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L'ALTRO IN ITALIA: UNA TRADUZIONE E ANALASI CRITICA  
THE OTHER IN ITALY: A TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

Today, Italy contains one of the most rapidly changing populations of the European Union. Currently, 7.2% of Italy's 60 million residents are non-citizens. Recent demographic data trends towards a large demographic shift in Italy society. One of every six babies delivered was born to a foreign born immigrant in 2008. This wave of immigration, especially the segment arriving from Africa, has not been integrated smoothly into Italian society, however. Because of a prevailing xenophobic attitude in Italy, immigrants have been greeted with prejudice and even acts of violence. Thus, immigrants have become the "other" in Italy. The purpose of this thesis is to uncover "othering" in Italy and its origins through the translation of a work of a respected Italian journalist (Gian Antonio Stella). Additionally, this thesis offers a reflection on the process of translation.

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## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

On a cold blustery winter day in 2010, I found myself doing the traditional *camminata* (a long stroll) down the streets of Milan, Italy. As a study abroad student, I was fully immersed in Italian culture: the language, the history, the art, the food, etc. However, I would soon stumble upon one of the uglier aspects of current Italian society. As I turned a corner, I came upon a large protest. It was apparent that the participants in the rally were not of Italian origin, but rather of Middle Eastern and African descent. The protest seemed political and emotionally charged. I would later ask a Milanese friend about what I saw. “It was probably the immigrants,” she said. “Immigration is a big issue here.” With this in the back of my mind, I began seeing things differently.

Soon after the protest, I noticed a placard of a powerful political party the Lega Nord (Northern League), which addressed the immigrant issue:



With a picture of a Native American, the placard warns: “They put up with immigration...Now they live on reservations!” I was shocked at what I saw. I could not believe that this would be acceptable in a developed country like Italy. It is something that I doubted would be tolerated in the United States. The protest and the placard opened my eyes to the issue of immigration in Italy and made me want to further explore the issue.

In order to better understand the issue, I decided that I should consider the viewpoint of an Italian. A professor of mine introduced me to the works of Gian Antonio Stella, a famous Italian journalist who currently writes for the newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*. He has written extensively on Italian culture, specifically the life of immigrants to Italy. The second chapter of his book *Negri, Froci, Giudei & Co. L'Eterna Guerra Contro L'Altro (Blacks, Gays, Jews & Co. The Eternal War Against the Other)* (Biblioteca Univerzale Rizzoli, 2010) deals with instances of blatant prejudice toward immigrants and the Italian public’s attitude towards them. The problem was Stella’s book was written in Italian and never translated into English. Therefore, this project became a practice in translation as much as it was a critical analysis of the issue of immigration in Italy. As I completed the critical analysis and reflection on the process of translation, I found that both were equally complicated, more than I could ever have imagined.

## SECTION II: TRANSLATION

### Chapter Two

In the name of the House of Savoy, of the Duce, and of the Po God  
*And the Italians absolve themselves of ever being racist*

“Oh my beautiful Mary / who dominates Milan / get a rifle / and chase away the Taliban.” The billboard, since replicated in a multiplicity of versions on the walls and on the web, appeared some time ago in a demonstration of the Lega Nord (Northern League) and summarizes a lot of things. An Islamic unaware of the Lombard dialect struggling with a literal translation would read it so: “O my beautiful lady, who dominates Milan, take the gun and kill the Koranic students.” A disgrace: how can you invoke the Mother of Jesus Christ, also revered by the Mohammedans with shrines throughout Egypt and the Middle East, to take up arms to kill her Muslim children?

Nonsense. Anybody who can barely make out some Milanese knows that that text is so rich with irony as to defuse any spark of violence. Just as it would be impossible to take literally many other blusterings of the Lega Nord. One day Erminio “Obelix” Boso says that “the immigrants must all be put on the snowfield of Mont Blanc: on the one hand, we would be able to count them all; on the other, they could grind ice in order to make mint slushies.” Another, Giancarlo Gentilini, proposes: “To give hunters some practice we could dress the immigrants like hares. Pow Pow Pow.” Another still, Umberto Bossi attacks the act of indemnity: “In addition to the 250,000 immigrants, their relatives bring the number to three million minimum. And if their cousins are admitted the chain will never end. Besides, you’ll have to add that Muslims can have four wives; and where do we put all their mothers-in-law?” Not to mention a banner that appeared at the annual gathering in Venice: “The only black that we want is the

Merlot [grape].” Are they to be taken literally? “C’mon!” the lawyer Niccolo Ghedini would say. And he would be right.

Woe if we take certain outbursts of the Lega Nord seriously. They would laugh: “You see? You’re missing a sense of irony.” Worse: mixing together their expressions of forced irony (i.e. a manifesto against the trafficking of Nigerian prostitutes that read: “You want to screw?”) and their over-the-top affirmations means that you end up losing sight of these last ones. The little ironies impede an understanding of the profound seriousness of certain other messages of theirs that exude a true, callous, vicious, and vulgar racism comparable to few others in the world.

The Lega Nord has played this ambiguity on us for years. When they clamored most stridently to send back [on boats] to the Mediterranean, where in the last two decades 14,600 have perished, according to the Vatican, the party website boasted a video game called “Bounce the Clandestine.” The son of “Senatur<sup>1</sup>” Renzo Bossi, explains that he wanted “only to involve, jokingly, young people in a real phenomenon that troubles our coasts.” The senator Piergiorgio Stiffoni hisses, about the arrangement of a group of immigrants left homeless in Treviso, “What a pity that the cremating oven of the cemetery of Santa Bona is not yet ready.” He snorts that it was only a joke. However, if there is someone without a home who needs help, then surely “the help goes first of all to our brothers, and the immigrant is not my brother. He has a different skin color.” Umberto Bossi thunders: “Have the Padani (Padanians<sup>2</sup>) worked the land for thousands

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<sup>1</sup> The suffix “-ur” comes from French and German influences of the Milanese dialect. It adds a pejorative or ironic connotation.

<sup>2</sup> Padania is the region around the Po River Valley. In the past, the Northern League has called for the secession of Padania from Italy because it feels that the poorer and less industrialized south has a negative influence on its economy.



of years, just to give it to the Bingo Bongo<sup>3</sup>?” Roberto Calderoli shrugs it off: “The expression goes back to the innocuous cartoon of an old comic book for children describing the adventures of a clever African always ready to use tricks.” He himself uses it and reuses it: “The motto of Prodi is taxes, joints, pardons, and Bingo Bongo.” “Don’t let the Bingo Bongo vote.” “We will tear the pro-Bingo Bongo law to pieces.”

Oh God, the existence of a Bingo Bongo is ignored both by *Fascism in Comics* by Claudio Carabba and by the *Encyclopedia of Comics* by Oreste del Buono, but how could we doubt the words of a minister of the Republic? He must be confused. Maybe with the not-so-harmless characters of Sia-La-Floup<sup>4</sup> that, explains Ferdinand Martini (writer, governor of Eritrea, and then among the signers of the Manifesto of the Fascist intellectuals) in a letter quoted in the “Corriere dei Piccoli<sup>5</sup>” (“The Children’s Courier”) of the Corriere della Sera Foundation, tells the adventures of “many blacks from the most sad and miserable viewpoint,” known as Quas-Quas-Quas. They are “degraded human beings” who “have black skin, ugly faces, armed with the jaws of a gorilla, the receding skull, very long arms, attached to which are two huge hands, short and crooked legs (...) all greasy, because they never wash themselves, except when they jump in the water, and their hair is the refuge of a host of parasites,” and they sleep “with the dogs and pigs, living with them in the most detestable familiarity.”

