeing the image reminded him of how moving the films were.

[18] The words on a film publicity poster as remembered by W.. interviewed in Sicily, 04.09.99, unconfirmed data; from 1950s but the actual film title is unknown.

[19] Of the 15 interviews that I conducted amongst the male, Sicilian émigrés who are now in their sixties and who had gone to Belgium during the period of the 1950s to work as miners, all of them mentioned Nazzari as their choice of film star. My uncle L.S. claimed, "*We had no one to aspire to. We did not know any men who were that healthy, so good at getting what they wanted. We were skinny and starving – all we could do is hope to achieve some of what Nazzari achieved. When we got here, we were so glad to be a little closer to that dream but we knew that it would entail sacrifices. Even Nazzari could not help us with this, only God*". (L.S, La Luviere, Belgium, July 2000). Other interviews show that this is also the case amongst Sicilian immigrant groups in Germany, France and Switzerland.

[20] Sorlin, P108

[21] "*We didn't talk about those sorts of things when we were young. We saw things in films that we had never seen before. Our parents were right about not wanting us to go to see films at the cinema. Films gave us ideas; they showed us how to do things that we wouldn't have otherwise known about. They showed us how things could be. I was only allowed to go after I was married, with my husband. Then we moved here (Bedford) and I've never been to the cinema since*". (G. C, Aged 64, 11.08.01.)

[22] *Ginevra Degli Almieri*, was directed by Guido Brignone in 1935.

their ability to be popular amongst both male and female audiences. Aldo Fabrizi was another star from this period and is one of the only actors to play both comic and straight roles[23] although his larger build and rounder face seemed to preclude him from ever playing the good looking hero. Of his role in Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (1945), Vitti has said of Aldo Fabrizi, that there was an advantage in his heavy-looking figure, he moves slowly, creating an image of determination and religious confidence appropriate to his part of a parish priest.[24] This was not the type of role offered to Girotti or Nazzari, however, their clean-cut image and heroic qualities were representative of a particular period in Italian cinema[25]. Italian national cinema was either trying to vary its aesthetics, by combining comic and realist strategies, as in the so-called *Rosy Realism*, or faithfully undertaking the re-enactment of actual events[26]. The internationally successful *Neo Realist* films, together with the *Rosy Realism*[27] referred to here, have developed very few film stars between them. Girotti and Nazzari were key to a particular populist construction of stardom and one that is still alive in the minds of some members of the diasporic Italian communities in Britain.

Negra's writing about ethnic female stardom in America is useful to consider here in relation to issues of representation and reality. She argues that stars are indicative of the complex relationship between representation and social history[28] and this is a key consideration in terms of the inter-relationship between stardom and memory. The fact that memories of a 1950s Italian film star should linger on in the Italian-British diasporic community a great deal of time since they had long been forgotten in their own native land is important in aiding an understanding of the construction of identity, when this formation has entailed many multiple fragments, some of which have no visible place in the second location. The experience of the disrupted space, otherwise known as home, adds to the fluidity of identity and the different spaces that are continuously occupied (all at the same time) do not all share the same cultural value. These non-international stars (commonly compared to Hollywood stars[29]) were indeed huge national stars (often unheard of outside of their own countries) and they played a pivotal role in helping to shape a sense of their nation as well as their nationality, both within Italy of the 1950s and in Britain now. In her writings, Negra[30] claims that it was her aim to consider the ways in which icons of popular culture distil contested social issues and express and subtextualize issues of history. Whilst Negra has argued for the key role that popular culture has during periods of ideological transformation[31], I would like to extend this to its key role in both nurturing and helping to formulate (in this case) a sense of Italianicity. The populist melodramas, with their national stars were transmitters of how to be in the world and significance of this transmission is very much alive in the

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[23] Plays Don Pietro, the priest in *Rome Open City* (Rossellini, 1945).
[24] Vitti, p100
[25] Although Nazzari had starred in other types of roles and did also work with other directors such as Federico Fellini in *Le Notti Di Cabiria* (1957), Guy Hamilton in *I Due Nemici* (1961), Dino Risi in *Il Gaucho* (1964) and Vincent Minnelli in *Nina (Matter of Time)* (1976). The last film he made was the year before his death and ironically it was called *Melodrammore - E Vissero Felici E Contenti* (Maurizio Costanza, 1978)
[26] Vitti p77
[27] This is Vitti's term but is often translated in similar ways. It is an expression that delineates between the 'serious' films usually associated with the Neo-Realist films of the period and the melodramas made by a director such as Matarazzo.
[28] See '*Hollywood film and the narravization of ethnic femininity*', P9, in Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London, Routledge, Press, 2001)
[29] Nazzari was known as the Italian Errol Flynn - see Sorlin, p108.
[30] See the Introduction, in Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood, American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (London, Routledge Press, 2001)
[31] Negra, p24.

communities of immigrant groups in Britain. Historically, the debates about audiences that have proliferated in disciplines such as *Film* and *Cultural Studies* have tended to ignore the relationship between stardom and national identity although film studies in particular, has recently seen a growth of interest in the role of exiles and émigrés [32]. However, although this work is very important, it pitches itself as a comparative data gatherer to Hollywood and is interested in exploring the relationship between the émigré actor within the mainstream machine. One of the spaces that I hope to occupy is in relation to those that became émigrés from one pre-modern European country to another, wealthier European country and how through being participating populist audiences in their pre-modern times, through storytelling, they were able to maintain and continuously translate their own sense of being Italian.

Pursuing this theme further, the 1950s Italian female stars, were implicitly associated with being winners of beauty contests in the minds of populist home audiences and this quality was valued in women who through this role could then legitimately move on to an acting career. Their perceived beauty was of paramount importance and it is with this in mind, that Grignaffini has argued, that it is no accident that the Italian stars of the 1950s - Silvana Mangano, Lucia Bose`, Sofia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Silvana Pampanini, etc. - were discovered in the(se) beauty contests where the rise of Italianess, now expressed in physical forms and movements, could be celebrated to the full.[33] Therefore, Italian actresses did not go straight into acting as an initial career choice and interestingly few of those that did reach the higher levels of stardom were actually Italian in nationality, although this was always their assumed in-character ethnic identity[34]. It was Yvonne Sanson's covetousness that gave Southern Italian audiences a reflection of a version of femininity that had not been previously available to them through earlier representations of Italian femininity. Sorlin has said, *her features were regular but rather coarse* and that her *vulgarity was sensual, she could look extremely rough but with appropriate make-up she would become sweet or sexy.* She looked chaste but she could have so easily fallen.[35] He later goes on to say that it was precisely because Matarazzo cast her in roles as ordinary woman that her very common appearance prevented her from becoming a star[36]. The director capitalised on the ordinariness of Samson's looks by casting her in roles that were as diverse as a woman who admits to adultery before attempting suicide in *Chains* (1949) and as an angel in a convent in *Angelo Bianco* (1954). It was these types of paradoxical characterisations, together with the stark identifications made by the consuming audiences, which kept audiences watching Matarazzo's melodramas. The fantasies acted out through these stars are important to keep in mind in relation to the construction of Italian identity within the diasporic communities under discussion.

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[32] See *Screen dossier: European actors in Hollywood*, where Alastair Phillips (Introduction reprinted in Screen Volume 43, No 2, Summer 2002), discusses his project and forthcoming publication with Ginette Vincendeau, (eds), *Journeys of Desire. European Actors in Hollywood* is co-funded by the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris). He hopes to "develop a new agenda for an understanding of the complex history of exile or emigration in European film", p174.

[33] Giovanna Grignaffini, '*Female Identity and Italian Cinema of the 1950s* in Giuliana Bruno & Maria Nardotti, (eds), *Off Screen: Women & Film in Italy* (Routledge, 1988), p123

[34] For example, Yvonne Sanson was born in Greece to a French father and Turkish mother. Equally, Sofia Loren's transition from 'beauty queen' to movie star has been well documented and is typical of the journey followed by Italian beauty contestants who went on to become actresses.

[35] Sorlin, P108

[36] Sorlin, P109

Although both Nazzari and Samson made films separately, as did Girotti and Pampanini, it only took one of them to appear in the publicity of a film release, for audiences to know that a new melodrama was being released. This is interesting to consider in relation to the importance of the visual over the textual amongst a community of people living in the South of Italy in the 1950s, who had no other access to the mediated world. As I have discussed in my earlier chapter, the life experience of the popular audiences of the South would have been very narrow and outside locations would have been exclusively an experience only available to men during the experience of military service. It was unlikely that the men would be positioned near to their hometowns and villages during the usual year long time period of military service. This would then constitute the first encounter that the male rural workers and soon to be émigrés, would have with a space that was not their home. Their readings of the film posters advertising the latest Matarazzo melodrama would be influenced by the journey of military service for those that had done it, since they were now eligible to apply for work outside of their region. However, for those that were too young or were waiting to be called (men were only allowed to emigrate after they had completed what was then compulsory military service) these images helped to keep alive the aspirational possibilities that only emigration out of their home location could fulfil. Since many of the rural peasant workers (and non-workers) who would have seen the marketing posters for the latest film releases, would be illiterate, it is clear that the visual, and cinema in particular, has played a multiplicity of roles in keeping memories alive[37]. Additionally, Nazzari's carefully constructed cinematic image of experience and knowledge (particularly in relation to women) helped to keep alive a particular idea of what it meant to be a (Italian) man in the world. For many it was to be the image that they brought with them on their journeys as émigrés to Europe.[38]

The power of the voice and of being heard amongst a community of people whose experience is shared is fundamental to the nurturing of the self in an alien land. Small connections become significant as all new experiences begin to hold an importance that perhaps they would not hold back home. It is in this space of connectedness that the immigrant Italian identity in Britain was born. Through shared meanings and collective consideration being given to the values left behind, the formation of the self as an Italian was beginning. Being Italian was a new experience to those that came to Britain during this period, since many of them had never needed to question their national identity before. Other than for military service, many of the men (and women) who came had never left home before and had never travelled abroad. The narratives which were literally and metaphorically told through their identity cards[39] was often their first official engagement with themselves as Italian subjects. Their sense of regional identity as a Sicilian, or Neapolitan, etc, was far more common and this too was transported with them to Britain. The struggles to get these official papers are

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[37] When asked how he knew that a new film by Matarazzo was being shown, X, one of the Sicilian émigrés to England, interviewed in Sicily, 04.09.99, said, " *We would see a new picture of Nazzari pasted on to the walls in town. That's how we knew. Word would spread that there was a new film with Nazzari or Sanson. Everybody wanted to know about it".*

[38] *"When we arrived at Victoria station we all looked very similar, swept back hair like Nazzari and our only best suit, which was our wedding suit for those of us that were already married. We carried beaten old suitcases or home made versions of suitcases with very few things inside. They had told us we weren't allowed to bring much with us, which was just as well since we didn't own anything. The only things we really owned were those pictures in our heads - they were things that kept us going".* X.

[39] Many émigrés had to be issued with their own identity cards for the first times in their lives and during this period this was sufficient documentation for foreign travel.

often interwoven with the struggles faced upon arriving. Certainly the impact of this kind of storytelling is not to be underestimated in terms of its significance in unifying and maintaining an Italian immigrant identity (in Britain). Often these stories would relate to peoples and narratives whose identities are locked in time and space and collectively remembered through the experience of immigration. Storytelling is the single most conclusive way that ones sense of back home is constructed as reality[40]. Often the people's names and the locations mentioned are part of the grander narrative of place and specitivity - this is who we were and this is who we are now. The unfolding stories become part of greater picture of a fading realty[41]. A reality that is only known through language - the spoken word is understood and heard in dialect alone and its meaning validated by the performative endeavour that usually accompanies the story telling.

Often the story telling(s) would be intertwined with known iconic film characters, such as Nazzari or Girotti, that were from the cinematic period in Italy of the 1950s. This was before the storytellers (the émigrés) became part of the new landscape that became England of the post war era. Pivotal scenes from populist movies were retold within the context of the contemporary - new layers of (diasporic) meanings were added to populist conventions. The filmic recreations would usually involve dramatic tension together with moral judgement and would often serve as illustrative examples of the sacrifice that is involved in order to sustain a good life for ones family[42]. Key protagonists were mentioned (in character) and understood to be representing a specific mode of being in the world. Identifications were made and won purely through narrative twists and linguistic abilities - spontaneous emotions are always understood to be part of the drama of life and hence to be taken very seriously. Behavioural patterns are linked to issues of morality in a way that can be difficult to understand for an outsider (Italian or otherwise).

