RE-MAPPING ITALIAN AMERICA

PLACES, CULTURES, IDENTITIES

Edited by

SABRINA VELLUCCI AND CARLA FRANCELLINI

VELLUCCI & FRANCELLINI

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BORDIGHERA

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BORDIGHERA PRESS

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939528

St. George Terminal, Staten Island Ferry
from *SI3D*, film by Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno

Anaglyph 3D image courtesy of and © 2015
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www.BongiornoProductions.com

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Printed in the United States.

Published by
BORDIGHERA PRESS
John D. Calandra Italian American Institute
25 West 43rd Street, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10036

SAGGISTICA 26
ISBN 978-1-59954-116-5

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An "Eye-talian" in the New World: Cognitive Estrangement and Diglossia in Antonio Gallenga's Early Italian American Narrative*

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UNIVERSITY OF TRIESTE

There is a promising territory of theoretical dialogue between Italian American and speculative fiction studies, which may be developed starting from *estrangement mechanisms* as a common matrix between the *disadjustment* experienced by the subject during the migration process, and the projective and extrapolative mechanisms typically exploited in speculative fiction narratives to imagine future or alternate worlds. In some ways, the migrant has encountered in actuality that radical *otherness* that speculative fiction puts on page, be it in a New World in which the utopian imagination that governed expectations is put to the test or in a new idea and narration of the self, emerging after deep processes of identity negotiations, when in contact with new social groups, forms of collective organization, physical places, languages and mindsets.

Darko Suvin, pre-eminent scholar in the foundation and affirmation of science fiction studies in the English-speaking academic world (and beyond), derived his concept of *cognitive estrangement,* on the one hand, from the Formalist notion of *ostranenie* theorized by Viktor Shklovsky as the elective instrument of art to disrupt our automatic mechanisms of perception and conceptualization,[1]

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* I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Leonardo Buonomo and Nicholas Grosso for all their valuable suggestions and notes on the first draft of this essay.

[1] See, for example, "The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects

and on the other, from Bertoldt Brecht's closely related but Marx-inflected development (*alienation*), arguing that it was fundamental to distinguish the concept for the genre of science fiction writing. The key to *cognitive estrangement* is the presence, in a story, of what Suvin called a *novum*, namely an element which, because of its absolute newness, impedes our automatic conceptualization, inviting us to imagine a different way of conceiving our subjectivity and our world.[2] I think that the *displacement* experienced in the course of migration[3] provides significant moments of *disadjustment*, having a similar effect to a *novum*, and foster more complex processes of identity problematization and critical reflections on society, which we may now read in Italian American narratives, including early narratives—written and/or published and/or referring to experiences occurring before the 1880s.[4]

'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important." Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (1917), in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (New York: Blackwell, 1998) 15-21, qt. 16. Cfr. Carlo Ginzburg, "Making Things Strange: The Prehistory of a Literary Device" (1996), in *Wooden Eyes: Nine Reflections on Distance*, tr. by Martin Ryle and Kate Soper (New York: Columbia UP, 2001) 1-24.

[2] Suvin went further, proposing a rather exclusive definition of science fiction based on the idea of cognitive estrangement, which emphasizes the rational scientific dimension of the genre and rigorously excludes fantasy fiction. Subsequent generations of scholars have pointed out the limitations of Suvin's approach and were able to refine it (for example, by replacing the idea of *reality*) with a more epistemologically negotiable concept of *paradigm of reality*. See Patrick Parrinder, ed., *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2000) esp. 36-50.

[3] Teresa Fiore, "Lunghi viaggi verso 'Lamerica' a casa: straniamento e identità nelle storie di migrazione italiana," *Annali d'Italianistica*, 24, *Negotiating Italian Identities* (2006), 87-106; Ginzburg, "Making Things Strange."

[4] Francesco Durante, *Italoamericana: Storia e letteratura degli italiani negli Stati Uniti, 1776-1880* (Milan: Mondadori, 2001).