Or perhaps the ministers of the Lega Nord get confused with Zimbo, Zimba, and Bomba, the stupid servants that appeared in the “Corrierino” in the years in which newspapers and magazines received fascist “press releases,” like that of May 27, 1936: “Severe penalty

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<sup>3</sup> “Bingo bongo” is a derogatory term for a black immigrant.

<sup>4</sup> Sia-La-Floup Sia-La-Floup is a children's story written by Renato Thevenin that was published in 1923.

<sup>5</sup> “The first giornolino (children’s newspaper) to include foreign and Italian comic strips on a regular basis was the Corriere dei Piccoli, founded in 1908 as the counterpart for children of the prestigious newspaper Il Corriere della Sera” (Marrone, 787).

measures: refrain from sentimental and tender feelings towards the Ethiopians. No sentimentality, no fraternization. There must be absolute and clear division between the race that dominates and the one that is dominated.” Or with the comics on the notebooks of the fascist schoolboys who spoke of “black races, false and spoiled (...) Humble, vile and groveling in front of the strong,” to whom [the black races] should be brought “the ax of Fascist justice” Or as in the cheerful postcards drawn during the Ventennio [20 years of fascism] by the cartoonist from “Il Balilla” (“The Fascist”) Enrico De Seta. In one, a good soldier is photographed with his boot placed on the head of a Negro he shot down as if he were antelope in his big-game hunt. In another he goes to the post office to send home a parcel tied with string: a beautiful black woman to cuddle. In still another, somebody gets free of the annoying Bingo Bongo, as the Lega would say, by spraying them with poison gas.

The trouble is that gases were actually used. Indeed, says Angelo Del Boca, the historian who first shed light on the crimes of Italian colonialism, “We were the only ones to use gas to such an extent” with “a logic of annihilation.” The orders, he writes in *Are Italians Good People?*, came directly from il duce (Benito Mussolini): “It is he who grants permission to use weapons prohibited by the Geneva Convention, the deadly toxic gas. He authorized during the secret landing in Eritrea the close range use of 270 tons of these chemical agents, 1,000 tons in bombs used by the Air Force (loaded with mustard gas), 60,000 grenades for the Artillery (loaded with arsine). The contract for this more-than-lethal weapon has been preserved.”

These weapons were banned by the international conventions but used daily. Even Haile Selassie condemned it, according to Del Boca: “They did not drop bombs, but strange barrels that broke as soon as they touched the ground or the water of the river, and spewed a colorless liquid. Before I could realize what was happening, among my men, several hundred were hit by

the mysterious liquid and they screamed in pain, while their bare feet, their hands, their faces were covered with blisters. Others, who had drunk from the river, writhed on the ground in an agony that lasted hours. Among those affected were farmers who had also brought their cattle to the river, and people from nearby villages.”

“We are in the area affected by the chemical weapons that our planes threw when the land was full of Abyssinians. The effect must have been terrible, which is attested by the hundreds of dead horses and mules, that are impressively scattered everywhere,” writes the infantryman Elvio Cardarelli in his diary, found 73 years after his death. “I see through the tall grass the black bodies of native warriors numbed by the fire of our flamethrower; they do not give off any bad odor, but they are hideous to behold. Many of them have limbs detached from their bodies and a horrible grimace painted on their skeletal faces.”

If he was appalled, others did not even blink. On the contrary. Let’s reread *Ali sul deserto* (*Ali on the desert*), with the memories of the War of 1934 of Vincent Biani, an airman stationed in Libya: “The crews, navigating a few feet off the ground, could follow the tracks of fugitives and finally found beneath themselves a swarm of people in turmoil; men, women, camels, sheep, with the riotous promiscuity that is encountered only in masses under the nightmare of a cataclysm, a multitude that did not have form any more than the fear and despair of which it was prey; and on it rained, with casts of hot steel, the punishment it deserved. (...) When the bombs were exhausted, airplanes descended lower to try the machine guns. They worked very well. (...) No one [among the airmen] wanted to be the first to go [back to base], because we had all taken a liking to this new and fun game. And when we finally went back to Sirte, we celebrated that baptism by fire with several bottles of champagne. (...) Throughout the vast territory between El

Machina, Nufilia, and Gifa, the most fortunate were the jackals who found large meals to sate their ample hunger.”

It took a deep racial contempt towards those Africans to give our hearts this indifference toward the slaughter of old men, women, and children. The singular indifference to the fierceness of this or that fascist murderer could not be enough: it required a unanimous, collective indifference that involved thousands and thousands of willing executioners of Il Duce. It's not like the “supposed kindness” of the Italian Fascism “was corrupted, in the end, by the ‘bad allies’ of the Duce,” Luciano Canfora wrote twenty years ago in “L’Unita” (“Unity”): It is rather a “criminal matter which was likely to be removed forever by the irrepressible national trend toward ‘self-absolution’.”

“The myth that ‘Italians are good people’ served only to cover and to mitigate, the true nature of a mass of unscrupulous conquerors, committed to evil deeds, led by wicked orders,” wrote Angelo Del Boca in his abovementioned book. And one proof of the “almost total connivance,” explains the Piemontese historian in *The Fall of the Empire*, the third volume of the series *The Italians in East Africa*, “One finds in the Photo Archive of Addis Ababa, where tens of thousands of images were collected (...) there are, first of all, hundreds of images with pitchforks of all kinds, crude or well finished, that tack up one or more bodies. Often the Italian perpetrators are photographed posing in front of the forks or holding the severed heads of the Ethiopian patriots. In some photos the torturers raise the severed heads on pikes. In others, they roll them [the heads] out of baskets. In still others, they display them on groundsheets, as if they were objects of barter. A hesitant smile, embarrassed, is stamped on the face of these soldiers, the bearers of civilization and prosperity, according to fascist propaganda. But what is most surprising is the full consent from the faces of those surrounding the torturers. As if these

macabre spectacles constitute a daily ritual, perfectly natural, or taken for granted. In fact, in their cruel and horrible exhibitionism there is even the contempt for the indigenous peoples that they consider socially and culturally inferior.”

To chop off the head of a man, all you need is a murderer. But, to display the head as a trophy amongst complacent hurrahs, you need everyone to be complicit. Or almost everybody. Take the case of Rodolfo Graziani, the butcher of the Italian colonial conquests, after his 1937 attempt on the life of the Viceroy of Ethiopia. The reaction not only of the military but also of Italian settlers dismayed the envoy of the “Corriere” *Ciro Poggiali*, who wrote in his diary: “All civilians who are in Addis Ababa have assumed their duty, carried out as fast as lightning like the most authentic fascist squads. They go armed with truncheons and iron bars, picking up as many indigenous as they can still find in the streets. (...) I see a driver who, after having struck down an old black man with a hammer blow, pierced his head from ear to ear with a bayonet. Needless to say, the havoc struck an unsuspecting and innocent people.”

“After receiving their orders at Fascist headquarters, some hundreds of teams of black shirts, drivers, and Libyan *Ascari*, flooded indigenous neighborhoods and started the most frenzied ‘black hunt’ that was ever seen,” one of the witnesses, *A. Dordoni*, would tell *Del Boca* years later. “”In general, they set fire to the tukuls with gas and ended with blows of hand grenades as [the blacks] tried to escape the fires. (...) I knew many of these psychotic people personally. They were traders, drivers, officials, people who I found calm and respectable. People who had never fired a shot during the entire war now revealed their resentment and how much they were loaded with an unexpected violence.” They did not have pity for men, women, or children. There was also an actor, *Dante Galeazzi*, who in the book *The Violin of Addis Ababa* would tell all its horror: “The chaos lasted for three days. There was no way for any Abyssinian

to escape in those terrible three days in Addis Ababa, that African city where for a while you could not glimpse a single African.”