Fragmentary sequences are remembered some forty to fifty years later and re-dramatised into life. Gendered readings of these film sequences meant that the women listening to these stories together with the second generation children listening to them, were spectators of an edited version of a film remembered through the memory of the particular, patriarchal story teller (father, husband, family friend). In the South of Italy in the 1950s, men accompanied other men to the cinema and women rarely attended the cinema at all[43]. The audiences' participation (in the storytelling) in contemporary England would mirror the patriarchs' pleasure as it had been experienced some four decades earlier[44]. The notion of pleasure and entertainment is reproduced under very specific rules of negotiation - the re-living of these stories is permissible only through the lenses of a constructed visual memory as it was experienced by a third party (the re-counter of the tale).

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[40] "I remember my brother coming to fetch me from the cinema because one of our relatives had died. They were such happy, innocent times". E.

[41] "We could have learnt even more from those films. Those stories were important, they made us think about the world differently". J.

[42] "Nazzari could only try to do the right thing (this is referring to the film Vortice, where Moretti loves Ellena, played by Sanson, who is married). We all have it in us to know how to be good people. It was this land (England) that corrupted us". J.

[43] "I was only allowed to go to the cinema (as a woman) because I was acting as chaperone to my brother and his fiancée. A single woman in her early twenties could not go to the cinema then, that's how strict things were." Y.

[44] "*It is important that those (children) born here, should hear these things.*" X.

The second-generation audience members were one step further removed from the story telling. Another space in another time was being discussed and dramatised and attempts to make sense of these stories in the contemporary setting (in England) was always fraught with difficulties. Contrary to the idea that the community was actively constructed by community leaders,[45], the material connections made here were important in re-figuring another layer of Italian identity that has come to be known as *being Italian* in England. How one makes sense of the memories of others here is fundamental in shaping a sense of belonging and identity formation as émigré. Other spaces are being discussed with different connections being made to characters in films (unknown in England) than the connections one may immediately want to make for ones self. However these stories are instinctively understood to be working as instruments that help to construct a sense of ones self that is unrelated to the identity created through ones lived experience in England. Harshness and detail never collapse into sentimentality and the notion of sagrifici[46] is paramount to the nature of the tale. As Dolci's work so often demonstrates[47], Southern Italians have only ever understood themselves to be from worlds where sacrifices were obligatory. The foreignness of the stories told, together with the mystery of the unknown characters in films, whose titles are often only half remembered, gives these tales a tragic importance and uniqueness both at the same time. Moments within these stories would be repeated so often that the narratives would change very slightly in their re-telling and audience members would know what their reactions should be. The dramatic tension guaranteed distinct notions of place and home in relation to a collective memory of being Italian (for the other émigré audience members) and Italian-British (for the second-generation British born Italian audience members) identity. In this sense, at precisely the same time that the historical roots of the community were being laid out for the coming generations to negotiate, the act of telling these stories was loaded with the spectre of erasure. These stories would not be re-told to subsequent generations in the same way. The loss of one translation would be negotiated by other translations that were formed through life within both an Italian and British community since the second generation are so much more easily able to slide between either group. What versions of these translations are prevalent now is difficult to determine, since the assimilation of the third generation is now so greatly in evidence[48].

The stories told were very much outside the experience of the second-generation Italian children who formed part of the listening audience. The history being re-lived in their front room in England was both outside and inside their collective frame of reference[49]. Who are they within these tales? Who are they in relation to the memories being explored? How do they make sense of these memories in relation to their sense of selves and their own evolving histories? How can they add or subtract from these stories often told (in part) for their benefit? Their own filmic references would be inappropriate here since they are from a different time

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[45] See Fortier and my *Cultures of Migration* Chapter

[46] This can literally be translated as the sacrifices that have been made and this is also a reference to the experience of being an immigrant in England. It is also a tem that the first generation Italian immigrant understands as being alien to the second and third generation Italian.

[47] See McNeish or Mangione.

[48] See my writing on Italian-American filmic representations and their impact.

[49] "I just listen and after a while you hear the stories so many times that you think you saw the film too, you saw it with them." N.

and space. Often their understanding of these stories would be very partial. Limited linguistic devices, together with conflicting ideological expectations, meant that these stories were not as meaningful to the children of émigrés as the storytellers (and other émigrés) would have hoped for. Their narrative repetition added to the knowing drama often aligned to the act of immigration as experienced by the first generation, but this was not necessarily how it was actually experienced by their children. The performative nature of the experience literally acts as a display of *who we are* but also helps to instil the values that one generation wants to pass on to the next. Key to an understanding of a diasporic identity formation is that what is also being engaged with here is the display of difference and of singularity[50]. The values being performed were not deemed visible elsewhere within the new homeland so the story telling experience was laden with a particular level of power in England. The storytelling is experienced as another way of re-asserting ones difference from English values and English identity, as it was understood by the first generation[51]. Story telling is part of the narrative implicit in parenting in the South of Italy and forms part of how parents teach their children about key values in life. However, within the context of the new location and the passing of the (English) liberated swinging sixties and seventies, parents could only replicate what they knew from their world of 1950s Italy. Contrasting values, often theorised as creating an in between status[52] for the second generation, was often experienced through this act of storytelling.

The issue of distance and how it is experienced as part of the narrative of the immigrant childhood is important to raise here. Some second generation Italian born children did not go to Italy until their formative years had passed. Even if they did go to visit family and the place of their parents' birth, their strong alienation and distance from the environment raises other questions here. Their alienation from Englishness is understandable to the degree that they went home to worlds that were not visible in their daily lives at school or fitted easily into what it meant to be a teenager in England in the seventies[53]. This distance was as profoundly experienced during the family holiday to the rural location that stood for Italy and where one was told one really belonged. Emotional and geographical conditioning was such that these feelings of a double distancing help to shape second and third generation Italian identity in Britain. The storytelling was locked into a different time frame and bore small relation to the Italy that was being lived by those family members that had never left home and Italy. The journey that the stories had made had re-figured into layers of an identity that was neither fixed nor fluid. Often the childhood distancing meant that children felt they had to choose - were they Italian or English? The question always seemed perfectly logical to those that asked it, be they an English bureaucrat or an aging uncle in Italy. In this context, contemporary identity discourses about hybridity and the politics of race do not sit comfortable with the actual experience of *being Italian* here. One does not belong to either space but one has to exist within both.

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[50] This term is further referenced in Julia Kristeva's current thinking on femininity and singularity as discussed at the talk she gave at Tate Britain, 23, November, 2003

[51] "We are foreigners here. We are not like them (English people). For a start they expect their children to leave home when they reach a certain age. I have heard it said that they even charge them rent." N.

[52] Homi Bhabha's use of this term is being referenced here, see The Location of Culture, (London, Routledge Press, 1994), P3

[53] "I felt very close to my Asian friends, they lived like us". M.

Many second and third generation Italians elected to reproduce their parents' values through their own children and this is more commonly the case in the smaller Italian communities (in towns such as Peterborough and Bletchley, amongst others). Within these communities the anchoring of the stories told are tending to die with the first generation and hence are gripped on to more tightly than in larger communities such as the ones in London or Glasgow. So, those from these larger communities, exist as Italians in England, although they were born here and very often no longer speak the Italian language (they may still have a small amount of dialect vocabulary that is not spoken in the region where their parents are from). Importantly, this distancing is replicated since they do not visit Italy and prefer to holiday in other parts of the world where there are no emotional ties[54]. Their children act out their own parents *double distancing* since they feel even further alien to their grandparents' experience[55]. These are all key consideration when thinking about how the community is actually experienced by those perceived to be its members.

Part of the act of the narrative re-telling would help to characterise the second generations' attitude to how their parents saw themselves - and hence how they chose to represent themselves as children of immigrants. The past (and the parental understanding of the role and place within it) was constructed in a very particular way. Alienation from this past helped to shape part of the sense of who the second-generation British/Italians were in relation to their parents. The sense of disconnection from ones parents is both generational and cultural here. Who is one outside of these experiences? How does one recognise oneself through the (authentic) memories that are witnessed through (patriarchal) storytelling when ones direct emotional relationship to these memories can only be fractured? An adopted sense of cultural identity is non-negotiable here, regardless of one's rebelliousness from it or sense of alienation from it as a lived experience[56]. One's cousins in Italy had specifically generational concerns to rebel against in relation to their parents - quite unlike their English cousins' experience in England. Equally, one's English friends were not able to relate to these trans-cultural narrativised memories. Children from this second-generation were both inside and outside of these memories and experiences and hence, they were part of both the inside and these outside of these worlds[57].

Through my research it seems appropriate to suggest that those that were the first born from the bulk recruited Italian immigrants have found these two worlds the hardest to negotiate, despite being the age group that has most overwhelmingly selected to reproduce their parents 1950s Italian values. To select the values transmitted through your parents over those of the country where you actually live (some of those born in the early 1960s came to England as toddlers) helped to determine both internal and external conflicts. Their Italian identity has tended to reflect an experience that is more akin to the South of Italy in the 1950s

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[54] Out of 20 third generation Italians aged 15-24, interviewed, 4 of them had visited their grandparents' place of birth more than once. 17 of them had no intention of ever going back there.

[55] "I am proud to be Italian, but it does not mean I have to speak the language since I was born here. I understand what's being said, but I answer back in English". N.

[56] "My Nonna (grandmother) is always talking about stuff from when she was in Italy but she's lived here for forty years. Some of it (her stories about Italy) sounds more like a film to me". E.

[57] There is considerable writing on this from the perspective of Black-British migration. See Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy and Lola Young amongst others.

and obviously does not fit comfortable with being Italian-British. They tend to be the age group that has felt the double distancing most severely because they were the ones that experienced the trauma of immigration often as the only child of the nomadic family. Often the bulk recruitment worker was in the insecure position of not knowing if his contract would be renewed the following year. Some workers lived their lives in England always as a temporary arrangement since they intended to go back just as soon as they had enough money to build a real home in Italy[58]. This second generation child did not speak English and had left behind the rest of their extended family, but they also felt the immediate impact of poverty as it would not be experienced by their younger siblings. They would be witnesses to their own parents' early years of marriage (it was not uncommon for couples to be virtual strangers until they married since they would never have been left alone together before marriage) and their attempts at replicating their own experience of parenting despite being in another environment all together. They would have experienced the very long work shift patterns that their fathers' worked (in the brick works this meant one week on night shifts the following on day shifts and working twelve hour days). Additionally, they would have witnessed at first hand the reality of the emotional impact of immigration on their mothers who had previously never left their rural towns and villages before immigrating to England[59].

Since televisions and telephones were still rare and often the immigrant family was living in small rented accommodation, the storytelling experience perhaps impacted upon these children in a different way to those from later eras[60]. One socialised exclusively with other Italian immigrants if at all and within developing community, it was not uncommon that one met other *paesani*[61] from the same rural community as your own. Many close bonds and friendships developed during this period of the late 1950s and 1960s and often the extended family in Italy that was sorely missed, was recreated through these new relationships. These friendships came to be the early creation of the Italian community in the South East of England and the children born into these communities were expected to adhere to its values.

The storytelling evenings acted as a source of entertainment but also had other more revealing functions. The children that had experienced a break in continuity through being brought over to England at a young age, seemed to be able to relate more easily to the stories told. There were no children's' books[62] (it was not uncommon for their parents to be illiterate) and few other kinds of props ordinary associated with British childhood were in evidence, so part of ones infantile imagination was developed through the storytelling experience. Siblings born in the late 1960s had other conflicting distractions such as television[63] but entered into the world of England and the English language more smoothly, particularly since most of them were born

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[58] "I intended to go back (home to Italy), we all did. I regret that I never did". E.

[59] Of the 20 women that I interviewed aged 55-67, 17 of them claimed to have spent a lot of their first year in England crying. They missed their families and were not used to such isolated living, the arrival of the first -born child acted as a distraction to these circumstances. All 3 other women felt sufficiently supported because they came to stay with their families that were already living in England.

[60] "I can remember feeling so cut off from the outside world, from England". A.T.

[61] The term used to describe a member of the Italian community that is from the same region in Italy

[62] Children's toys, together with reading to ones children and the 'bedtime story' were not common in Italian-British immigrant households.

[63] In general by this point their parents had decided to settle in England and they had moved from small rented accommodation into their own homes and hence could now afford additional luxuries.

in England. The strong Catholic morality that often informs the narrative detailing of the storytelling sessions was inscribed in such a way as to be accordingly understood across the different generations. In this context, the codes of the Catholic Church were mutually understood but rarely overtly preached from the first generation to the next. The censoring of television for daughters was limited to the visual experience only since the parents did not understand the (English) spoken words and it was common practice for the father to change the television channel just as soon as any physical contact was becoming apparent. Storytelling enables a degree of parental control and the editing of a version of a life lived through the émigrés eyes - this power relation is further complicated by the films under discussion only having been seen by very few.