NARRATING A NEW SELF

Antonio Gallenga's autobiography, *Episodes of My Second Life (American and English Experiences)*, is a case in point. Published in London in 1884-85 (in two volumes) and again in Philadelphia in 1885,[5] the *Episodes* narrate Gallenga's life starting with his decision to move to America to where he embarked in 1836, at the age of 26.

Antonio Gallenga (alias Luigi Mariotti), 1810-1895, was born in Parma; and was a medical student before taking part in the 1831 insurrection in Parma. He became member of *La giovine Italia*, and in 1833 planned the assassination of Carlo Alberto, King of Sardinia, but in Turin he changed his mind and did not carry out the plan. In 1834, working as private tutor for a Neapolitan diplomat, he was in Malta, and then in Tangiers, from where he set sail for New York in 1836. From New York he went to Boston, where he did not manage to obtain the teaching position he wanted at Harvard University, but worked in David Mack's School for Young Ladies. In 1839 he moved to London, where he collaborated with cultural reviews, and in 1840 he was in Florence. After a new attempt at teaching in Nova Scotia he went back to London, where he continued his writing activities and had contacts with Mazzini. In 1848, back in Italy, the Alfieri government gave him a diplomatic post in Frankfurt.[6]

Between 1849 and 1859 he taught at University College in London before being hired by *The Times*, for which he wrote reportages and analysis on Italy (1859-60) as well as the United States during

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[5] Antonio Gallenga, *Episodes of My Second Life (American and English Experiences) (1884-85)* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & co., 1885). Subsequent quotes are taken from this edition.

[6] The diplomatic appointment was short-lived after he attempted to promote an alliance between Sardinia and Austria, which would have left Lombardy and the duchies abandoned to their own fates instead of defending the cause of Italian independence, as he was supposed to do. Other political parentheses will come between 1854 and 1856, when he was elected to the Piedmont parliament, and in 1861, with the election in the national parliament.

the Civil War (1863), Denmark during the conflict with Prussia in 1864, revolutionary Spain (1865-66, 1868-69), Prussia (1866, 1870-71), Cuba (1873), Istanbul (1875). He was fired in 1884 after the English first edition of the *Episodes*, in which he made an open depiction of *The Times'* internal affairs. He retired with his second wife to the countryside in Llandogo, where he died in 1895.[7]

The first half of the *Episodes* is dedicated to his years in the United States (1836-38), the second to the years 1839-80, emphasizing the important role the American experience played in the author's life. In the *Episodes*, it might be argued that Gallenga is testifying on the migration experience as "the ultimate form of cognitive estrangement." "On the 15th of August, 1936, I was born again:" no formulation could be more effective than the one forecasting the trip to America at the beginning of the first chapter of the *Episodes*, to describe how deep the turning point constituted by the migration movement affected the author's identity, its construction and narration. Antonio Gallenga's autobiography *Episodes of My Second Life: (American and English Experiences)*, offers us an incredible testimony of an early Italian American experience,

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[7] Scholarship on Gallenga includes mostly historical reconstructions of his life, but the most exhaustive is still Aldo Garosci, *Antonio Gallenga: Avventura, politica e storia nell'Ottocento italiano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1964); Garosci's biography was preceded by Hugh Chisholm, ed. "Gallenga, Antonio Carlo Napoleone," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed. (New York: Cambridge UP, 1911); and followed by briefer entries in biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias: Luca Codignola, "Gallenga, Antonio Carlo Napoleone," in Chiara Evangelista, ed., *I primi italiani in America del Nord. Dizionario biografico dei liguri, piemontesi e altri. Storie e presenze italiane tra Settecento e Ottocento* (Reggio Emilia: Diabasis per la Fondazione Casa America, 2009) 103-106; Giuseppe Monsagrati, "Gallenga, Antonio Carlo Napoleone," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 51 (1998), http://www.treccani.it/biografico/, *ad vocem*. Especially on the Boston years: Renzo Dionigi, *An Italian Exile in Brahmin Boston 1836-1839: Antonio Gallenga* (Como: Insubria UP, 2006); on the English years: Toni Cerutti, *Antonio Gallenga: An Italian Writer in Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford UP for the University of Hull, 1974); of some interest on the experience at the Harvard School for Young Ladies: Claudia Biraghi, "Following in the Footsteps of Antonio Gallenga," *New England Ancestors* 7.1 (Winter 2006): 29-31.