Nobody payed [was convicted] for that massacre. Nor for the murder of Debra Libanos, either. Marshal Graziani ordered all the monks and deacons (the heart of Ethiopian church) to be eliminated. He delegated the slaughter to the Muslim detachment. It was a massacre that not only never carried any burden for him (“I have often examined my conscience in relation to the charges of cruelty, atrocities, and violence that have been attributed to me. But I have never slept so well.”), he also boasted in a telegram to General Alexander Pirzio Biroli: “Priests and monks are now clearing out, and that is a thing of beauty.” They did not pay then; they did not pay after the war; they never paid. On the contrary, the Italy of Alcide De Gasperi, Pietro Nenni, and Palmiro Togliatti, without substantial differences between the three, refused to hand over the indefensible Graziani to the Ethiopians who wanted to prosecute him as a war criminal.

And here we return to the neo-racism today. The foolish lightness with which the Lega called the blacks Bingo Bongo is, obviously, a far cry from the atrocities of our colonialism, from the Fascist racial laws, and from the apartheid that Italians invented in Africa by establishing the first cinema for whites and those for blacks, buses for whites and those for blacks and so on. But it is the result of the almost total ignorance of what our colonialism was, and of the absence of any sense of guilt for Italian fascist racism.

These things, of course, must not be confused. Renzo De Felice already said it in 1993, at the release of a new edition of *the History of the Italian Jews under Fascism*: To confuse the phenomena of racism today with yesterday’s racism of Mussolini or worse still with the Nazi laws “is like trading the chickenpox for the bubonic plague.” Quite right. It is difficult however not to realize one thing: that the racists, xenophobes, and intolerants of today are resorting more

to the same assumption. Italy is not “historically” a racist country. And if it was not then, of course, it must be much less so today.

It has gone on like this for years. What about the fans of a Varese basketball team during a game against Maccabi Tel Aviv who unfurled a banner at the arena that read, “Hitler taught us that killing Jews is not a sin”? Choir: But Italy is not racist! What about the entrepreneur who set one of his construction workers on fire, the Romanian Ion Cazacu, because he dared to complain that he was being paid one-seventh of the other workers? But Italy is not racist! What about the young student from Ghana, Emmanuel Bonsu Foster, who was mistaken for a drug dealer and accused the policemen of Parma of beating him bloody and only writing on an envelope: “Emmanuel, Negro”? But Italy is not racist! What about the four drunk members of the Lega who trashed an establishment in Venice on the feast of Pandania, savagely beating two immigrant waiters? But Italy is not racist! The websites are flooded with pages that scream “Shitty Immigrants!”, “Shitty Gypsies!”, “Shitty fags!”? But Italy is not racist!

And the list goes on. [What about the] study by the European Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (E.U.C.M.) of Vienna which monitored 450 blogs of sports fans and reported that we are the country that “hosts the largest number of soccer fan websites with racist and xenophobic stances,” almost 32 percent of those surveyed? But Italy is not racist! Throw a banana from the stands to Mario Balotelli and the other black players? But Italy is not racist! And the young Matteo Frascini, adopted in infancy by a professional in Milan and raised in Milan, perfect Milanese accent, good schools, decided to move to Africa where he had never lived because he couldn't take the attitude toward the blacks here anymore (“Where did you steal that car? Why do you never speak Italian? Do you feel cold?”)? But Italy is not racist! Marcello Veneziani vented his fury in “Libero” (“Free”), writing a compelling story about how the “racial

persecution” is becoming more and more unbearable. And he would know; he is subjected to it on the roads, in the airports, everywhere (because of his “dark complexion, strengthened by the sun, and from a vaguely Arab-Islamic-Oriental appearance”). But Italy is not racist!

You can go on for hours, with this list. Hours. Just to give you an idea: the news stories of ANSA with the words “racist,” “racists,” or “racism” in the title totaled 83 in 1988, rose to 161 in 1998, and climbed to 878 in 2008. That's ten times more than twenty years before. It's a trend that makes your blood run cold. Around the beginning of November 2009, the only electronic archive of the “Corriere della Sera” (then there were only scraps of paper ...) contained 1,315 articles that had the words “racist,” “racists,” or “racism” in the subhead, 2,694 in the summary, 3,083 in the title. Against those who minimize these matters, the director of E.U.C.M Beate Winkler sounded the alarm in March 2007: “In Europe, 64 percent of people consider discrimination on the basis of ethnicity to be ‘widespread,’ but for Italians the figure rises to 73 percent.”

A 2008 Demos-La Polis study confirmed: apart from the Eastern European countries, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania, nobody more than the Italians considers immigrants useless, despite the fact that they produce a tenth of the gross domestic product, and nobody more than the Italians (51 percent) sees them as a “threat to public order and personal safety.” We are fourteen points above the United Kingdom, 21 above Germany, and even 29 above France. Nando Pagnoncelli’s Ipsos<sup>6</sup> poll in September 2009 asked: “Speaking of illegal immigrants, Cardinal Bagnasco has called for ‘welcoming them as brothers,’ for fear incidents of racism reported in recent weeks could be repeated. Is he right?” “No, because the state cannot manage the continuous flow,” replied 43 percent of inhabitants of the peninsula.

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<sup>6</sup> Ipsos is a “private research think-tank in the fields of media and advertising” established in Paris in 1975.



“These were only isolated incidents, of course. Italians are not racist,” replied another 25 percent. As it meant to demonstrate: Italy is not racist!

There are those who will say that “our” immigrants commit more crimes. But the argument could also be reversed. Given that Italy does not bother much fighting the Mafia and the Camorra, and it persecutes only 0.97 percent of assessed building permit violations, and it tolerates a huge quantity of tax offenses, and it turns a blind eye on a mountain of illegality committed by many of its own citizens, there is something paradoxically amazing in the fact that only two percent of crimes are committed each year by immigrants.

“For those who fear, everything rustles,” said Sophocles. But is there a real reason to have so much fear? Is Italy a particularly violent country? The data seem to say no; indeed, on paper (except for certain regions of the South, where, paradoxically, the perception of insecurity is minor) it is one of the least unsafe. So what? One example says it all: a paper presented at the inauguration of the judicial year 1992 of the district of the Court of Appeals of Lecce (encompassing the provinces of Lecce, Brindisi, and Taranto) reported that during the previous year there had been 149 murders in the area. The same report recorded only thirteen for 2008: one-twelfth. Alfredo Mantovano, Undersecretary of the Interior, who was from Lecce and had served formerly as a magistrate of that district, told the prefects in a conference in Padua in October 2009 “It seems impossible, but people have never been as insecure as they are now.”

Why is murder a crime considered “distant” (they kill amongst themselves...), while purse snatching, pick-pocketing, and burglary are “near”? Sure. But it is also the fault of that “hyper reality” about which the political scientist Ilvio Diamanti writes in “La Repubblica”<sup>7</sup> (“The Republic”): “The ‘fact’ that intolerance and xenophobia increase in waves that are not

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<sup>7</sup> La Repubblica is a progressive newspaper based in Rome.

consistent with the [decreasing] number of actual crimes is not a ‘fact’, but a ‘consequence.’ It is the product of the emphasis attributed by the media and political and social agents.” Comparing three sets of data from around 2008 when power shifted from the left to the right in government provides the evidence.

In the first, there is the general data of crimes in Italy, down eight percent. In the second, pieced together by the Center of Pavia on “Safety and media,” there is the space given by the major television networks to the facts of crime news and to the “anxiety-provoking” news, that more or less at the same time decreases not by eight percent, but even by fifty percent: to speak of an Italy at the mercy of delinquency is not useful anymore. The third data set shows the perception of insecurity; despite the mix of economic fears, it is a consequence of the second set of data more than of the first set. In short, “The facts are real, but if they are systematically manipulated (omitted, hidden, or distorted) reality is affected,” says Barbara Spinelli in *La Stampa*<sup>8</sup>, “and it is in this way that a parallel is created.”