Angelo Bianco (Matarazzo, 1953) is a significant example of a film whose narrative sequences are mentioned repeatedly during some of these storytelling events. Yvonne Sanson plays two roles in this film: the nun and the girl who Nazzari[64] falls in love with. Sanson's role as the nun echoes the same role that she played in her previous film, I *Figli Di Nessuno*[65] (Matarazzo, 1951) where the Nazzari character cannot have the woman that he has fallen in love with because she is a nun. This introduction of the subversion of the predictable plots that Sorlin discusses[66] has to be understood as part of the success of these films within financial terms but it is also their success as remaining models that carry memories into the contemporary that is being marked here. Although the mode of telling the stories would often happen spontaneously and are never pre-planned, various aspects of this film would be either recounted in part or in considerable detail. Interruptions to the story, such as the expresso coffee being served or another guest arriving, would ensure a pause before the drama would unfold once more. Sometimes the wife of the storyteller would use this pause as an excuse to allow guests to move on to another topic if they wanted to, and she would joke that the audience had heard the tale many times before (and in various disguises). But more often than not, the story is told as an illustrative moral tale that relates to a specific contemporary problem. Any particular issue that is of concern in the lived world is made sense of in relation to a key sequence from a relevant film. - *Angelo Bianco* may not be mentioned by title[67], but a key sequence from the film will be relived. The version of the sequence will be told in such a manner that it will be made to make sense in relation to the contemporary issue that it is being related to.

Memories of home are mixed with memories of the film sequences and sometimes more than one single sequence is retold in one evening[68]. These stories will play a key part in the conversation (and entertainment) of the evening and will often be referred to again long after the actual story has finished. This ensures that both the film sequence (story) and the memories are constantly alive and their reliving forms part of the

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[64] Who played the Italian male lead
[65] The English title is translated as *Nobody's Sons.*
[66] Sorlin, p110
[67] During the course of the interviews I was struck by how often this film was remembered together with how pleased those being interviewed were to be reminded of the actual name of the film that they were referring to. I was never questioned about how I had managed to discover the film titles since so few of those interviewed had actually remembered it themselves.
[68] "Nazzari (in *Angelo Bianco*) knew where he was going in the world, he was intelligent and thought about things. We learnt from him". .

audience members' sense of self. Often melodramatic in both original content and in its retelling, the films offer up a particular moment in Italian film history and give us some indication of the populist films watched by audiences in the early 1950s in the South of Italy. Additionally they provide knowledge into the moments, which go on to become markers of cultural history. Performative notions of gender are displayed knowingly in these films and they are models of a very specific set of ideological concerns[69]. Given that the major audience members that saw these films during this period was young males, quite clear parameters of both femininity and masculinity were both visualised and inscribed into their consciousness. These young males (both of pre and post military service age - military service was still compulsory in Italy) would watch these fictions and meet with quite diverse notions of an Italian identity than with the one that they had previously lived and understood.

Interestingly, given the importance of the visual and the limited level of literacy, the audience seemed to have read these texts as social proverbs - as visual encounters for how life could go onto to be negotiated. Catholicism and morality in particular would have been a language that these audience members would have understood and yet their experience of life was very limited to the family alone. For instance, it was not uncommon for both men and women to have little if any sexual experience prior to their marriage[70]. Although no sexual experience was (is) demanded from the Southern Italian woman prior to her marriage it was (is) preferred in the man [71]. The films that are being re-enacted within the immigrant household through the act of storytelling are now being experienced by both genders, although a mainly male audience would originally have viewed the films. Notions of a performative sexuality are interesting to consider in this context - participating male listeners' understanding of the world would have in part been influenced by their interaction with the moving image and one that was experienced exclusively with other men. A key consideration here is, the extent to which an understanding of what sexual interaction could mean was imbedded into the spectators' relationship to the films consumed. Imagination, desire and fantasy play their role in creating a normative interaction between the sexes both within the films and in the lives experienced by the immigrant workers[72].

Moral melodramas such as *Angelo Bianco* predispose a specific code of conduct and moral foreboding. Paranoia and superstition feature as characterisations that exemplify the Southern Italian temperament and this is as apparent in the films under considerations as it is in the work of Dolci[73] or the interviews that I have conducted. In the same way that Rizzo's wife believes that the fortune teller that she had previously visited led to her husband being given a job, in the film *Bicycle Thieves* (de Sica, 1948), the cultural beliefs represented in these films were understood at a local level rather than as fiction. The narrative implications

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[69] The performative and sexual construction is developed through the writings of Judith Butler.
[70] "In those days we knew nothing before marrying. It was better this way. Now there is too much information and look what happens". J.
[71] A mans' first sexual experience was commonly through visiting a prostitute although the filmmakers Cipri and Maresco explore male peasants' use of other inanimate objects for sexual experimentations. These contemporary filmmakers portray the Sicilian man as sexually frustrated and unable to conceive of themselves in anything but sexualised terms. The world of Cipri and Maresco is without women and men have no option but to relate to each other or their animals on an emotional and physical level. See *Toto Who Lived Twice*, 2000, or *The Return of Cagliostro*, 2003 amongst others.
[72] "My husband was and still is the only man that has touched me. It was meant to be this way. Our children have picked up bad habits from this land (England) and look where it's getting them". J.
[73] See his book Conversazioni (Torino, Einaudi, 1962)

of this era of Italian filmmaking were of course, politically motivated and hence ideologically loaded and in keeping with attempts to take audiences away from their grim lived realities[74]. In the same way that the melodramas of this era in America were espousing particular ideological concerns about the dilemmas of the middle classes in relation to issues of class, race and gender, these melodramas in Italy were also concerned with these inter complexities. *Vortice* mythologizes class relations and renders them unimportant whilst contrasting this with the importance of the family unit and keeping it together. Whilst Douglas Sirk contained these quite specific melodramatic sentiments in films such as *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) and *Written on the Wind* (1956), Matarazzo conveyed comparable concerns in films such as *Angelo Bianco* and *Vortice* (1954). The rethinking around genre and the work of Sirk[75] that happened in the 1970s through the development of feminist film theory did not extend to the melodramas from other European countries. Across all continents, the radical content of the film narratives as they were perceived in their own time, does now lead to them being especially dated[76]. However, this radicalism is significant since the actual narrative content of the Italian melodramas helped to shape the basis for the self-reflective sense of Italianicity as it was to be felt by the Italian immigrant to Britain.

Whilst there is little research[77] available about the Italian audiences' reception to their home grown films (audiences also had access to the American films that were on general release), the period of the 1950s saw the highest record of cinema audience attendance than in any other period in Italy's history. Cinema attendance accounted for the single highest leisure activity (although the data available does not seem to have a record of the gender and age break down of this audience[78]). During this era of mass emigration in Italy, audiences would appear to have been attending the cinema as a source of entertainment and this activity was pursued far more than any other type of social activity. Cinema ticket prices were relatively low and a single ticket purchase would mean that purchasers could see the same film two or three times (on the same day). Ticket purchasers took advantage of this system in that they would not necessarily watch the whole film in one showing, but would return to the second or third screening as they saw fit and often with other friends and new audience members[79].

Cinematic viewing was not necessarily a journey that was experienced in a linear manner and multiple discourses would be created simultaneously. Interaction with the film was part of the cinematic experience in a way that silence is the expected code of behaviour for cinema consumption in the contemporary. As a film such as *Cinema Paradiso* (Tornatore, 1989) helps to illustrate, during the post-war period in Italy, audiences

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[74] Note the performative nature of the audiences during the viewing of a melodrama in Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso*, 1990. All manner of bodily functions are performed, a mother is breast feeding her baby, a couple are making love, men masturbate, a prostitute invites her next client behind a curtain, a man breaths heavily in his sleep with his mouth gaping open, children eat their ice creams, whilst others loudly convey the sentiments they experience whilst watching the moving image on the screen.
[75] For representative key essays on the melodrama genre that and Sirk's work in particular see Christine Gledhill (ed), *Home is Where the Heart Is* (BFI Publications, 1987) which is still the most important book on the subject despite its age.
[76] Sirk on Sirk quote about this
[77] See Vittorio Spinazzola, *Cinema E Pubblico* (Roma, Bulzoni Editore, 1985). This is the most useful source; it is only available in Italian and is no longer in print.
[78] Ibid
[79] "We bought a ticket after lunch, then stayed most of the day. We left to eat something or meet our friends then went back in again. We would see the film again and again with the new set of friends we had met up with". A.

would not remain silent witnesses during the screening of a film, but on the contrary feel that they were living mirrors to the experience[80]. Indeed their interaction with the film (through remarks exclaimed at the characters, through a repetition of the dialogue, ironic sentiments being added, dialogue repeated in a mocking Northern Italian accent, etc,) was a crucial part of the evenings' entertainment. Many additional layers of meaning were being translated from the screen - group expectation was such that the creation of new meanings could be made possible when attending the cinema. Indeed, often the viewing journey was entered into in the belief that neither the film's reception, nor the audience identifications made would remain static[81].

The film *Vortice* (Raffaello Matarazzo, 1954) best exemplifies the type of melodramas that were popular in Italy amongst the rural workers during the period of mass immigration[82]. Interestingly, this film was very popular in the South of Italy with the male cinema going public, and this audience characterisation would seem contrary to the *women's pictures* of the parallel genre in America. These Hollywood melodramas depicted the torments of the middle classes in their suburban surroundings but were additionally problematising modernity versus tradition. Codes of sexual behaviour were pitched against perceived transgressive modes of being and the first was always rewarded at the expense of the second. *All That Heaven Allows* (Sirk, 1956) is comparable to *Vortice* (Matarazzo, 1954) in many ways, not with standing the fact that it complies with the known iconography of the melodrama genre. A typical facet of this genre is that it has an emotionally strong woman at the centre of the narrative and one who is forced to confront what it means for a woman to pursue her own needs over and above those of her family's. In *All That Heaven Allows* (Sirk, 1956) Carrie is torn between her own happiness and that of her children. Together with this her standing within the community is agonised over, should she follow her heart and have a relationship with a man that is perceived as being from a lower class than herself. The film acts on different emotional levels and the viewer is asked to identify with Carrie's struggle whilst understanding the expectations of a woman who is middle aged, with children and a particular social standing within her community. In one scene she is given a television set as a gift to keep her occupied, the assumption being that since her husband has died and her children are grown up, she will not have any other desires of her own in how she might want to spend her evenings. Her attraction to a younger gardener who comes to work for her forces both the viewer and herself to confront the social structure that the middle classes had come to conform to. Her friends feel that she would be giving up her social position in the world for somebody who can offer her little other than to love her. Respectability within her community is very important to all of those around Carrie and she has to ask herself questions about how this notion of

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[80] Tornatore's following film *Stanno Tutti Bene* (*Everybody Is Fine*, 1990) is also another key intervention into the area of the changing face of Italian cultural identity and internal emigration. The narrative follows an aging father (played by an aging Marcello Mastoianni) as he attempts to visit his various children in their respective home across different parts of Italy. His old world values clash painfully with the modern world that his estranged children inhabit.

[81] "I would come out and argue over what I had just seen, like in real life, there were different versions". A.

[82] "He was a proper movie star, he had a certain presence. I dreamed of being a man like him". E.

respectability is constituted and at whose expense. It is this hidden contradiction[83] that some feminist film theorists of the melodrama genre have sought to explore[84].

As Gledhill has argued, melodramas could be created out of almost any topic and yet the issue of family and its social values has given the idea of the home and the family a symbolic potency[85]. This power is such, that even during the actual time period of when these Sirkian films were made and seen, they displayed a certain level of nostalgia for how things should be. This is an issue explored by David Grimstead in his writings about melodrama where he argues that the melodrama genre sees the promise of human life[86] not as something that could help to constitute a more considered future but rather as something that helps us to return to a perfect past. Or, as Gledhill has claimed, less how things ought to be than how they should have been. [87] Here the modern world is tainted by capitalism and the social order of things is in disarray, the melodrama restores the ambiance to a better place. It investigates the promise of a better future, through a re-writing of the past. Modernity and the modern world in particular, has to fight against the nostalgic memory of how the past was perceived to be experienced rather than how it actually was experienced. The disillusionment felt by post war Americans created an audience that was very willing to engage with a fantasy of the past, since it visibly delayed having to confront the reality of both the present and the future.

However the fantasy that was created by American melodramas operated in a comparable way in Italian melodramas. *Vortice* (Matarazzo, 1954) is also about a changing world and the main, female protagonist's role within this world. Family values are tested to the core through the character of Ellena and family conflict is governed by her self-sacrificing nature. High sentiments are displayed in the opening sequence of Vortice as Ellena, the daughter realises that her father has attempted suicide because of his mounting debts[88]. He has incurred these debts through trying to accommodate the lifestyle that he feels she deserves[89]. The absent father and issues that question the role of patriarchy, is a central premise of the melodrama and in this sense Matarazzo is complying with the known formula to great dramatic affect. She is adamant that she has to find a way to resolve the dilemma on her fathers' behalf and in turn it is her role to maintain the family name. She is convinced and blackmailed into marrying a banker, Moretti who is offering to pay off these debts in return for her becoming his wife[90]. Moretti was the senior banker that had in fact aided Ellena's father in getting into debt by loaning him sums of money that he knew would be difficult to repay. Indeed, he is not surprised when he receives a call from Ellena who is desperate to see him at the discovery of her fathers' suicide letter.