marked by a high degree of literary and linguistic self-awareness and by a relevant distance between narrating and narrated "I"s. It might be worth emphasizing that, as we shall see in subsequent paragraphs, Gallenga's migration was professionally driven: a comparable cognitive estrangement would be all the more striking for people following his steps with a far less secure professional and personal situation.

The narration of the self epitomizes the migration experience as a source of estrangement, underlined by the presence of markedly discrete narrating and narrated "I"s, of which the linguistic self-consciousness (of the narrator *and* the character) is a conspicuous correlative objective. The relationship between different selves, belonging to different moments in time, is made more complex by the relatively long period elapsed between the narrated events and the actual writing—almost 50 years—and by the literary self-awareness of the author. Gallenga is a learned man; during his political exile he was first in Corsica, and then in Tangiers, earning a living as a teacher of Italian—or as he puts it ironically "a dealer in participles"[8] just as many of his compatriots in the United States during the same years.[9]

The text is interspersed with comments and judgments offered by Gallenga the narrator, on the actions and thoughts of the narrated Gallenga, with a retrospective gaze that reveals the extent to which the experience changed him and how he perceived himself, often in an amusing way, occasionally patronizing his younger self. For example, the captain of the ship *Independence* taking him to New York (so much for "talking names!") "came up to the ideal I

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[8] Gallenga, *Episodes of My Second Life,* 8, cf. Durante, *Italoamericana,* 203.

[9] Emilio Goggio, "Italian Educators in Early American Days," *Italica* 8.1 (1931): 5-8; Howard R. Marraro, "Pioneer Italian Teachers of Italian in the United States," *The Modern Language Journal* 28.7 (1944): 555-82; Joseph J. Fucilla, *The Teaching of Italian in the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: American Association of Teachers of Italian, 1967).

had, *in my silly imagination*, conceived of the typical Yankee" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 17; emphasis added). Gallenga would soon move to Boston, but his first stop was in New York, that

> might at that time be described as a town with one street. Broadway was its only real thoroughfare ... I had seen nothing like it, unless it might be Toledo at Naples,—a street which might boast ten times the noise but not half the actual movement of this transatlantic Babylon. ... The impression of novelty, however, was not very deep, and soon wore off. ... *What struck me as the wonder of wonders in the place was "to see myself there."*
>
> "What!" I said to myself, "was I really in America,—alone in a world to which I came unbidden, unexpected, utterly unknown, with barely the most rudimental acquaintance with its language, and no knowledge of its ways, its laws and customs,—without one friend, with credentials the value of which was yet to be tested, and with only forty poor dollars on my pocket?" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 29-30; emphasis added)

That "[t]he impression ... soon wore off" is not exactly true: the text is scattered with depictions of people, their customs, places, the narrating self always commenting, explaining and putting into perspective what his young eyes registered, with an informative attitude, in its depiction of Boston Brahim society, religion, politics, customs, and culture derived from the prolific activity of *reportage* writing which Gallenga did for the London *Times* between 1849 and 1859.

Many other descriptions follow of the American streets and crowds—in Boston for example, "the Athens of the United States, and the 'Hub of the Universe'," where the young Gallenga wandered around in great need and difficulty (being out of a job and with no friends to help him, in a situation that seemed briefly to be hopeless), while the older Gallenga comments "All this seemed very hard to me at the time. But I have learned what the world is since…." (Gallenga, *Episodes,* especially 71, 58-60, 61-62).