It is Diamanti’s thesis: “Fear erupts especially from television. In this country where the line between real reality and media reality is always getting more subtle. (...) Patrol or no patrol. patrol of the patrol. The fear disappears along with the crime. Or reappears. At command of the remote control.”

Moreover, the history of the vigilante patrols says it all. It seemed that at a certain point the whole of Italy was infested with hordes of drug dealers, rapists, and thugs, such that Italy could not endure a moment longer without the creation of more squadrons of militia volunteers who patrolled the streets. It only took the imposition of a few minimal rules, suggested actually by the police and carabinieri, such as that [the volunteer militia] keep away from bullies, etc., to

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<sup>8</sup> *La Stampa* is a liberal newspaper based in Turin.

end up in mid-October of 2009 already causing the big splash in the ANSA calling [the initiative] a flop. The case of Arcore, the Berlusconi “Versailles” was truly spectacular: despite the call to join launched in the square by the Cavaliere [Berlusconi's nickname], in spite of all the posters on the walls, despite the direct involvement of the rightist mayor, after months of claims and weeks of recruiting there were exactly only two volunteers. Out of sixteen thousand.

“They told me of a young father whose child was afraid of black men,” wrote Adriano Sofri in “La Repubblica.” “The father told him there was not a single case of a black man, he showed him the statistics: nothing, the child is still afraid. Who is not moved by a child frightened by a black man? So long as the population of millions of adults isn't moved, too. Xenophobia, they say, is the fear of something different, and therefore it is something natural. Who feels no apprehension, mistrust, anxiety, in the face of the unknown? Phooey, let's not get too cozy with the etymologies. Xenophobia is also the invention of the different, and the contempt, hatred, and persecution of the different. It is a step away from racism, and often this step was taken. Can one really say ‘Italians are not xenophobic’? ‘they are not racist’? Oh, Father, do not test us, lead us not into temptation ...”

One thing is certain: in France they are ruthless about deportation, but no member of the government forces are dreaming of shouting on the streets: “Illegal shit.” In Great Britain they have even more problems of Islamic terrorism, but no representative of the government forces are dreaming of shouting on the street: “Islamic shit.” And the same Geert Wilders who speaks of “Islamic fascism” would not dream of spilling pig urine on the places intended to house mosques.

In short, there are many ways to make war on Muslim bigotry, especially since, as Renzo Guolo explains in the scholarly article *Who Wields the Cross? Lega, Church and Islam*, the suspicion that certain choices are instrumental is strong. Starting with shifting the crosshairs from the "southerners" to the Muslims. Shall we recall one of Bossi's many outbursts, that one after the defeat of the administration in 1997? "In the big cities, Milan and Turin, a racial vote was cast. Immigrants have voiced their opinion against the freedom of the North and chose the pieces of shit. The tragedy of the North is that it surrendered itself to southern teachers and southern magistrates. The fight will be head on."

Instead, Guolo explains, the "Senatur" realizes quickly that it is worth the effort to "change the enemy." And after having shot blanks at the church for years ("the Vatican is the real enemy that the green shirts (Lega Nord) will drown in the toilet of history"), while he celebrated the God of the River Po and the Padanian marriages, what more could be invented? Carroccio is the "defender of the threatened Cross." And "waving the theme of Islam as the Enemy opens a vast space in the political arena. The new enemy is symbolically more effective and politically more expendable than the others, evoked by the slogan 'thieving Rome' or 'assisted South.' Fueling the anti-Islamism in Italian society Carroccio oversees a specific niche of the electoral market: that of ethnic identity and more or less latent xenophobia." Of course, there is the competition from the church, but it is enough to accuse Her of weakness, timidity, and complicity: "The new Crusaders are us."

It's true that the Lega does not have a monopoly on xenophobia. "The Muslims threaten our purity; their real purpose is to marry our women," says the congressman Michele Bucci. "I do not want to see fags on the road; I do not want my grandchildren be black, I do not want to see half-black grandchildren," squawks the senator of the Fiamma Tricolore (Tricolor Flame)

Luigi Caruso, who specifies, “I’m not racist. But Italy’s roads, railways, and infrastructure are the product of the sweat of Italians, of our ancestors. The blacks, the Zulus, have not given us anything.” “YOU represent in a perfect aesthetic way why the Milanese are afraid of Muslims,” hisses the leader of the National Alliance of the municipality of Milan, Roberto Predolin, to his colleague Ainom Maricos, who is of Eritrean origin.

“These are bloodthirsty murderers of the worst kind. Institutions should not think that these citizens, convinced almost certainly of being right, that they are dealing with the usual gang of Slavs, historically and genetically accustomed to such atrocities, who can continue to remain calm waiting for state intervention.” Congressman Marco Zacchera said to Adnkronos<sup>9</sup> (who will subsequently say: “That was a mistake of my secretary ...”) after the news of the horrible crime of Novi Ligure, that was discovered to be committed by Erika De Nardo and her boyfriend Omar Favaro: “If we were to discover, as we discovered many times, that illegal immigrants were the ones to strike, we should ask why the town of Novi Ligure ever bothered to give homes to immigrants, and why it had never thought about the possibility that the crime rate might rise,” thundered the future Foreign Minister Franco Frattini. *Bloodthirsty Slavs* is the headline of “Il secolo d’Italia<sup>10</sup>” (“The century of Italy”).

“Those who voted for the pardon contributed to this massacre. Congratulations,” Maurizio Gasparri thunders, after the massacre of Erba, which was not committed by the immigrant husband of one of the victims already arrested in the past, but from their neighbors Olindo Romano and Rosa Bazzi. He explains that “egregious crimes such as the one which occurred the other night demonstrate how dangerous many of the released prisoners are. We know who has contributed to this massacre. Just read the reports of Parliament.” “The

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<sup>9</sup> An Italian news agency.

<sup>10</sup> A conservative Italian newspaper.

frightening massacre committed by a criminal Moroccan drug dealer indicates to us what he will be, many times over, a scenario that we must get used to,” Mario Borghezio bellows.

The eurodeputy<sup>11</sup> from Turin did not miss an opportunity to fire off exclamation points of his own. “We are the white Christian Padania; we are Lombards, not Levantine and Mediterranean shit!!!” “Horned Islamist bastards! (...)The moderates? You think the moderates are doing anything? Fuck the moderates! Shit! It is a Lega that is winning [this war]! Because just like during the Crusades, God wants it [war] against Islam to defend this land! We will screw them [Muslims]!” “Don’t break our balls anymore with the immigrant crap, shitheads.” “It's over! It is over. For you illegals and Moroccans here's a one-way ticket. The Lega always has a rock hard cock ready to screw you illegal shits!” “Moroccan Parliament!” “Ali Nania and Mohammed Fini are opening the doors of our communities to the followers of Allah!” “We have strong arms and very bad intentions!” “L’Ulivo<sup>12</sup> (The Olive Tree) has ceased bastardizing our blood, infecting it with the blood of illegals!” The film *Green Shirts* by Claudio Lazzaro is full of outbursts like these.

Topic of discussion: In what other civilized country does a party of government come to have the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice tolerate in its bosom a racist who comes out with “Infected blood”? “I can only say good things about Borghezio. He is the type who collects old books. But then in public he changes,” says Roberto Maroni, who as head of the Interior Ministry should be prosecuting those who incite racial hatred. Instead, the other leading members of the Lega defuse the situation by chuckling: “Gosh, that's just the way he is ...” It is true that they promoted him first to the under-Secretary of the of the Justice system in the first Berlusconi government, then to Minister of the Interior, then to President of the “Padania

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<sup>11</sup> A member of the European Union Parliament

<sup>12</sup> L’Ulivo was a coalition of center-left political parties in Italy. It dissolved in 2007.