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[83] Christine Gledhill, *The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation, in Christine Gledhill, (ed), Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, (London, BFI, 1987) P 10
[84] See Laura Mulvey, Notes on Sirk and Melodrama in Christine Gledhill, (ed), *The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation in Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*
[85] Christine Gledhill, *The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation*, P21
[86] David Grimstead, *Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth Century Social History*, P28
[87] Christine Gledhill, *The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation, in Christine Gledhill, (ed), Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, P21
[88] Not having enough money was well known to us, we sympathised with those we saw in this situation. But we knew that they were earning their bread acting (out) that they were poor, whilst (those of us in the audience) we, really were hungry". Q.
[89] Interesting parallel to the film noir/melodrama, *Mildred Pierce* by Michael Curtiz, 1945 where the character of the mother runs into debt in her bid to maintain the affections of her daughter by buying her what ever she wishes
[90] Referring to this particular sequence of the film, "*This would happen in the North (of Italy), we heard people talking about it*". A.

In this letter, she is alerted to the reasons behind her fathers' actions and she tearfully relays this information to Mr Moretti. Although she is engaged to another, she forfeits her own desires in return for her fathers' happiness and her family's honour being kept intact[91]. One of the reasons that she allows Moretti to manipulate her is because he reasons with her that her fiancée (Guido) would not want to marry the daughter of a criminal[92]. Ellena is the only one who can maintain the family order and Moretti is well aware of her status as a dutiful daughter and hence potential dutiful wife[93]. He also acknowledges that she does not love him, but is prepared to over look this since his need to be with her will be met and in every other way, he is in a position of power.

Although we never learn why she lives alone with her father, the feminine and maternal presence is prevalent firstly in her treatment of her father and then in her apparent self-denial and self-sacrifice. She leaves her fiancée a letter rather than confront him with the truth behind why she had to break off their engagement. Different sections of the audience are able to engage with her dilemma and at her attempts to do the right thing[94]. However, the bourgeoisie family is also being depicted here and it stands for a version of modernity that has many discontents amidst its apparent material success. Like Sirk's work, given the time period of the films, they were quite radical in the face of film censorship and contemporary mores. Additionally, in Matarazzo, the Catholic Church and its influence is never very far away and he is able to both accommodate this influence whilst also critiquing it. Ellena decides to spend one last evening with her finance and she goes to his home, where he lives alone and they are openly affectionate towards each other[95]. The consuming audiences would have had few opportunities to see this type of realism in earlier, home grown Italian, domestic releases, although this was less likely to be the case in relation to some American blockbusters that they would have seen.[96]The audience is able to identify with Ellena's anguish as she emotionally bids Guido goodbye and the end of the taxi journey that they share together. The emotional is juxtaposed with the aspirational here, as audiences would be seeing a lifestyle not yet afforded to them[97]. Many viewers would have been rural workers whose only mode of transport would have been the mule or donkey[98] and future émigrés saw the type of luxury exhibited in this film as something that would only be possible through movement to another location. They relate to Ellena's decision and understand why it is that she is unwilling to trust her fiancée

[91] "*With a daughter the dishonour (to the family name) is immediately visible (referring to unwanted pregnancy/sexual activity before marriage), it's different with sons*". Q.

[92] "Family reputation is everything. The family name and reputation was always something to preserve". W.

[93] "*What else can she do here?* (Referring to this particular sequence in the narrative of the film.) *She did it for her father, she did the right thing in wanting to look after him*". W.

[94] Referring to this sequence in the film, "They are stories that make you think and feel, stories that matter. They are still relevant today, even though they are old". J.

[95] Referring to this sequence in the film, "*Obviously this was a film, I never knew any woman that would dare to go to a man's house alone. Women from our part of the world (Sicily) would never do this. Whether they really would behave like this in other parts of Italy, I couldn't really say. Times were very different then anyway.*" W.

[96] Italian melodramas were the most popular films in the 1950s, second only to American blockbusters, see Pierre Sorlin, *Italian National Cinema, 1896-1990* (London, Routledge, 1996), P107

[97] "We would see these (consumer) objects and think to ourselves that money meant you could live a very different life to the one we knew". Y.

[98] "We found various ways to make ends meet. My father owned a donkey and people in the village would pay us to borrow him. He was the best travelled in the family! It was a very sad time when that donkey died; he had been so good at helping to put food in our stomachs. We missed him when he was not there anymore. It was not long after this that I was told there was a job for me and I left to come here (England)" Z.

with the truth of her circumstances. She is both ashamed and pained at her own situation and is not prepared to allow these emotions to conflict with her relationship with him. This was her justification to Moretti when he asks her why she did not turn to her fiancée for help with the debts - its was Moretti's exploitation of her sense of duty towards her family that enabled him to deceive Ellena into thinking that he was the only person that could help her.

The narrative swiftly moves in time and turns to the matrimonial home. We see Ellena with her husband and their young daughter - it is immediately apparent that the resentment that she feels for her husband is strongly contrasted by her love for her daughter. She behaves dutifully by maintaining a clean and tidy home and by making her daughter the centre of her life. She is quite resigned to her loveless marriage and allows herself to be tormented by her husbands' demands for her attention. He is angered by the fact that even though her father has now died, Ellena should still feel that her relationship to him was only possible because of her sense of obligation - he had hoped that she would grow to feel something for him. Her status as the dutiful, self-sacrificing wife is unpuzzling given the ideological context of the narrative and we watch her suffering at the hands of a dislikeable man[99].

Since Ellena refused to voluntarily join him on a business trip to Florence (she tells him that she will only go with his in order to comply with his wishes), he rings an old girlfriend Clara who is willing to join him instead[100]. As is common in melodramas of the 1950s, Clara is represented as a woman in opposition to the type of woman that Ellena is. Like the character Lucy in *Written on the Wind* (Sirk, 1955), Clara is highly sexualised in her demeanour and we meet her as a single woman of leisure provocatively lying on her bed upon receiving the call from Moretti. Clara represents the lack in any woman who is not a dutiful daughter, wife or mother. She is unencumbered by family or parental pressures and wears clothes that emphasise her body; she smokes and is happy to take a holiday with a married man that she has not seen for many years. Later on in the film, when she steals Morettis's money in order to have an operation on her scarred face[101], she displays other signs of modern selfishness that are paralleled by Ellena's continual self-sacrifice. Equally, Moretti is representative of the bad (modern) man whilst Guido, who is now a doctor and reappears in Ellena's life, represents good wholesome values.

In their car journey, Moretti and Clara have an accident that leaves Moretti paralysed - Clara is forced to leave the scene of the accident at Moretti's insistence for fear that they may be seen together[102]. They are both punished for their crimes against the family and Ellena is unaware of what has happened. She is shocked to be reunited with Guido who is the doctor treating her husband, although Moretti remembers whom Guido is

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[99] Referring to this sequence in the film, "*I knew people in this type of situation - it was only a film but I knew women that lived this for real*". A.

[100] "*There are always women around who will scipare l'occhi of men.*"Y. This literally means to pull their eyes out, so these women are accused of behaving in a manner that persuades men to pursue them. It is also an unfortunate generic term used to describe English women's behaviour towards men and was a term often used during the course of the interviews.

[101] Referring to this sequence in the film, "*If God cursed me with a scare, I would have to just live with it. Some things are just meant to be, they are sent to us by God. Of course she will now be punished for trying to go against Gods' will*". N.

[102] Referring to this sequence in the film, "*God dictated that this should happen. People here (in England) should pay more attention to these type of things*". Y.

and pleads with them to let him die so that they can then do as they wished. Ellena reminds herself, Guido and the audience of her duty to her husband and daughter and she attempts to control the emotions that she really feels. This is despite her real feelings about the unhappy life that she has and her ex-fiancés' attempts to persuade her to leave with his to his new post in South America. She feels that she would be failing in her duty as a good mother and could not bear the humiliation that she would feel when her daughter understands what has happened. Together with this she feels that she must comply with her duty as Moretti's wife and especially now that he would need her even more.

Like the character of Carrie in *All That Heaven Allows* (Sirk, 1956), Ellena's true desires are neutered at the expense of family duty and she now acts as nurse to her wheel chair bound husband[103]. Carrie can only be with the man that she loves as his nurse and this acts as he punishment for having desires that are outside of accepted boundaries. Ellena had experienced a difficult marriage at and the very point when she is reunited with the man that she really loves, her own husband becomes paralysed and in need of her to an even larger degree. He is incapable of doing anything for himself and is reliant on her in every way. She feels the burden of this reliance but sees it as her destiny in the world and the price she had to pay in order to nurse her father after his suicide attempt and in order to maintain the family name. She cannot allow herself to follow her heart and instead is forced to confront the folly of her decision to marry a man that she did not love by his increasingly tormenting behaviour, which she only finally rebukes on the night that he is killed. After carefully measuring out the dose of his medicine in order to give it to her husband, he angrily throws it to the floor. She finally vents her anger at his treatment of her and the life she has had to endure; the level of rage shocks Moretti. His hampered movements in the wheel chair further illustrate his need for her and as she leaves the house out of frustration, he emotionally demands that she return to him. She leaves the abusive, weak man only to unexpectedly see the kind, strong Guido, her ex-fiancé waiting for her. Yet again a man rescues Ellena but on this occasion it is a man that she loves[104]. Guido's aspirational qualities are collusively paralled with Morettis's unpleasantness - his mode of being is pitched against the qualities exhibited by Moretti. In keeping with the melodrama genre, male behaviour is under scrutiny as controllers of the prevailing social mores and men are often rivals for the dutiful woman in their competitive worlds.

Subsequent to the discovery of her husband's body, Ellena is arrested for his murder, as she cannot fully account for her whereabouts. Since she does not want to admit that she was with another man, her account of going on a walk alone is met with suspicion. The questioning officers cannot believe that a married woman would leave her husband and daughter at home so that she can walk the streets at night alone[105]. When she finally admits that she was with Guido, they surmise that she had wanted her husband out of the way so that she could be with her lover. Moral behaviour is questioned and conclusions are drawn on the basis of a specific

[103] Referring to this sequence in the film, "*This was her destiny. Like it was my destiny to follow my husband and work like a dog in this land (England)*". Z.
[104] Referring to this film, "This was my only experience of a man until I married my husband". Q.
[105] Referring to this sequence in the film, "These were films remember, we could learn from them. But having said this, certainly our women (from Sicily) would never have done this; they would never have walked the streets alone at night. To me this was a very different kind of woman. Then when I arrived in England I saw these kinds of women. I only knew them from movies so it took some getting used to". E.

reading of the evidence. During Ellena's encounter with Guido, Moretti had invited Clara to his house, taking advantage of the fact that Ellena was not at home and anxious to pay Clara some money in order to be left alone. Clara had been left with a disfiguring facial scare from the accident in Moretti's car and she tries, unsuccessfully, to blackmail Moretti into paying her the money for the cost of plastic surgery. Her attempts to drug Moretti lead her to unintentionally kill him and whilst she assumes that he is in a heavy sleep, she takes the key to his safe from his pocket and steals his money. Both husband and wife are defying the social mores of the period, the husband out of selfishness, Ellena out of love. As Ellena discovers the body of her husband, her screams are heard and genuinely felt - she is to pay the price for leaving her sick husband alone in their home whilst she is out with another man[106].

Importantly, Ellena is actually incriminated by her own daughter who is asked to give evidence to the police since she was at home when her father was being murdered[107]. The daughter, Anna had awoken to hear her father and Clara raised voices and she innocently believed her father when he claimed that it was in fact her mother and himself who were busy talking. She calls out for her mother against the locked door that precludes entry into the room where her father and Clara were arguing. She unwillingly returns to bed with the promise that her mother would soon go to see her. Anna has no way of knowing that her father was lying to her and relays this information to the enquiring police officers as they are collating evidence of the murder. She unwittingly implicates her mother in the murder and goes on to become overwhelmingly inconsolable by the realisation of what she had done to her mother. In contrast to this, she does not have any response to the news of her fathers' death and we understand Anna as a character whose only deep emotional bond is with her mother. This symbiotic relationship is fetishised in true melodramatic style to the point of irony and the emotional pleading for mamma or mammina echoes around the rest of the narrative until its final closure[108].