AN *EYE-TALIAN* IN BOSTON BRAHMIM SOCIETY

Focusing attention on the language and specifically on peculiar expressions of literary self-awareness,[10] in Gallenga’s case we find a particular, linguistic self-consciousness, which is possible thanks to Gallenga being a learned person[11] and partly a consequence of the intellectual distance that separates the narrating and the narrated “I”s.

Teacher of Italian and then Modern Languages, amateur writer, the young Gallenga in Tangiers also composed, in Italian, “*Romanze*, or ballads on chivalrous subjects ... attuning my verses to some of Bellini’s airs, popular at that epoch. They belonged to what was called the ‘romantic school’, based on the study of German and English literature, of which Manzoni, Grossi, Berchet, and other Lombards had taken the lead” (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 132), poems the reading of which will be friendly and affably demanded by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, at the time Professor of European Languages at Harvard, whom Gallenga met during his months of teaching at the Harvard Young Ladies’ Academy of Cambridge, Massachusetts.[12]

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[10] In devoting specific attention to the language and to the peculiar expression of linguistic self-awareness, we are following Martino Marazzi, *A occhi aperti: Letteratura dell’emigrazione e mito americano* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2011).

[11] Among the literary references that punctuate the text, Dante appears as a milestone of the Italian canon (Gallenga, *Episodes of My Second Life* 4, 41, 63, 64, 83, 87, 103, 140, 148, 221, 226, 319, 331, 372, 374, 451). Dante is quoted by the narrator to comment on what happens to his young self (e.g. “the salt that savors other people’s bread,” 4), on various subjects, often as a life mentor or historical point of reference (41, 140, 319, 374, 451) and as a father of the Italian identity and national cause (along with Machiavelli, 372); it is a topic of conversation and learned discussions with Pietro Bachi and Pietro D’Alessandro (63-64), of teaching (83, 87, 221, 226, 331), of translation (by Longfellow, 103). Other “literary founding fathers” of Italian identity appear, including Pellico, Alfieri, Manzoni, Foscolo. Cf. Gallenga’s essays and companions of Italian literature, such as his article on “Romantic Poetry in Italy,” *The North American Review* XLVII (1838); *Italy: Past and Present*, 2 vols. (J. Chapman, 1848-49).

[12] The Academy has been more recently identified with the School for Young

While reporting on his American experience, the narrator often describes the struggle of his young self with spoken English (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 17, 52). During a conversation with Edward Everett, the Governor of Massachusetts,[13] the narrator notes: "Though he was a great linguist, it was only in cases of extreme necessity that he spoke in any other language than his own,—his principle being that if one of the talkers was to be embarrassed and at a disadvantage it should be rather his interlocutor than himself; whilst for my own part I was glad that such was his choice, as when any language has to be murdered I always prefer that it should be any other than mine" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 36).

While trying to improve his English, he received precious help from a woman, a widow, at the first boarding-house he stayed at in Boston. The young Gallenga took a fancy to her (the narrator commenting "What defence [sic] I had against her?" [Gallenga, *Episodes,* 55]) and she gave him some English lessons: "There was an ecstasy of the senses, but there was also improvement to the mind, as I watched the movements of her lips and the expression of her eyes, to catch the peculiar lisp of the 'th,' the hissing of the 'sh,' the stronger or softer aspiration of the 'h'" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 56).

Along with his own personal difficulties and struggles, Gallenga's being a foreigner was often exposed—deliberately or not—by others, singling him out, calling him "*eye-talian*" or "signiò" or "signor" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 50 and ff., 57 and ff), as much as for his own communication shortcomings in everyday life, let alone the limitations posed by a poor mastery of the language in the image of the self presented in social and professional relationships (e.g. lacking ease, self confidence and naturalness in verbal interaction, which was felt all the more important by a professional lan-

Ladies directed in Cambridge by David Mack (imprecisely mentioned as "Marx" in the *Episodes*): Dionigi, *An Italian Exile in Brahmin Boston 1836-1839*, 99 and ff.; Biraghi, "Following in the Footsteps of Antonio Gallenga," 29.