Government,” leader of the Lega delegation to the European Parliament ... And nominated and re-nominated him despite his embarrassing proven ties with neo-fascists, for example by a video interview on Canal + where he advised militants from the far right: “We must get back in the governments of small municipalities. You must insist on regional aspects of the movement. There are good ways not to be labeled as nostalgic fascists, but as a new regional movement, a Catholic group, etc., but still remain the same underneath.” That is, they are black. Very black. But only in their hearts.

“But you're forgetting Sandy!” They tell you. Ah, very true: Sandy Cane, Mayor of Viggiu, a town of five thousand citizens in the province of Varese. She is the first black-skinned mayor, a Lega member with a green handkerchief of the order. There are those who will say it is a story that means nothing because the woman, the daughter of an emigrated viggiutese and a U.S. marine of color, was not born in Timbuktu but in Springfield; she did not come from Africa, but from Massachusetts. She was raised in this country since she was 10 years old, and she was not at all a poor immigrant: “I had Nikes and a bicycle. The other children did not have them, and everyone wanted to play with me.” The fact remains: the Lega elected the first woman mayor of color. They claim a point; it's solid proof, along with many others, they say, that the old patterns are no longer good for understanding racism, the hostility toward the other, and the xenophobia of today.

The trouble is that if the case of Sandy Cane is, for now, an exception, the case of Borghezio is not so in the least. And it is not since the times when Gianfranco Miglio, the ideologue whose memory is revered in the Carroccio, told “Sette” scary things like this: “The anti-racist universalism that insists everyone is equal, from the monkey to Einstein, is a rabid ideology that won't get anybody anywhere.” That chilling comparison of blacks and apes didn't

embarrass him at all. On the contrary, to another question, “Can one not be racist?” he replied, “No, at least not in a civilized society. In order not to be racist, you must not have any roots.”

Since then, over the years, we have heard and read it all. “Illegal immigrants, torture them. It is a legitimate defense,” says one Mirano section Facebook page (before disassociating itself from the comment) which was friends [on Facebook] with several Lega leaders. “The immigrants are animals that should be kept in a ghetto closed with a barrier and left to kill each other,” debates the advisor of Treviso Pierantonio Fanton. “We must use with the immigrant the same method as the SS: punish ten of them for any wrong done to one of our citizens,” says his colleague Giorgio Bettio. “We need a civil guard against the negroes? We must simplify our procedures for the ability to carry weapons because our people need to be able to defend themselves,” theorizes Erminio Boso. “When will we free ourselves from the negroes, the whores, the criminals, the immigrant thieves, the hazel-colored rapists, and the gypsies who infest our homes, our beaches, our lives, and our minds? We’ve had enough of them, to say the least. Whisk away those damned people,” screams “La Padania” in a 1997 article that the director of that time explained uses “strong tones to express, in short, the thought of many citizens.”

Not to mention the outbursts on the party website, reported by “La Repubblica”: “The Jews?” “Cursed bastard dogs, Hitler was right.” (...) “Carletto from Venice” suggests a solution to free our city from foreign prostitutes: “Just ship them off from Genoa on an oil tanker and maybe sink the whores in the Bermuda triangle.” “In my opinion the only solution to these problems is napalm; forget repatriation, after ten days they are just back here again to break our balls. Free Padania!” “I do not like southerners, we’ll melt you in acid if you come here to the North.” “It was to be expected; we could’ve predicted that the kommi shits would launch



something against the Lega Nord. The real Nazis are those communist bastards that want to destroy our identity by imposing a multiracial society.”

*Words in Freedom?* Then let's listen again to the words of Umberto Bossi, the Don of the Party, which he read to the Congress of the Lega at Palavobis at the end of 1990s: “In the next ten years they want to bring to Padania 13 to 15 million immigrants to keep this damn Roman-Congolese colony among our Padanian race, a pure race, the master race.” The same concept was expressed by Gustav Kossinna, the German historian who wrote a famous manual about the prehistory of the Germanic nation. He declared archaeology a “science in the national interest,” and this contributed to paving the way to Nazism by elaborating the definition of “one race, one culture, and one people.”

It goes without saying that when the European Union tried to introduce a more severe law for crimes of racism, the then Minister of Justice Roberto Castelli blocked it: “Article 3 says that whoever commits the crime believes oneself to be superior to others on the basis of race or religion. If we combine this measure and the EU mandate of arrest, that means that a judge from another country can arrest me if he believes that I hold myself superior to another person by race or religion. And I do not like this system very much.” Why? “In a democracy, a citizen must have the right to say whatever nonsense he or she believes.” In short, we'll just end up “entering the minefield of freedom of thought.” And who are those people who want to “deny citizens the freedom to express their opinions”? Why, “the red Nazis,” of course.

And we're always right back where we started: we have never fully understood our past. Can you imagine a German minister who even dares to defend the right to think and support being “superior to others on the basis of race or religion”? Or a French, English, Spanish, Dutch, or Belgian minister? The problem, explains colonial historian Nicola Labanca (amongst others),

is that “Italy has been prevented from being aware of and debating its colonial past because it did not have to experience the bitter divisions that accompanied decolonization in France and Great Britain during the 1950s and 1960s.” Were there hate crimes in the colonies? Never successfully proven, and if they tried, they would just be committed by the Duce, Marshal Graziani, and a minority of fascists who could never be confused with the good, generous, and kind Italian settlers who, just like all the other Italians, have never been racist. The response is the same.

“The racial laws that were signed by my grandfather?” explained some years ago, Victor Emmanuel of Savoia, [the laws persecuting the Jews were signed by the King of Italy], “They weren't really that bad.” He was not just thoughtlessly defending his family: his was a position shared by many Italians. First of all, according to an interview by Silvio Berlusconi given a few years ago to Boris Johnson, the editor of the weekly “The Spectator,” who was subsequently elected mayor of London: “Mussolini never killed anyone, and he sent those who opposed him to go on a vacation to the islands.” Francesco Cossiga laughed at this: “Why bother? Everyone knows that Matteotti, Don Minzoni, and Amendola were killed by Saddam!”

The story of Settimo Calo, told in the chapter about the Holocaust, should suffice to explain what the laws of the good-natured Duce meant to Italian Jews. Those laws infected Italy, and messed with the heads of many children who would then spend their lives trying to it down. It is not easy to argue that they [the laws] were imposed from above and were entirely foreign, even outright rejected by Italian society. Just remember that in 1931 of the 1,250 academics asked to swear loyalty to Fascism only eleven refused. Or read the book *The Double Purge* in which Francesca Pelini and Ilaria Pavao reconstruct what happened to the “ninety-six Jewish full and associate professors, 141 part-time professors, 207 teachers, and four lecturers removed from the universities, who along with the 727 Jewish scholars expelled from academic and other

cultural institutions around the country.” Well, only the writer Massimo Bontempelli, “up to that point a committed Fascist and perfectly integrated (...) refused to cover the teaching of Italian literature that was until that point Attilio Momigliano’s duty,” who had been hired at the Florentine university because of his stellar reputation. And after the war had ended and Mussolini had already hanged in Loreto Square, many of those who had their professorial chairs thanks only to the purges tried in every way not to return them to their colleagues who had been cut down by the racist laws and survived the Holocaust. What’s more: for decades and decades until 1998, when the University of Bologna commemorated “the infamy of the racial laws with a plaque,” the “Italian academic community has not realized the need for self-criticism, not even procedural self-criticism” about what happened.