One of the pivotal tensions of the film is in relation to the over bearing love that Ellena feels for her daughter and her daughters' (literal) inability to live without her mother's love. Whilst the fathers' love for his child is never made overtly apparent, indeed there are no scenes between the father and daughter alone. Maternal love is visible and in abundance, however, she does not love the child's father even though he claims to love her. In a later sequence when her original fiancée reappears in her life she feels that she cannot leave her husband because her only identity is as a mother and she could never face the humiliation of having to explain the truth of her actions to her daughter. She sees her life, together with her role as a mother, as being more important than her happiness as a woman[109]. Her role as a daughter, wife and then mother are very clearly symbolic of a known order and her relationship to the men in her life is as nurturer. She shows anger only once (at her husband as he torments her - see above) otherwise this emotion is reserved for each of the other male characters in the narrative.

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[106] Transgressive femininity was not something new to this genre of filmmaking. A key example here is the classic Hollywood Film Noir and Melodrama film *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945), where Mildred (Joan Crawford) is punished by the death of her younger daughter who dies whilst Mildred is following her desires and is on a date with a new man.
[107] Referring to this sequence, "*The child did not mean to do this, children are innocents*". Q.
[108] Referring to this sequence in the film, "*These scenes always made us want to cry. I saw this film many times.*" Y.
[109] "*We understood this to be our fate - what else is there in life if there is no family?*" Z.

Models of modernity are represented in the mode of the delivery of the dialogue, as well as through the more known iconic images. For the popular audiences, what made this kind of narrative engaging was the fact that they would and could willingly make identifications with the emotions conveyed[110]. Together with this, the fantasy of aspiration is understood, as being achievable through self-sacrifice and the preservation of social mores that otherwise seemed to be disappearing. This fantasy was deemed attainable only through movement of location and the creation of a new (and possibly temporary) home. Immigration is still usually characterised by Italian émigrés to Britain as having involved a large degree of self-sacrifice[111]. The codes of these sacrifices were conveyed through the characterisations in films such as *Vortice* (Matarazzo, 1954). Both Ellena's first fiancée, Guido and Moretti, the man that she goes on to marry, are men that live alone and are professionals (Guido is a doctor, Moretti is a banker) that sustain their own lifestyles. Untypical familial situations are re-enacted in the narrative and acted out as fantasies for and ciphers to another reality. Indeed many of the (single) men watching this film would never have lived away from their families prior to immigrating to England[112]. The possibilities that were perceived as being realisable in *Vortice* (Matarazzo, 1954) and other films such as *Angelo Bianco*, (Matarazzo, 1954) helped to shape the realities of the spectators that consumed them[113].

The representation of the bourgeoisie family and the class relations constructed, were in keeping with the conventions of the melodrama genre, although those represented were not of the same class as the populist consuming audience. However feminine virtues were expected and assumed both within the worlds of the films and within the realms of the lived reality. Other than the obligatory screen kiss, there is no other indication of any physical involvement between the main protagonists. As is typical within this genre the good woman is pitched against the *bad woman* and this is also the case between the good (doctor) and the bad (husband). Purity in a woman supported the (communal) understanding of her ability to be loved. This very strong moral reasoning left a deep impression in the minds of the young (and inexperienced) men and women that consumed these films and they went on to take these narratives (and memories of these narratives) with them to England.

Sophisticated clothing, together with the use of the telephone and other household appliances would have helped to create the fantasy of what one could aspire to in the outside world[114]. The consuming Southern

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[110] Referring to this sequence in the film, "*It was destiny that she would be reunited with her daughter. Like it was destiny that I should leave my parents and my home to work in England*". Q.

[111] "Everything that we have achieved is through having made sacrifices, nobody ever gave us a penny for free". X.

[112] Their recent compulsory Military Service would have meant that they had lived away from their families for a brief period but they existed under the control of the watchful Military personnel. "*We were treated like the adolescents that we were. We needed permission to do anything at all that was outside of the regulations. Socialising was not encouraged, which was fine by me. I dared not go out much because I did not understand the (Italian) dialect that was spoken. I was based just outside Rome and counted everyday until it was over and I could go back home. We were well fed, better than at home but I missed my family and everyday that passed I thought could have been better spent looking for a job so I could help my family*". A.

[113] "*Work (in England) meant that we too could help our families (back home) and start families of our own, like in those films*". A.

[114] "*We (daughters of a marriageable age) were all going to sewing classes and we got so many fashion tips from those movies*". E.

Italian audience would often have been illiterate and of peasant stock - their poverty was the only motivating force that would lead them to immigrate to England at the British governments' request. This reality mixed with the filmic reality, of telephone and other objects only made real through representation, acted as anchors to the new world that they were entering into[115]. More than forty years later and in another country they too (in part) could live the lives that they had seen in the movies that became memories of their earlier identities just prior to leaving that home to create another one in England. Early home photographs taken in England sent back to eager relatives, would perform familiar poses that mimicked Moretti and other stars from the nineteen fifties era of populist film making. Stylish clothing would be mixed with greased hair that these young men had seen in these films - films that had in essence helped to shape their sense of who they were in the world but more specifically what it meant to be Italian in England[116].

Through narrative nuances and the jostling of memory, it has been difficult to trace single films from the stories told, although those already mentioned have been researched as being the authentic material through which some of the migrant memories were constructed. The fantasies of the filmic world came to abrupt endings in the working worlds of England and the new home - and indeed after this period rarely was the cinema visited again (either in England or in Italy)[117]. Holding on to these visual reminders of there has helped to serve as a constant knowing of who one once was and who one was forced to become. Memories of home are intertwined with images (and memories of images) of another time and of being in another space[118]. A sense of belonging was made possible through these particular films, together with a sense of cultural unity that was more than simply generational.

This chapter has addressed the key interaction between and across cultural memory of a particular body of films in Italy and has shown the strong link between culture and film. The analysis has been determined by an account of the relationship between the consumption of these films and the future émigrés own consideration of the reality of knowing that they were to leave their home and become émigrés. It was throughout this era that Matarazzo's melodramas were popular and is it important to remember, as previously discussed, that this was also the era of high cinema attendance. In the same way that popular audiences in America during the Depression of the 1930s gave space and hence determined the development of the realist grittiness of the Warner Brothers gangster genre[119], huge audiences in Italy adored the melodramas of the 1950s. The actual desire to leave ones place of home and break the familial thread was never represented in Matarazzo's work, but neither was it a desire that was in evidence in the interviews conducted for the purposes of this research. None of the men I interviewed had any notion of wanting to leave their homeland but conversely, they felt

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[115] "*I'd only ever seen a telephone in the cinema before coming here* (England)". Y.

[116] "I learnt a lot about life through Nazzari. I learnt a lot about myself. I would always think about those times in the cinema when I first arrived here in England. I think about it less now. Now, I don't remember as much as I used to. I would carry those film memories with me all the time". E.

[117] "When I moved here, as a single man I went to the cinema a few times. But this soon stopped, I came here to work not for fun".. A.

[118] "We were dying of hunger but still got to the cinema. They were great times".. Y..

[119] Robert B. Ray's *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985) provides a strong critical history of the development of this genre from its inception.

that they were forced to do so through poverty[120]. As is made apparent through the oral interviews in this chapter (and perhaps throughout this thesis) they wanted to escape this poverty and hence this presented itself as a situation with no alternative. The privileges of the protagonists in the films were read and understood as being indicators of a worthier existence, and in turn, this existence was presented as a moral spectre of what a worthier life could involve[121]. The role and function that their own memories of these films would go on to have during, after and continuously in relation to the period of mass immigration, was impossible to predetermine by these people who were part of a very clear labour *bulk recruitment* scheme of foreign workers, from the South of Italy to England's brickwork's factory throughout the period of 1951 to 1956.[122]

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[120] "It's true we could have stayed (in Sicily) - to die of hunger". *A.*

[121] "Hunger motivated me to come here (England). It was this (hunger) and those movies!". E..

[122] *"I keep remembering those pictures (images from films) in my head, they are so old now. I am so old now, those pictures in my head are over forty-five years old." W.*

CONCLUSION

This conclusion will look at the various ways that the different chapters of this thesis have addressed the over arching theme of Italian cultural history and memory in the migration to Britain in the 1950s. The findings have made it clear that the historical implications of the screening of Italians and in turn the impact of these screenings on the Italian immigrants to Britain, are paramount to how cultural migration and its detailing might need to be considered in the future. Together with this, the importance of how converging experiences of cultural formation are lived through during the temporal nature of the immigrant journey has to be considered in the light of these findings. The degree to which memory and storytelling, relates to the viewing experience of a particular set of films of the 1950s has been pivotal to the identity formation of these various Italian communities in Britain. The ethnographic methodology utilised in this thesis has enabled the cinematic experiences of the diasporic communities to be given what would otherwise be an unheard voice. The oral interviews have informed the premise of these findings which resulted in the need to re-configure film as *the* cultural form through which to think about cultural identity. Future explorations into cultural history of modern migrations cannot ignore the significant role that is played by the cinematic experience in the formation of this history. Without the methodology employed throughout this thesis, there would not have been a way in which diasporic experience and the importance of cinema within this experience could have been made visible.

In the introductory chapter to this thesis, *Towards an Ethnography of Film*, the cultural determinants of the migrant journey from the South of Italy to Britain in the 1950s were discussed in relation to the methodologies and theoretical framework of the thesis. Within the context of the more recent cultural theory, cultural translation was inscribed with a determining of the privileging of the authorial voice of the writer. The terms of the thesis had always been from the outset to provide a platform through which the diasporic voices could be heard rather than simply translated. The issues that surround the use of an ethnographic methodology, and which is outlined in the introductory chapter, provide a useful overview of the complex range of factors that it was necessary to assess before progressing on to the first and second parts of this thesis. The themes of identity, memory and sexuality in Italian film and culture that are covered in this thesis come out of a very particular cultural moment in British cultural history. These themes have to be considered as being in themselves quite unstable but not uncertain in their categorisation. The implicit fluidity of the marker that enables Italian diasporic identity to be a term of categorisation and labelling is more fully developed in relation to the different voices that are interviewed during the course of the research for this thesis. What is apparent through an analysis of the contents of this chapter is that the diverse make up of the various Italian communities that are represented in this thesis, is contextualised across issues of the lived experience. The theoretical framework is determined by the personal experience of the evolving construction of Italian diasporic identity, and the central facets that formulate this diasporic experience are focussed upon within this context.

The first part of the thesis, *From Film to Culture*, assesses the privileging of cultural expression and film in particular over and above the lived experience that gave rise to the formulation of this cultural expression. However, before it is possible to fully consider how *Cultures of Migration* are constituted, it is necessary to analyse the range of existing histories that assert their claim to be addressing cultural history and Italian diasporic history in Britain in particular. In this first chapter, *Cultures of Migration*, there was an assessment of the various strengths and weakness of the existing literature in this field. This led to an assessment of a variety of academic methodologies and assesses both these methodologies and the resulting findings. The more traditionally historical approach made apparent in the work of Terri Colpi or Donna Gabaccia, is reconsidered in the light of contemporary cultural theory. The collating of statistic data in both of these writers work is both relevant and exhaustive in its detail. However its usage here does not allow for the actual experience of transience that is the framework of ghosting around which thinking through any considerations around cultural translation must happen. The lack of acknowledgment of the experiences had by the members of the Italian community discussed in Colpi's work[1] occasionally reduces their status as factual and statistical only and does not provide enough scope for some of the more complex questions that are raised throughout this thesis.

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[1] I am particularly referring to *Italians Forward* (Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1991).

The chapter also assessed significant work by the cultural historian Danilo Dolci, focused upon both in its ethnographic approach to the subject of Sicilian cultural history and in its findings. Dolci's work is quite unusual in its methodology and also in the range and breadth of his approach. The impact of his oral interviews with Sicilian people in the 1950s helped to forge all manner of Policy changes in Italy during this period. Additionally the global impact of his work was even in evidence in Britain during the very same period of Southern Italian migration in Britain with the influence of the *Danilo Dolci Trust* that was set up in central London[2]. This *Trust* was one of many across the world that collected funds for a variety of charitable concerns, but primarily for the educational needs of the poor in Sicily. A range of other factors emerged throughout this chapter and the inevitable range of literature did not militate against some of the publications under discussion being outside of the more traditional scope of academic research. Whilst more populist literature, and the religious migrant Italian community newspaper, *La Voce* was considered in relation to Anne-Marie Fortier's assertion of the representative nature of such a newspaper, other cultural journals such as *The Italianist*, *Screen* and *Block* were also under scrutiny in this chapter. The breadth of experience which makes up all cultural history is witnessed by the expansive range of the literature critiqued here.

In the second chapter of this first part of the thesis, *Frank Capra and Anthony Minghella - Comparative Links Through Masculinity, Family and Community*, there was an attempt to find a linkage between the textual analysis of the films created by two particular Italian immigrant directors. There was then an analysis of how their work could be assessed in the wider sphere of cultural history. This chapter utilised the elements of cinematic language and deconstructive methodology in order to formulate some assessment of how cultural expression can be understood in relation to cultural history. However, what is important about this chapter is the revealing aspect of the systematic limitation in the approach that is employed. Although key issues are raised and developed in relation to this textual analysis and the works of both Capra and Minghella, what is ultimately apparent in this chapter is the limitation of this methodological approach. To begin with an analysis of the films as the final output of the cultural expression that is the work of both Capra and Minghella is to give cultural expression a privilege that is over determined by the role of film. The object of film has to lose this privilege in order to fully engage with cultural history and come to an understanding of how cultural identity is formulated within the lived experience of what goes on to become historicised.

This first part of the thesis makes it apparent that the material culture has to be examined within the context of the lived experience in order to be able to think through ideas of cultural history and its construction. It is this reality that has shaped the diasporic Italian community in Britain since the 1950s and in turn it is this experience that will go on to shape the future definitions of British national identity in the twenty first century. To dissolve film into culture

allows for our narrativised identities to be understood and this can only be fully achieved through a process of taking the academic discipline of Film Studies towards ethnography of film. The role and function of film can only be considered as a process, a process that situates film as an aspect of culture[3]. More recent aspects of *Film Studies* and *Reception Studies* in particular such as the work of Marcia Landy and Thomas Elsaesser have begun to re-examine the importance of history in relation to the cinematic form[4]. Elsaesser has talked about the importance of the established interconnections between the spectator and the cinema and goes on to claim that an effect of cinema is that of its ability to enable the spectator to feel *stung into action*[5]. This is an interesting idea when we consider the results of the findings of the research involved throughout this thesis. The contribution of film to culture is not to be underestimated, but the dialogue that it can enable must be considered through the wider cultural experiences of the films' reception.

The second part of this thesis, *From Culture to Film*, went on to examine how the formation of cultural history, and the development of a diasporic cultural identity can be considered once film is dissolved into culture. The first chapter in this part of the thesis, *Cultural Identity and Assimilation* formulated a platform

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[2] See Page 6 of *Cultures of Migration*

[3] *One of my own earliest memories is in Italy in the mid 1970s when I was taken to see an open air screening of a film in my parents home village in Aragona, Sicily. I remember one of my cousins propping me up on a car to get a good view and I constantly wanted to slide down in order to get even closer to the moving image and be able to touch the source of my fascination.*

[4] Elsaesser's work about the affects of cinema in relation to subject positions is useful here. See *Subject positions, speaking positions; from Holocaust, Our Hitler and Heimat to Shoah and Shindler's List*, in Vivian Sobchack (ed), *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television and the Modern Event* (New York, Routledge Press, 1996)

[5] Ibid, P173

through which to tease out some of the different aspects that make up Italian diasporic identity. Importantly in this chapter, the role of film was completely removed whilst other aspects of the diasporic cultural experience were considered. The removal of the previously privileged cultural expression of film in this chapter highlights the fact that film comes out of culture and can only be considered as part of a wider set of cultural determinants. What this chapter has provided is a variety of evaluative markers that systematically evolve and give a narrative to the journey of cultural migration from the South of Italy to Britain in the 1950s. The historical formations of the different Italian communities are investigated and the lived realities of the *community members* are considered and in turn analysed from a variety of perspectives. The representational myths that have helped to sustain the stereotype of Italians in Britain were explored through looking at the visible aspects of this cultural migration from the 1950s until the present day. The diverse experiences of the diasporic communities were investigated through a detailed analysis of the gender relationships and the generational conflicts that converge in this particular chapter. The ethnographic aspect of this chapter particularly allowed for the visibility of an experience that went on to further contextualise the findings of the research. The oral interviews that were drawn upon here re-configure experience as the centre through which any categorisation of migrant cultural identity must be filtered.

This chapter went on to assess the complexities of the experience of *assimilation* faced by the Southern Italian economic migrant and charted the development of the *rebuilding* of post war Britain. Given some of the current debates around *Foreign Policy* formation in relation to the newer waves of economic migrants, it is a key time to reconsider Britain's cultural history and its more recent evolution. Together with this reconsideration there should be a continued appraisal of the lived experiences of those trying to forge a new home here but the dialogues should also involve those whose own homeland exists in a continuous state of flux and movement, such as the community under analysis here. There is a great deal to learn from the voices heard throughout this chapter in terms of how those that underwent the cultural shift through migration to Britain from Italy in the 1950s have evaluated their own contributions to what has until recently been called *the multicultural South East of England.* The important role that education played and continues to play in forging a new and hybridised cultural identity for the second and third generation Italian-British, highlights the fact that the pull of cultural translation allows for this new Britishness to exist along side a different and revised Italianess (or *Italianicity* might be a more preferable term here). The slowness to acknowledge the importance of education within the Italian immigrant communities is discussed here in relation to questioning some of the reasons why this experience of education might be different to other British migrant groups[6]. In this chapter, core aspects of cultural determinants have been analysed, along side the first hand testimonial by the members of the communities being discussed.

The conclusion of this chapter is pertinent to the final premise of this part of the thesis in that there is an attempt to directly address the inter-generational nature of cultural formation. This mode of address takes the form of looking at the role of nostalgia and loss from the perspective of those who left their homes in Italy during this period of the 1950s. The role of satellite television was considered as a marker through which *home* is understood to be a stable but strange and distant place. Additionally what is made apparent here is that the diasporic generational differences can best be seen in the conflicting reactions to the mediated version of contemporary Italian identity. As the research has shown, in the same way that in general terms, second and third generation Italians in Britain have an uneven relationship to their parents' sense of Italy and *home*, their relationship to their parents' consumption of Italian television in Britain is equally ambivalent. The detailing of this ambivalence enables us to think through the unique nature of what determines our sense of our selves and how in turn we are shaped by a multitude of uncertainties that make up our sense of who we are in the world. There are no stable points of entry that go on to enable the Italian diasporic communities to exist in Britain in a way that is easily digestible or linear in nature and hence understandable in a coherent way. The fractured experience of migration from one home to another *new home*, does not register itself in a way that is continuous and coherent to understand here. The divergent range of experiences that are discussed in this chapter enables us to understand that cultural identity and its formation comes out of a complex relationship to culture itself.

[6] *Both Farrah and I always knew that there was no way that we would be allowed to leave home and go off to university - our English friends did not experience this. M.*

In the final chapter to this part of the thesis, *Memories and Movies*, we are directly able to see how the object of film has to lose its privilege in order for us to understand how film is only one contributing factor in determining the formation of culture as a whole. It is through the dissolving of film into culture that its real contribution to cultural identity can be assessed and cultural history on a wider scale can be more clearly considered[7]. Thinking through this process determines, the way forward for academic disciplines that are concerning themselves with visual culture as a whole. In this chapter, various issues make themselves evident in relation to the historical and continued importance that the temporal image has on migrant communities in the twenty first century. Film history has given primary importance to a particular version of Italian film history whilst ignoring other less visible histories, much as post- war British cultural history has given some migrant histories an importance whilst ignoring other communities. Italian film history is categorically surmised through the impact of the post-war realist film movement most commonly known as *Italian Neo-Realism* and indeed this influence can still be seen today in the work of contemporary directors[8]. The impact of the populist comedies and melodramas that were viewed in large numbers within Italy has been given far less scrutiny[9]. As this chapter has shown, wider populist audiences, those not *educated* in the parameters that have helped to determine the continued importance of the *Italian Neo-Realist* work,[10] were watching other kinds of *home-grown* films. Those young Italians who went on to become the economic migrants to Britain of the 1950s brought with them cultural references which are still alive for them today.

Further more, this chapter has helped us to negotiate the role and function of particular film stars and the consumption of their characterisations. What is important to consider here is the performative nature of how these film stars are recalled through the narrativised accounts of sharply remembered elements of detailing from movies[11]. Since these films were originally seen over fifty years ago the nature of this act of remembering becomes a key marker through which to understand how culture is determined. Cultural memory is vital here in order to understand how lived experience structures who we are and who we go on to become. Importantly how this form of cultural expression goes on to impact on culture has to be given due importance when we think about what determines culture as a whole. As the oral interviews in this chapter show, lived experience is entwined with the narratives that are inherent in the cinematic viewing experience. However, in relation to the overarching subject matter of this thesis, what this chapter goes on to highlight is that the importance of film is only possible to engage with once it has been submerged into cultural experience. To do the reverse of this and to begin with the films themselves does not allow for the complexity of experiences that go on to become apparent throughout this thesis and this chapter in particular.

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[7] *Once we had got our tickets, we would go in and out of the cinema picking up new friends along the way. We would see the film as many as two or three times but not always in one sitting. We would hide behind curtains and adults if those who worked at the cinema noticed that we were coming backwards and forwards. But some of them did not mind us walking in and out with our friends. There was a really kind old man working at the cinema then, Francesco, he came from a good family. He only died quite recently.* E.

[8] This is a point that I made and was supported by the film director Bernardo Bertolucci at the *National Film Theatre* in London at a talk that he gave on 10 November, 2003

[9] It is interesting to note that in his recent documentary, *Viaggi in Italia* (2002), the film director Scorsese talks about how much his own practice was influenced by watching films from the *Italian Neo-Realist* period with his parents on television when he was a child. My own parents do not want to be reminded of this aspect of their families past and do not enjoy watching films from this period. Despite my repeated attempts, neither of my parents have managed to watch more than the opening sequence of *Bicycle Thieves* (De Sica, 1948) claiming that they lived the experiences being replicated and did not want to re-witness their childhoods through this type of film.

[10] This is also true of the weight given to the subsequent work of the critically respected Art Cinema directors such as Fellini and Antonioni.

[11] *I can't remember the name of the film but Yvonne Samson made us all cry. Her daughter (the film being referred to is Vortice, 1954) cries, Mamma and we all cried Mamma with her. This was 1954 and the year that I came to England; and I too left my mamma and the rest of my family in Italy. This was the last film that I ever saw at the cinema.* W.

To summarise, this final part of the thesis, *From Culture to Film*, has highlighted the evolution of British culture that has been transformed through the experience of migration. This experience of migration has been contextualised within the framework of what some of the very members of this migratory group have to say about their own experiences of migration[12]. Their own dissolution of film into culture happened through their cycle of lived experience as economic migrants (from the *bulk recruitment schemes*[13] discussed in the chapter, *Cultural Identity and Assimilation*). The various members from the Italian communities, across different time planes and generations utilise the temporal image as a continuous dialogue through which to continuously define themselves to themselves. If they are visible at all, Italian immigrants in Britain are defined by their labour or through a mediated stereotyped imaging. What soon became apparent in the second part of this thesis is that these migrant Italians' own senses of themselves was much more powerfully complicated than might previously have been considered. In addition to this, the impact of this evolving sense of self cannot be seen in isolation from the conflicting perspective characterised by the second and third generation British Italians. Their parents sense of *going back* to the home land that they used to know is too often filtered through an understanding that these two subsequent generations have not got anywhere to *go back* to[14].

This thesis has utilised a variety of methodologies that have been applied to a range of academic disciplines. The future development of some of these academic disciplines must be considered in the light of the findings of this thesis. Some of the debates that surround the discipline of Visual Culture very often follow a self-reflexive path that privileges the author's own subjectivity in a way that determines the journey of the discourse under consideration. Questions of subjectivity, so prevalent in Post-Colonial discourses are additionally further problematised when one considers the notion of cultural tourism. This is evidenced between those academics that write about cultural hybridity from the advantage point of being outside of the hybridity of which they speak and those that are not. Bhabha's assertion that cultural specificity is determined in the latter part of the twentieth century by being *in the beyond space and* that *this beyond* must become a space of intervention for the here and now[15] is a useful idea to consider in the light of the overarching findings of this thesis. The disturbance caused by moving away from narratives of originary and initial subjectivities[16] additionally allows for the subsequent destabilising of previously held notions of fixed categorisations of identity formations. The idea of providing a focus for those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences is at the very heart of the research findings of this thesis. This thesis has been produced in part with the knowledge that its author has been attempting to capture a history, a journey, a moment through which to understand some of those elements which make up her own cultural identity. There has been an attempt here to fix and think through, the very thing that is unfixable. The very nature of any categorisation that is determined through language means that no sooner has one naming taken place, than another evolution of this naming has been born elsewhere. During the time that this thesis has been evolving the various Italian communities in Britain have been evolving in all sorts of ways that are outside of the remit of this particular body of research and impossible to explore at this point.

[12] *We came here (to England) and we had nothing, we were considered nobodies. But back home and with those films we felt we were somebody, Nazzari (the actor) knew about the world, the sacrifices that we would go on to experience, we came here ready to work hard and have had to carry on working hard until this very day.* Y.