It is true that one can read the worst of the worst of it in “The Defense of Race,” as the eponymous book by Francis Cassata explains, where articles appeared about Jewish ethnic whores, “Jew Judas, Judas Negroid,” or about the characteristic of the “Negro who prefers indulging every day, no worries whatsoever, in his favorite pleasures, such as chatting for hours and hours about silly subjects repeated perpetually.” But certain monstrosities were even published in “normal” newspapers, such as the “Corriere della Sera,” where on June 11, 1939, Paolo Monelli, who was already a mature middle-aged man, came to write that Jews “appear to be all the same, like the Chinese, like the Blacks, or like horses, suitable only to intermixing with their own lowly bloodlines, to equally lowly lives, to equally hopeless futures. Who can understand their relentless hustle and bustle or their scurrying about without rest. They're wretched, and they hoard their little coins in their rags or fists.”

“What was the anti-Semitism, and the racial persecution that was a consequence of it? Everyone knows about it more or less, even the youngest children. What was Italian anti-

Semitism? That is less known,” writes Umberto Eco in his preface to the e-book by Valentina Pisanty *Educating Hatred: The Defense of the Race*. “The conviction that was most bandied about was that Fascist anti-Semitism was somehow blander than Nazi anti-Semitism, and it is emphasized (and it is true) that many good Italians saved many Jews from deportation, and this seems to absolve our country. Italians are good people, then. But in 1938, King Vittorio Emanuele III signed the racial laws, and in Italy there was a consistent current of anti-Semitic and racist thought. We're talking about thought: and thought, of course, has nothing to do with the death camps, at least directly. But in reality, that same thought justifies them and in some measure prepares for them and accompanies them, even if others are the ones to construct them.”

A great little test? The Trio Lescano had become immensely popular, thanks in part also to the simultaneous diffusion of the radio and the record player. Theirs was a universal popularity, perhaps never before witnessed, and likely in comparable terms never to be seen again. Yet it was enough to learn that the legendary Alexandrina, Judith, and Katharina Leschan had a Jewish mother for all the passion, almost obsession, of millions of Italian fans to be instantly extinguished, like when all the lights of a stadium go out with the click of a switch. Of course, the Duce himself (so it seems) made every effort after their arrest during a performance at the theater Grattacielo of Genoa that they would not end up at Buchenwald or Dachau. But the great mystery remains of why they were instantaneously erased in the heads of millions of people, the same Trio Lescano who had given Italians such peaceful lyrical interludes with “Tulipan,” “Maramao perché sei morto” (“Maramao, why are you dead”), “Ma le gambe” (“But the legs”), and “Pippo non la sa” (“Pippo does not know”). The three Jewish sisters disappeared as if by magic, and they never able to regain their fame.

Sure, some people like Emilio Gentile in his essay *The Race War*, believe more or less the opposite: that “anti-Semitic racism was introduced into a country that had no tradition of racism or anti-Semitism.” That would also seem to be demonstrated by the arrival, at the beginning of the twentieth century, of Luigi Luzzatti and Sidney Sonnino<sup>13</sup> to the position of Prime Minister. According to Nazi rules, they could have ended up in Auschwitz with the yellow star of the Jews on their chest because of their “tainted blood.” The fact is that, beyond the sometimes fiery debate among scholars, the belief remains in the minds of Italians: we were not involved.

It is a theory that is challenged not only by Jews, Libyans, Eritreans, and Ethiopians, but also by the Slavs. The Slavs experienced (before many Dalmatian and Istrian and Quarnerini experienced the same harassment, the same horrors, and the same executions in the shallow graves at the hands of Tito partisans) what is the Achilles heel of our nationalists. “Even if the presence of fascist Italians in the Balkans was barely over two years,” recalls Del Boca in *Italians; Good People?*, “the crimes committed by the occupying troops were certainly higher in both number and ferocity than those committed in Libya and Ethiopia. Besides, in the Balkans, the Italians did all of the dirty work; there weren't any Amhara-eritrean battalions or the castrators of Mohamed Sultan's band.”

Roundups. Decimation. The deportation of tens of thousands of men, old people, women, and children to prison camps. The Civil Commissioner Umberto Rosin of the District of Longatico writes in Summer 1942 to Emilio Grazioli, the high commissioner for the province of Lubiana: “The mass shootings done at random and the blazes of the towns set off only for the pleasure of seeing them burn to the ground (the Grenadiers have earned a dubious distinction in

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<sup>13</sup> Luzzatti practiced Judaism, while Sonnino was Anglican but had Jewish ancestry.

this regard) have inflicted the fear of God in people, but they have also diminished a lot of the sympathy and confidence they had in us, to such an extent that everyone who isn't blind realizes, that the soldiers are venting their rage that they were incapable of venting on the rebels on the defenseless instead, (. ..) The phrase 'The Italians have become worse than the Germans' that is heard murmured everywhere, sums up the feelings Slovenes have towards us."

There were 30,000 interned in the Italian concentration camps: one-tenth of the entire population of Lubiana, says the Italian-Slovenian Joint Committee charged a few years ago with trying to piece together a history of this burnt border zone. It is not known how many died. But according to Davide Rodogno's essay in the journal "Qualestoria," there still exist Red Cross accounts on the lone prison camp of Arbe, where "approximately 3,000 died from poor nutrition," that is, they starved to death. Or there's the letter to the Vatican from the Bishop of Veglia, Monsignor Joseph Srebnic: "Living eye-witnesses who assisted with the burials, attest that the death toll is definitively at least 3,500." Many were children, since children made up 54 of the 187 dead in the field of Monigo, in the province of Treviso, as has been verified by Maico Trinca.

And then how do we put it? Do you want to believe that Italians are not racist as long as they don't have to be with any "others" in their general vicinity, so they only become so when they are forced instead to face those who are different? This is what the philosopher Salvatore Veca argued, and as Giuseppe Caliceti revealed in his book *Marocchino! Storie Italiane di Bambini Stranieri (Maroccan! Foreign Children's Stories of Italy)*, containing a collection of the thoughts of young immigrant schoolchildren. Let's say they are racist "in their own way," Giorgio Bocca answered twenty years ago, "Italy, in the manner of other Latin Catholic countries, were at the historical crossroads of migrations, invasions, and translations for

thousands of years. It is a country that ignored or downplayed religious wars and that lagged behind with little thought towards the colonial experience, ignoring century-old problems regarding the coexistence of people of different colors.”

And then he closed his book, titled *Are The Italians Racist?*, by explaining that at that time there were not “great tragedies anymore” but....but “things can happen damn quickly in this world, racism included. Let's be on the lookout for it.” It is a recommendation that is doubly valid today. Even that other time, everything started from small nationalist exaggerations that seemed silly, like those manifestos in Turin, in the name of “Italianity” and the contempt for the Negro. They introduced the legendary jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong in Italian as: “Louis Strongarm.” That was sure something to smile about. But you know how it ended....

### SECTION III: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

On January 10, 2010, hundreds of African immigrants rioted in response to violence directed towards migrant workers in the Italian town of Rosarno, located in the southern region of Calabria. The riots broke out after two Africans were shot with pellet guns by white Italian men. The hate crime led to a series of retaliatory fighting during which 70 people were injured, most of them migrant workers. Further safety concerns forced the local government to evacuate one thousand immigrants to nearby towns. "This is a neglected population, and they are the victims of exploitation and violence," explained Sophie Baylac, coordinator of the Doctors Without Borders migrant programs in Europe. "The situation last weekend is a symptom of the ongoing neglect suffered by migrants," said Baylac. (TIME).

The so-called "Battle of Rosarno" represents only one incident in the clash between native and foreigner in Italy. However, it demonstrates how explosive this complex issue has become. Gian Antonio Stella, author of *Negri, Froci, Giudei & Co. L'Eterna Guerra Contro L'Altro (Blacks, Gays, Jews & Co. The Eternal War Against the Other)*, was interviewed shortly after the incident, saying:

They used black immigrants to do the work. This aspect was instantly seized on and exploited by anti-southerners in the North. Then, there was also exploitation by organised crime, which at a certain point decided to get rid of these people... They chose to get rid of the immigrants. Thirdly, there was also real racism that was triggered when those poor workers reacted. This was not the first time they had been shot at and they reacted, which resulted in a disaster because people were frightened and the media made the mistake of spreading fear (Zoja).