[13] This term is used by Terri Colpi in *Italians Forward* (Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1991)

[14] *Everyday I feel guilty about my parents never having gone back to live in Italy because of us (the children brought up in Britain). Especially now that they are getting old. They still won't go back and leave me here since I am the unmarried daughter even though Pepe and Gino (her brothers) are here with their families and could keep an eye on me. But they will only consider going back if I went too, but I don't belong there, I only just about belong here (England). What my ma and pa don't see is that I have nowhere to go back to.* AB.

[15] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, Routledge, 1993), P7

[16] Ibid, P1

Bhabha's notion of the *beyond space*[17] and its rightful respect for the *here and now* provides a powerful platform for the continuous ghosting that is the migrant experience of self-identity[18]. One's past is forever apparent in its ghostly presence and the continuous reminders that one is both performing migrant identity for the *host country*, whilst at the same time negotiating its very existence, has to be understood as part of future thinking around cultural formation. The over-determining power given to the object[19], or to other aspects of visual culture such as film, and more typically associated with some aspects of the debates that surround the academic disciplines of both *Visual Culture* and *Film Studies*, is not born out in the evidence collated in this thesis. Some of the moments that collide and diffuse to make up our identities and histories exist both between and around any fixed entry point that could be understood as being either Italian or British. Both systems of categorisations are redundant within the framework that must underpin the thinking around the development of cultural formation since the only starting point for the privileging of any discourse should be that of lived experience and its filtered realities. As the writer of this thesis is more than occasionally reminded of moments and fragments of experience, partly through writing this thesis and more over through living in the post immigrant age[20], the heightened sense of her own identity formation is fragmented in its potency. The further removed one is from the historical reality that once governed a stabilised notion of who and what one was in the world, the more one may wish to grab on to this historical reality. The idea that the past is in the present and therefore this informs who one is now and all that one can ever become is seductive in its rhetoric and in its ability to internalise other notions of what it means to be a migrant in the post migrant age. However, as this thesis highlights, the complexities that make up our evolving identities cannot legislate for the ambiguities and momentary surfaces which collide with any stabilising factors such as the nationality witnessed into ones passport photograph.

The role and function that the mediated and cinematic experience (in particular) plays in identity formation is complicated by these notions of homogeneity and assimilation. One's experience of being Italian in Britain is too often understood at best through the spectre of Italian-American criminality[21] or more commonly through utter ignorance of the migrants' lived reality. Fluency of language is often the marker through which cultural identity is negotiated and lack of entry into language through non-fluency is still a way to differentiate between assumed true assimilation and a more partial one[22]. As this thesis has shown, the formation of language and its entry points through it are not necessarily the only distinguishing factor (if indeed it is a factor at all[23]) which determines ones actual sense of being in the world. Generic consumption of a body of Italian films from the 1950s, and works of the Italian director, Matarazzo in particular, have provided a framework in which to understand the construction of memories that help to hold together our fantasies and desires of who we are and more importantly who we can become. Second and third generation Italians in Britain are not outside of the influences that the mediated construct of Italians can generate even if their own parents and grandparents are[24]. As the very experiences that have been held as memory markers for a self-actualised understanding of identity through the films discussed here, those that were Italian immigrants have not easily slipped into becoming British citizens. Equally their children's experiences of those

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[17] Ibid, P7

[18] This is not only applicable to the migrant experience but to cultural identity as a construct.

[19] An interesting consideration in this debate is how little importance is often given to the object within representations of the Italian migrant in film narratives. This is as true in none mainstream film as it is in mainstream film. For example, in *The Godfather* (Parts 1 & 2, Coppola, 1972 & 1974), the main patriarch, Michael Corleone (played by the Italian-American, Al Pacino), is never very interested in the ownership of new acquisitions but far more interested in new levels of power available to him.

[20] I use this term to heighten how ones experience is, even in the twenty first century and post, post colonial theory, assumed to be culturally homogenised or assimilated into mainstream culture to the point where new migrants, be they economic migrants, refugees, asylum seeker or any other type of migrant is discussed in none too dissimilar terms to the various migrant groups of the 1950s.

[21] As previously discussed through the representation of the Southern Italian in television constructs such as *The Sopranos* or in other cinematic constructs such as *Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990) amongst others.

[22] *"They treat me like I'm stupid because I don't speak (English) very well even though I have been here such a long time. But I'm used to it and to them they think this is a new experience, but what they forget is that I have had a life-time of being treated like this. I don't care since often I am laughing at them rather than the other way around".* Q.

[23] *"If I was so dumb how come I have managed to buy my own property both here (in Britain) and back home (in Italy). I'll tell you how, though keeping my head down and working very hard, by sacrificing everything for my family. I may not speak their (English) language, but I have more than earned my right to be here".* Y.

[24] *My dad will never admit that he does not understand everything when he watches English television (as opposed to Italian satellite television more commonly watched by Italian immigrants in Britain) but he sits in front of it anyway and I translate the bits he is not following. There is a constant commentary when we watch television together; there are constant interruptions. We can never watch anything in silence.* N.

same films is at once removed or only reconciled through the stories that belong to their parents' past. As old memories fade, re-construct and even literally die[25], newer ones are formulated from old remnants of time passed and moments shared. The cinematic experience has proved to be important within this process that has gone on to be determined through an understanding of migration to Britain during the period of the 1950s. The development of cultural history and the impact of immigration during this period in Britain must be considered with this in mind. *I never knew that my dad had understood how it felt for me growing up being Italian in Britain. Then he told me that story about when he first came here in the 1950s with only a ten-pound note in his pocket and a suitcase made out of cardboard boxes. In my mind it had always been like something out of a film, except it really happened. I always thought they (his parents) did not understand that I just wanted to belong here (in Britain) and I had heard that story so often throughout my life. But this time, it was like I heard it for the first time, he was telling me that life is like a film except that in real life, the feelings keep on coming even after the credits have finished*[26].

[25] Given the time span covered in this thesis, from the 1950s to the present day members of the Italian community that came during this period are now as I write, in 2003, starting to die.

[26] N. is second-generation Italian-British.

Appendix A - Oral Interviews

The following transcriptions are all taken from the original oral interviews conducted. In order to retain the confidentiality of those interviewed, all interviewees have been given an alphabetical letter instead of using their real names. This order system has been used chronologically throughout the thesis and is separately listed in this *Appendix*.

Part One
From Film to Culture

Towards an Ethnography of Film

Footnote 29 -A
44 - B
47 - C
54 - D

Cultures of Migration

Footnote 73 - E
185 - F
187 - G

Frank Capra and Anthony Minghella - Comparative Links Through Masculinity, Family and Community

Footnote 5 - H
6 - I

Part Two
From Culture to Film

Cultural Identity and Assimilation

Footnote 8 - A
9 - A
13 - J
21 - K
22 - K
29 - E
32 - L
43 - M
48 - N
49 - O
50 - P
51 - Q
53 - L
54 - L
55 - Q
56 - M
57 - N
58 - N
61 - O
62 - P

63 - Q
66 - R
67 - L
68 - J
73 - S
78 - T
79 - U
80 - J
86 - J
87 - J
90 - J
92 - V
93 - L
94 - J
99 - V

Memories and Movies

Footnote - 4 - E
18 - W
36 - X
37 - X
40 - E
41 - J
42 - J
49 - N
51 - J
52 - N
53 - M
55 - N
56 - E
58 - E
68 - J
70 - J
72 - J
79 - A
81 - A
82 - E
88 - Q
90 - A
91 - Q
92 - W
93 - W
94 - J
95 - W
97 - Y
98 - Z
99 - A
100 - Z
101 - N
102 - Y
103 - Z
104 - Q

105 - E
107 - Q
108 - Y
109 - Z
110 - Q
111 - X
112 - A
113 - A
114 - E
115 - Y
116 - E
117 - A
118 - Y
120 - A
121 - E
122 - W

Conclusion

Footnote - 6 - M
7 - E
11 - W
12 - Y
14 - AB
22 - Q
23 - Y
24 - N

Appendix B - Translation of Oral Interviews

The following transcriptions are all taken from the original oral interviews conducted. In order to retain the confidentiality of those interviewed, all interviewees have been given an alphabetical letter instead of using their real names. This order system has been used chronologically throughout the thesis and is separately listed in this *Appendix*. When ever possible I have retained the original regional Italian dialect and any colloquialisms as they originally appeared. I take full responsibility for any mistranslations that may occur in this *Appendix*.

Part One
From Film to Culture

Towards an Ethnography of Film

Footnote	29 -A	*Nudru ci pensava a nandri tanu, eramu cavazri per zravagliare e basta*
	44 - B	*Per me, gli Italiani che sono venuti qui duranta l'anni cinquanta hanno fatto* una vitta di Neo-realismo e ancora hanno questa mentalita *ritirata. I loro pensieri, I sui modi si fare sono cosi strani per me.*
	47 - C	*Quando vado in uno di quelli vecchi café Italiani nell East End mi sembra che sono dentro un film del anni cinquanta. L'atmosfera, il silenzio di lavoro. La mala voglia degli fighli che non vogliono lavorare con I sui genitore. Le loro sacrifici si sentano con ogni tazza di te`. Sono cosi palide, poverini e non semprano contenti. L'Italia che Conosco io e cosi diversa.*
	54 - D	*Che fanno con I libra? I libra non acatano u pane. Ho bisogno che I me fighi travaglianu, non u fastu sullo per me, e pi idri puro.*

Cultures of Migration

Footnote	73 - E	*Vinamu per lavoro e per mangiare, idri ci lo potevanno subito livare si volevano. Perche` ca viamo daru na scusa?*
	185 - F	*Io non ci voglio pensare a quelli festi perche per me era nu tempo brutto. Tutti I miei soreeli hanno trovato I suoi maritii cosi perche` era l'unica volta che potteva uscire se non cera la chiesa. Oviamente tutta la mia famiglia era con me ma per l'uomini cera la posibilita di vedere la femmina. Come femmine sapevamo che cera bisogno di fare la bella figura, di no essere criticata. Per me era cosi noioso, e ancora mi sento che e noiosa sempre fare la bella figura. Perche` farlo anche qui?*
	187 - G	*Primo voliva che me figli videvanu I cosi Italiani ma ora sono fatti tutti grandi e non ce piu il bisogno. I miei nipoti sono lo stessi. Vogliono pensare a la computer con amici. Quando I miei figli Erano piccoli vedevono I suoi amici a la chiesa o ai festi, vedavano Alti Italiani come loro. I tempi non erano facile ma ci divertiamo. Ora tutto e diverso.*

Frank Capra and Anthony Minghella - Comparative Links Through Masculinity, Family and Community

Footnote	5 - H	Original is in English
	6 - I	Original is in English

Part Two
From Culture to Film

Cultural Identity and Assimilation

Footnote		
	8 - A	*U travaglu spetavamu, uni era, era*
	9 - A	*U travaglu era pisanti ma non cera nienti di fare - che facivamu?*
	13 - J	*Quando arrivamu na casa di Signora Sienna no ci capivamu, chi aviva vistu a qualcuno di Napoli prima d'ora?*
	21 - K	*Mi ricora che la padrona di casa no voleva che mi cucinava la spagetata perche' ci faceva pustare la casa*
	22 - K	*Tupiavamu ogni casa uni ci aviamu ditto che cera la stanza. Ci qudivano la porta nella facci. Nandri lo capivamu che non ci volivano perche' eramo stranieri - perche' non eramu Inglese*
	29 - E	*Idri non capivano che nandri ci pigliavamu I giorni che n'atocavanu. Ci gli pigliavamu tutti da na volta - eranu gilusi, ma cu parlava?*
	32 - L	Original is in English
	43 - M	Original is in English
	48 - N	Original is in English
	49 - O	*Sunu qaranta quattro anni che sono qui, si, ppiu tempo qui che li. Ma sunu sempre di dra, si sa uni nasci, ma no uni mori*
	50 - P	Original is in English
	51 - Q	Original is in English
	53 - L	Original is in English
	54 - L	Original is in English
	55 - Q	Original is in English
	56 - M	*Era stato fidanzata a casa ma e' finuto. Qunu vini ca mi marritavu a fotografia o soeno cu ci voliva a nandri cosi?*
	57 - N	Original is in English
	58 - N	Original is in English
	61 - O	Original is in English
	62 - P	*Ci sono ditto a lei, dimenticarlo perche' non e' niente. Suo padre la fatto puro ma io non sono parlato di divorzio. Voi giovani setti cosi subito a parlare di divorzio. La famigli non si distacha. La vitta continua, il mondo gira. Non ce' bisogno che tutti sanno it vostri fatti, che figura ce' in questo?*
	63 - Q	*E n'uomo bravo e senza vistie. Che putemu fare nandri fimine, cu nandri il difetu si vidi, cu idri no inveci.*
	66 - R	Original is in English
	67 - L	Original is in English
	68 - J	*Certo che non mi piace' che il mio figlio abbita con sua ragazza, perche' non e gusto e lo so che tutto parlano. Ma se fusti la mia figlia era pegio perche' con la donna si vedi tutto. Le femmine bisogno ricordarsi questo.*
	73 - S	Original is in English
	78 - T	Original is in English
	79 - U	*Sono venuta con la mia cugina e stavamo con I miei zii. Eramo quattro di una famiglia, tutti donne*
	80 - J	*Avia autato la mia zia coni corredi ma non aveva mai lavorato fuora di case. Sapeva che aveva bisogno stare atentu cu I soldi perche' non cera piu me madri.*
	86 - J	*Idra sempre si pensava che ara meglio di nandri pichi avia la casa,*

		e nualtri ci la fitavamu. Era piu vecchia e avia statu ca gia un anno piu di nandri. Ci faciva pagare il telefono abbonante ma cu lu capiva tanu? Cu avia usatu u telfono prima d'ora?
	87 - J	*Tanu cu spiniva I soldi. Idru avia mandare I soldi a I suoi. Eramu setti che' mangiavamu cu I soldi e senza metici I picilidri*
	90 - J	*L'omani non ivanu a la chiesa. Ne' ca o dra. Dra ci ivanu quanu era tempo di si maritare. Me marita certi volti ci veni a Natale o si ce' qual'alra ocasioni*
	92 - V	*Lo sapivamu che Signora Bisogno andava a la mesa ogni semana. Lei quidiva il negozio e basta. Io non lo poteva fare questo, perche' doveva lavorare. Come fusti bello fare come vole fare una.*
	93 - L	Original is in English
	94 - J	*Faccio la pulizia a lo spedali e cosi non posto andare a la chiesa ogni Domenica. Dependi quali shift, perche' mi pagono double time, e cosi sono diventata in questa situazioni. Il Signore capiscera*
	99 - V	*Chiandamu I virduri che ci mangavamu a casa, a modu nostu. Cosi amu sparangnatu o seno comi si fa?*
Memories and Movies		
Footnote -	4 - E	*Nandri non avivamu nienti ma ceranu sempri I soldi pi ir a lu cineima*
	18 - W	*Non cera nudru pi nandri. Nessunu chi era cosi bedru, cosi forti. Pi nandri cera sullu la fami. Si pottivamu avira macari una qualrta di chidru che avia Nazzari, macari. Quanu arrivamu ca eramu teccha piu vicinu a arrrivari a quello sogno - mangu Nazzari ci putiva autari po piu.*
	36 - X	*Vidivamu la fotografia di Nazzari nellu muro vuora, cosi lo sapivamu. Subitu tutti parlavanu che cera un filmi nuovo con Nazzari o Samson. Tutti lo volevanu sapiri po.*
	37 - X	*Quanu arrivamu a Vittoria stazioni eramu tutti auali. Capelli comu Nazzari e con l'unico vestito che avivamu. Valicchi vecchi fatti di casa cu due or tre cosi dintra. Ci avianu ditto di non portari tantu cu nandri, ma nandri chi aviamu? Sul dri foto nella nostra mimoria.*
	40 - E	*Ci putivamu barari ancora di giszri filmi. I storie eranu importanti. Ci facivanu vidiri u muni diferenti*
	41 - J	*Nazzari pruvava a fari la cosa gusta. Nandri tutti lu apemu come esseri bravi, ca e' ca ci ficimu fradici*
	42 - J	*A mia mi ci facivanu iri a u cinima pichi cera me frati che era zitto e cu sta scusa I ci iva. O seno na fimmina sula di na certa eta non ci putiva iri senza esere accumpaniata*
	49 - N	Original is in English
	51 - J	*Nandri semu sempri stranieri e non semu comu idri. Per esempio I sui figli*
	53 - M	Original is in English
	55 - N	Original in English
	58 - E	*Vulivamu irinini, tutti pensavamu da cusi, mi ni pendivu che non lu fici*
	68 - J	*Nazzari capiva uni iva nu munu, era inteligenti e ni cosi ci pensava. Nandri ni baravamu di izru*
	70 - J	*Ni chitri iorna nandri non sapivamu nienti primu di maritarine. Era meglio da cusi. Ora ce' troppu tutti cosi a l'apertu e vidi chi ce'*
	72 - J	*Me marito era e ancora e' l'unico uomo che' mi conosci. Era destino di essere cosi. I nostri figli annu pigliatu brutti vizie qua e vidi comu*

	stanu ienu I cosi
79 - A	*Compravamu un biglietto doppo mangiare e stavamu tutta la giornata. Lasciavamu per manigiare qualeche cosa a la serra, o per vedere qualche` amico e poi ritornavamu. Vedevamu la pelicola tanti volti con I nuovi amici*
81 - A	*Ci shariavamu pi dri filmi, eranu comu la verita. Ni la vita ci suno diversi momenti - comu I filmi*
82 - E	*Izdru era un vero personaggio di cinema. Iu mi putiva sullu imaginare comu era esseri comu unu di idri*
88 - Q	*Non avere abastanza soldi, nandri lu capivamu questo. Ma sapivamu che idri si quadagniavanu u pani cu u cinema. Pi idri facivanu vidiri che` avuanu la fame, ma pi nandri era la varita*
90 - A	*Sti cosi ceranu dra capu, io l'avia sentuto*
91 - Q	*Con la figlia il difetto di l'onore subito si vedi e diverso con il figlio*
92 - W	*L'onore della famiglia e tutto. Senza onore non ce` niente.*
93 - W	*Ma chi putiva fare? U fici pi so padre idra, vuliva fare la cosa giusta, lu vuliva tanto bene*
94 - J	*Sono stori che` ti fanno pensare, rifletare sul la vita. Sono storie antiche ma sempre importanti*
95 - W	*Certo che` era un film, io non conosceva una donna che` andava da sola da la casa di un uomo. I femmini di nostri parti non lu facivanu na cosa di questo generi. Si lo facevany da vero* la su, io *non lo posso dire. I tempi eranu tantu diferenti di ora*
97 - Y	*Vidivamu dri cosi e nandri ci pensavamu, I soldi sonu la cos che` fanu girari u munu*
98 - Z	*Nandri ci 'rangavamu. My padri avia nu cecu e l'agenti ci pagavanu pi lu usari. Idru era u chu giornatu di tutti nandri in famiglia! Quanu muri ci misimu tutti a chianceri, idru ci mis u pani nu stomacu. Ci magava qunu non cera chu. Non ci passa tantu tempo po che`mi ni vini ca a L'Ingliterra*
99 - A	*Io conoseva agenti ni sta situazioni, era sullu nu filmi ma io conusciva fimini che abbitavanu cosi pi veru*
100 - Z	*Ci sunu sempri I fimini che` ci scipanu l'occhi a l'uomini.*
101 - N	*Si u Signuri mi dava st disgrazia, bisogno aviri pacienza. Certi cosi sonu distinati. Ora il Signuri la castia*
102 - Y	*Era u destinu di u Signuri. Ca l'agenti l'avisiru ascundari a cisu*
103 - Z	*Chisu era u so destino. Comu gidru me era di veniri cu me maritu ca*
104 - Q	*Qusto era l'unica volta che` sono conoscuto un uomo prima di mi maritari a me marito*
105 - E	*Sti filimi eranu fatti per si ricordari una. Cera d'imbararsi. Ma ti posso dire che` le nostri donne non lo facivanu sti cosi. Ma po quannu arrivavu ca li vitti sti tipi di fimini. Primu li conusiva sulli nelli film, ma po li vitti ca*
107 - Q	*I bambini picilidri chi capishanu? Idra non lu voliva fare chisu*
108 - Y	*Sti pezzi sempri mi fannu chianceri, l'au visti un saccu di votti*
109 - Z	*Nualtri lo capivamu che` chistu era il destinu, senza famiglia chi ce`?*
110 - Q	*Ma era destinu che` idra si rinuiciva cu so figlia. Comu era destinu che` iu mini viniva ca e lasciavu me ma e me pa*

	111 - X	*A nandri nudru n'adatu nienti, tutto a statu fatu cu I sagrifici*
	112 - A	*Ni tratavanu comu I picilidri cha eramu. Ni avianu dari la parola di fari qualcosa fura di uni durmivamu e travagliavamu, E non ci piciva si niscivamu a sam ma cu lu voliva fari? Io no. Io non capiva l'atri Italiani. Era vuori di Roma e cuntavi I ioni pi mi ni iri ar a casa me. Ci davanu a mangiare, megio do indra ma a mia mi magava a sa la mia famiglia. Mi mis ogni iono che passava er nu iornu che` putiva autari a I me*
	113 - A	*Travagliari ca si nificava ca puro nandri putivamu autari a I nostri. Putivamu cuminare a fari I famigli nostri, comu ni dri filmi*
	114 - E	*Tutti nandri fimini ivamu na sarta, e quati idei ni davanu zri filmi*
	115 - Y	*Prima di veniri ca u telfonu l'avia vistu sullu nella pelicola*
	116 - E	*Io mi baravu assa di dri filmi di Nazzari. Quanu vini ca c pensava sembr a dri filmi. Ora un tantu. Ora non mi ricordu tutto comu prima. Prim l'avia a memoria dri filmi*
	117 - A	*Quanu arrivavu ca, sullu ci iva a u cinima cu qualchi amicu. Ma subito po non ci ivu chu. Vini ca pi travagliari no per divertimentu*
	118 - Y	*C'era la fami, pero ci ivamu a u cinema*
	120 - A	Si ci putivamu stari dra, ma a muriri di fami
	121 - E	*Vini cha pichi ce`ra la fami, e dri filmi!*
	122 - W	*Mi ricordu a memoria dri foto di cinima, ci sunu ancora ma sunu vecchie pichi puri iu sunu vecchia*
Conclusion		
Footnote -	6 - M	Original is in English
	7 - E	*Quanu aviamu I biglietti niscivamu e trasivamu cu andri amici. I Filimi I vidivamu tanti volti, du or tri volti ma mai tutti da na volta. Ca'mucavamu sutta I tendini o I granni si ci vidivanu. Ceraano chidri bravi cha no dicivanu nendri. Cera unu, Francesco, era di una famiglia brava, or amuri unavi tantu tempu*
	11 - W	*Non mi ricordo il nome del' film ma Yvonne Samson ci ha fatto piancere` a tutti. Sua figlia nel film diceva, mamma e noi anche` chiamamamo mamma! Era il '54 e l'anno che sono lasciato li per qui. Io sono lasciato la mia mamma e famiglia, questo era l'ultimo film che` ho visto nel cinima*
	12 - Y	*Nualti vinimu ca cu nienti, e nandri eramu nienti. Ma dra, e con gistri filmi, nandri ci sentimavu qulacunu comu Nazzari, idru lu capiva che cosa si significava a fari gli sacrifici. Vinimu pi travagliari, e ancora travagliamu*
	14 - AB	Original is in English
	22 - Q	*A idri ci paranu che io sugnu stupida pichi non parlo L'Inglese, ma sugnu stata ca da tantu tempo. Ma orami ci sugnu abbituata,idri si scordanu che` pi mia avi na vita di essere tratata da cosi. I donna care pichi Io sugno chidra che ridu a idri*
	23 - Y	*Si sugnu da cosi babba, pichi e` ca ci ficimu a nostra casa ca e dra? Comu ficimu? Ti lu dicu io comu, calari la testa e fari I sagrifici, tutto per la mia famiglia. Sullo che la lingua non ce` ma nandri amu travagliatu*
	24 - N	Original is in English

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Michelangelo Antonioni

L'Avventura (1959)

Frank Capra

It Happened One Night (1934)

Mr. Deeds Goes To Town (1936)

You Can't Take It With You (1938)

Mr. Smith Goes To Washington (1939)

Young Mr. Lincoln (1939)

Meet John Doe (1941)

It's A Wonderful Life (1946)

Cipri E Maresco

Lo Zio Di Brooklyn (1995)

Toto Che Visse Due Volte (1998)

Il Ritorno Di Cagliostro (2003)

Francis Ford Coppola

The Godfather (Part One, 1972)

The Godfather (Part Two, 1974)

Spike Lee

Jungle Fever (1991)

Raffaello Matarazzo

Catene` (1949)

I Figli Di Nessuno (1951)

Chi E Senza Peccato (1952)

Angelo Bianco (1953)

Vortice (1954)

Torna! (1954)

L'Intusa (La Moglie del Dottore) (1955)

Malinconico Autunno (1958)

Anthony Minghella

Mr Wonderful (1993)

Truly Madly Deeply (1991)

The English Patient (1997)

Cold Mountain (2003)

Roberto Rossellini

Rome, Open City (1945)

Nancy Savaca

True Love (1989)

Martin Scorsese

ItalianAmerican (1974)

Mean Streets (1973)

Goodfellas (1990)

Viaggi in Italia (2002)

Douglas Sirk

All That Heaven Allows (1955)

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