In his interview, Stella revealed some of these complexities. In the following critical analysis, I will present three causes of the "othering" of immigrants in Italy today: post-colonialist cultural identity, euro-centrism, and economic instability. Additionally, I will identify



factors within Italian society that allow “othering” to continue to exist and proliferate: the exploitation of xenophobia by certain political parties and sensationalist reporting by the media.

In order to go forward, it is necessary to define exactly what prejudice is and who can be considered an “other.” According to the Conflict Resource Consortium at the University of Colorado, prejudice is a “negative manifestation of integrative power. Instead of bringing or holding people together, prejudice and discrimination push them apart.” Prejudice, as described by the CRC, goes hand in hand with “othering,” or the labeling of an individual or group of individuals with the designation of the “other.” “Otherness” refers to someone who is different or dissimilar in a negative way. It involves a sort of list of expectations to which members of certain groups (i.e. races, ethnicities, and sexes) are bound to. These differences can involve something as significant as lifestyles, religion, and political affiliation, but also simple and petty things such as cleanliness or diet. As immigration has become a hot-button issue in Italy, concerns over the migrants’ effect on Italian economy, culture, health care, and criminal justice system have taken center stage. Stereotypes are commonly associated with immigrants, including that they increase unemployment, take public benefits, promote crime, and spread diseases. In this way, the immigrant has become the “other” in Italy.

The importance of “otherness” lies in its effectiveness in influencing the thinking and behavior of large groups of people. It is a tool that has been used effectively throughout history. Perhaps the most famous example of “othering” is the propaganda used in Nazi Germany to influence its people to allow the atrocities against Jews to occur and to create a strong nationalistic culture to fight its enemies during World War II. More recently, the bloody civil war in the Darfur region of the Sudan is another example. A conflict existed between the lighter skinned Arab population and the darker skinned African population. The United Nations has

estimated that 300,000 civilians have been killed and around 3 million have been displaced (Darfur Consortium). As one can ascertain from these atrocities, the concept of the “other” contains unfathomable power that is capable of destroying entire populations. This is precisely why the topic of this analysis is important. Of course, “othering” in Italy has not proven to be as destructive as it was in the preceding examples. The important thing is that it exists and it is, even if to a small extent, comparable.

The concept of the “other” becomes more complex and powerful as one considers the time period in which the aforementioned atrocities of World War II took place. The climate was nationalistic, with countries looking inward in economic and political terms. It is somewhat more palatable that “othering” could occur in a closed-off environment in which people had little or no contact with those from other cultures different from their own. This fact makes it all the more interesting to observe how “othering” has seemed to become increasingly apparent in today’s society, even in a world that has been forever changed by globalization. With the trend towards deregulation and trans-nationalization, cultures are on a constant path towards convergence. Thus far, however, globalization has not led to assimilation and has not eliminated intolerance. Over the last 30 years, Italy has transitioned to an immigrant-receiving country from an immigrant-sending country. Today, Italy contains one of the most rapidly changing populations of the European Union. Currently, 7.2% of Italy’s 60 million residents are non-citizens. Furthermore, recent demographic data trends towards a larger presence of foreigners in Italy society. In 2008, “one in six babies delivered was born to a foreign-passport holder.” The mere presence of “otherness” in the current climate and its implications for the future render this topic worthy of study and further exploration. It also invokes curiosity towards the reasons behind the intolerance.

As mentioned previously, cultural identity may have a role to play in the “othering” of certain groups of immigrants. Perhaps Italians believe that immigrants may refuse to assimilate and threaten traditional Italian culture. A substantial percentage of the immigrants flooding into Italy come from Africa. And, to many, the Italian identity does not include black skin or Islam. Historical issues also come into play regarding African immigrants. Italy colonized and later took control of Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Libya during World War II in the expansion of the fascist Italian Empire. It is possible that Italians feel as though those who were once colonized by Italy are exacting revenge and are now colonizing Italy. “The chickens are coming home to roost” so to say.

In his work *Politics of Race Italy's Racial Cauldron : Immigration, Criminalization and the Cultural*, Asale Angel-Ajani argues that the Maastricht Treaty, which formed the European Union on November 1, 1993, may have contributed to “othering” in Italy. He believes there is an increased focus on “race, gender, and country of origin, especially as Italy and the rest of Europe move towards more repressive anti-immigration laws and strict enforcement measures.” The Schengen Agreement of 1995 further contributed to this trend. The Schengen Agreement formally abolished borders within the continent of Europe. However, it made the united continent a sort of “fortress” with a zero tolerance immigration policy and highly policed borders. Angel-Ajani argues that “the increased policing of borders and the policing of individual concepts of citizenship and belonging have created state-sanctioned discourses about and practices of targeting certain immigrant groups as potential criminals.” Euro-centrism became a unifying force on the continent. That is, the question of whether one was or was not European superseded nationalist sentiments such as history, culture, and religion. As he explains, “The

development of a common racial identity that is fostered through European cultural nationalism seems likely to lead to institutionalized racism in the unified Europe” (Angel-Ajani).

While Euro-centrism may have laid the groundwork for an environment of “otherness”, one must consider that recent immigration to Italy is occurring at a time of economic uncertainty in the peninsula, with high levels of debt, low industrial production, and high unemployment rates. As Russell King and Jacqueline Andall note in “The geographic and economy sociology of recent immigration to Italy,” the black market has always been a huge part of the Italian economy. Even before the waves of immigration, the underground economy was always strong and is supported by organized crime such as the mafia. However, now that immigration regulations have become stricter, migrants are practically forced to go underground in order to earn a living. Moreover, because they have very few options, immigrants are laborers who are easy to exploit, especially in the agriculture and construction sectors. This was exactly the case in the violence in Rosarno. The farms in and round Rosarno, owned by the mafia, relied on the cheap labor provided by Africans to gain a competitive advantage and maintain high profits. Despite these considerations and the fact that jobs that immigrants assume are generally undesirable to Italians, the influence of the immigrant on the Italian economy has been made into a political issue.

Political parties in Italy have exploited the aforementioned issues (perceived postcolonial threats, clash of cultures, and economic uncertainty) to gain support. The rhetoric of right-wing parties became especially xenophobic in the mid-1990s. The political party that has most successfully exploited the immigrant trends and the national economy is the Lega Nord (Northern League), which has substantial power in the industrial Northern region they call Padania. Despite the fact that the official party ideology claims to be moderate on the issue of

immigration and opposes all forms of xenophobia, party leaders have been quoted inciting violence towards immigrants and associating immigrants with drugs, prostitution, and other criminal activities.

As Gian Antonio Stella demonstrated in *Negri, Froci, Giudei & Co. L'Eterna Guerra Contro L'Altro (Blacks, Gays, Jews & Co. The Eternal War Against the Other)*, the many blatantly prejudice messages made by Lega Nord officials are well documented. In 2003, Party Leader Umberto Bossi suggested that the immigration problem was so bad, the only way to solve it was to shoot at the boats carrying migrants. "After the second or third warning, boom... the cannon roars," said Bossi. "Without any beating about the bush. The cannon that blows everyone out of the water. Otherwise this business will never end... Illegal immigrants must be hounded out, either nicely or nastily... The navy and the finance police are going to have to line up in defense of our shores and to use guns. Those are the proper regulations for implementing the law" (BBC). In 2008, the Mayor of the City of Treviso and Lega Nord member, Giancarlo Gentilini, supported the removal of benches from public parks to stop immigrants from using them. "We should dress them up as rabbits and go *bang, bang, bang* with a rifle," he said (Spiegel). Massimo Bitonci, the former mayor of Cittadella in northeast Italy and currently a Lega Nord representative in the Italian parliament, became famous for his vetting of immigrants trying to settle in his jurisdiction. "We demand to see a pay packet. We don't want people to be a burden on the local welfare system," he said in 2008. "Then I send the police round to see if they have accommodations and whether it conforms to sanitary regulations" (Hooper). In 2010, Interior Minister Roberto Maroni from Lega Nord, claimed that "toleration of clandestine immigration that has fed criminality and generated situations of frank degradation" was the reason the conflict in Rosarno occurred (Whitney).

These blatant declarations of intolerance have been largely ignored on a national level, even as international organizations have denounced them. The European Commission against Racism and Injustice (ECRI) has directly referenced the Lega Nord's exploitation of racism and xenophobia in politics in two separate reports in 2002 and in 2006. The 2002 ECRI report on Italy said:

ECRI is concerned at the widespread use of racist and xenophobic propaganda by the exponents of certain political parties in Italy. Such propaganda mainly targets non-European Union immigrants, particularly those without legal status, but also members of other minority groups. Members of these groups are typically portrayed as being responsible for a deterioration of security conditions in Italy, particularly on the basis of generalizations concerning their involvement in drug trafficking and prostitution, for unemployment and increased public expenditure, or as posing a threat to the preservation of Italian national or local identity...Racist and xenophobic propaganda is disseminated through the use of written material such as posters and leaflets, but also significantly present in the speech of public figures, including mayors and other elected representatives...Exponents of the Lega Nord (Northern League) have been particularly active in resorting to racist and xenophobic propaganda.

The ECRI goes on to urge the Italian government to take measures to stop this rhetoric.

However, the government failed to honor the recommendations. Those inciting fear and hate for personal political gain went unpunished (ECRI).

In addition to the propaganda of political parties, the media is also culpable in the escalation and acceptance of "othering" throughout Italian society. The media seems to sensationalize conflict between Italians and immigrants. Or, like the Italian government, they ignore the issue and refuse to enlighten the public with regards to what is right and what is wrong. It is apparent that this kind of news coverage does nothing but harms the relationship of immigrants and Italians by permitting an environment of fear to exist.

In a 2010 interview, Gian Antonio Stella offered his opinion of the media's role in amplifying the Rosarno conflict described in the introduction to this analysis. Stella believed that the Italian media focused on the violent reactions of the black immigrants rather than covering

the everyday prejudice the immigrants had already been facing. In a climate in which people feel vulnerable, this kind of media coverage can make people even more afraid of the unknown.

When asked about the importance of ethics to a journalist in Italy's current environment, Stella responded:

One cannot work as a journalist without an ethical perspective. One can hurt people in this job and at times one makes mistakes. Who knows how many mistakes I too have made. I believe that the ethical dimension of a journalist is like sanctity for Catholics; hard to achieve but one must try. I think the challenge lies instead in making people think and that this is really useful. It is best to bring out the best in people, not the worst.

As I conclude this analysis, I cannot declare one possible cause of "othering" in Italy to be the only cause. Rather, I believe that "othering" today can be attributed to all of the possible causes presented. I, like Paul Sniderman, author of *The Outsider: Prejudice and Politics in Italy*, feel that the prejudice can be thought of as a subconscious mechanism resulting from many years of being exposed to subtle discriminatory messages. As Sniderman says, "Prejudice is rooted less in the actual interplay of social and economic life than in the deep-lying folds of individuals' psychological makeup" (Sniderman). Today's Italian culture is a culture of fear, created by cultural and economic concerns and perpetuated by political parties and the media. In this sense, Italians, rather than the "other," have been their own worst enemies. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's statement that "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" has proven to be true in this case. The situation in Italy will not improve until the Italian psyche changes. Unfortunately, stereotypes do not vanish overnight. Changes in the way Italians think about immigrants will take place over years and years. And, if the Italian government and media are not catalysts in this cause, they may never come.

#### SECTION IV: REFLECTION ON PROCESS OF TRANSLATION

“The worst mistake a translator can commit is to reassure himself by saying, “that’s what it says in the original,” and renouncing the struggle to do his best. The words of the original are only the starting point; a translator must do more than convey information.” -William Weaver

Weaver’s observation proved to be true as I translated the sixth chapter from Gian Antonio Stella’s *Negri, Froci, Giudei & Co. L'Eterna Guerra Contro L'Altro (Blacks, Gays, Jews & Co. The Eternal War Against the Other)*, I took the complexity of translation for granted as I completed my first draft. I had literally translated the chapter almost word for word. While I knew that there was much work to be done in terms of style, clarity and elaboration, I honestly believed that I had completed the majority of this project. I was wrong. In order to successfully complete the project, I could not just literally translate. Using the specific duties stated in the American Translators Association Code of Ethics and Professional Practice, I was able to guide myself toward achieving the ultimate goal of translation: linguistic integrity.

The first professional duty of translators is “to represent qualifications, capabilities and responsibilities honestly and to work always within them.” Prior to this translation, I had only had about four months of translation experience. Those translations tended to be simpler, from both a grammatical and cultural perspective. Because of my modest background, I had to be humble in my abilities. I recognized that I had never been exposed to Stella’s type of complex sentence structure, nor did I have much knowledge of many of the people, places, and events he wrote about. Therefore, it was necessary to consult a variety of sources, including Italian language textbooks and dictionaries. Additionally, I consulted professors of Italian and I utilized online forums in which I could interact with native Italian speakers and get their input.

In this way, I fulfilled the fourth duty of the Code of Ethics: to enhance one’s capabilities at every opportunity by continuing education in language, subject field, and professional



practice. This exercise had no business purpose nor provided me with any economic benefit. It was purely an academic exercise. The value I obtained from this project came in the form of personal growth, and I now understand Italian language and a very complex issue in Italian culture much better.

After enhancing my own understanding of Italian language and culture, I was finally able to impart my newfound knowledge to the reader. This includes not only culturally specific terms that do not exist in American culture, but also the original emotion and tone of the text. I could not ignore these items all together nor could I provide long explanations because I could risk losing the flow and, in turn, the clarity of the work. Therefore, it was necessary to insert footnotes as a way to inform the reader of the things he or she may lack in knowledge but are necessary to fully understand the book.

Finally, fulfilling the aforementioned duties of a translator allowed me to achieve an objective I set as I developed this project as well as the fifth duty of all translators: to act collegially by sharing knowledge and experience. I hope that I have exposed students studying Italian culture to an issue they did not know about previously. Additionally, I hope that by presenting the issues I faced throughout this translation in this reflection, students of Italian language may understand the process of translation and understand how to approach it.

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## SECTION VI: ACADEMIC VITAE OF PAUL IMBARLINA

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Glenshaw, PA 15116

### Education:

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 16802  
Smeal College of Business  
Schreyer Honors College  
B.S. Accounting  
Minor: Italian  
Anticipated Graduation – May 2012

### Work Experience:

June 2011 – August 2011  
Enterprise Accounting Intern  
Bayer Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA

May 2010 – August 2010  
Fixed Asset Accounting Intern  
Bayer Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA

### Awards:

The Schreyer Honors College Academic Excellence Scholarship (2008)  
The President's Freshman Award (2009)  
The Schreyer Ambassador Travel Grant (2010)  
Mel and Nancy Brown Family Endowment for Education Abroad Scholarship (2010)  
The President Sparks Award (2010)  
Deans's List (7 of 7 Semesters)

### Organizations:

August 2011 - Present  
The LION 90.7 FM – Community Manager

August 2010 – May 2011  
Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity – Vice President

August 2008 – May 2009  
South Halls Residents Association – First Year Council Chair