[13] Dionigi, *An Italian Exile* 47-53, esp. note 115 for further references.

guage teacher and writer, projecting himself as a well educated person):

> The reader must not imagine that I had been very ready with my English even in my intercourse with Mr. Everett, Mr. Quincy, or young Mills, educated men though they were, who spoke slowly and deliberately, shaping their sentences in that manner and giving them those turns which they thought could best convey their meaning to one who knew only as much of English as book-learning could impart. With illiterate persons, as those only conversant with one language may in our days be called, as with mere children, the beginning is much harder; but when you perceive that they have only one word for an idea, when they insist on screaming out that word till they think they have overcome your deafness, somehow you get on better, – in this as in any other study necessity being after all the best mistress. (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 52-53)

Given the efforts Gallenga made during his first twelve months in the US to became fluent enough to work as a teacher, it came as the highest mark of praise to be asked by Henry Ware Jr.—professor of pulpit eloquence and pastoral care at the Harvard Divinity School, and co-editor of the *North American Review*—to lecture at Harvard, where he had not been able to fulfill his ambition of obtaining a professorship in Italian (a position filled by Pietro Bachi).[14] While the invitation came after the circulation of a manuscript in which Gallenga mocked and parodied the style of previ-

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[14] "'I maintain, that you have acquired a mastery over our language that seems to me surprising, and that I find in your manner something quaint and outlandish, maybe, but not un-English,—some happy turn of your Latin phrase into our Saxon idiom, by which you almost seem to teach us our English, and to find in it what we would vainly seek in it ourselves.' It may be easily believed that such words from such a man called up a flush of color on my cheeks. But I gulped down the emotion of gratified vanity that was rising in my breast, and answered, without affected humility" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 129).

ous lecturers, the author still ironically lamented lacking confidence in speaking:

> how could I muster an accent that would make me intelligible? I can tell you that I hardly ever address a street-porter, a housemaid, or even the postman, to ask my way, without being met by a blank stare, and a '*Me no parle vous*'. ... Consciousness of unconquerable shyness disquieted me; and there were peculiar combinations of English consonants, such as the *w* and *wh* and still more the *s* after the *th* in *months*, *truths*, etc., to which my Italian teeth and lips positively refused to give utterance. (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 129, 132)

Proficiency and command of pronunciation were in fact perceived as markers of social position and/or integration, and the emerging of an Italian inflection was feared as comparable to the ones typical of low social statuses, or, when counterbalanced by the awareness of the richness and beauties of the native tongue, anyway as a limitation in the second language mastery, cause of unwelcome distinction: "We have also no aspirations in Italian, and, do what I might, I never felt sure that I would not, in an unguarded moment, drop my *h*'s like a cockney. The natural melody and smoothness of our Italian language, besides, rendered it extremely difficult to keep my intonation from falling into a monotonous *cantilena*, or sing-song" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 52-53).

The contention that English is a language better learned by use than by the systematic study of the grammar (Gallenga, *Episodes*, 134, 152) had to come to terms with the necessity of becoming competent beyond mere correctness, to be able to give voice to one's literary aspirations,[15] in the persuasion that "[t]hought must come

[15] "[A] language like the English is best learned and written by use. Grammar, however, is as indispensable for a writer as drawing for an artist, and we must master it, no matter whether by precept or practice; there were a thousand pit-

forth soul and body from the brain that conceives it: it only lives through the words. Hence is translation so difficult" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 155). Gallenga's Italian mindset inevitably appeared in his construction of sentences and speeches, but it may be forgiven, and even appreciated by his audience as "quaint and outlandish" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 170), part of the speaker's personal style and competence in a foreign language which enjoys the association with the community of Italian exiles in Boston, a small group of well educated, literate people including Pietro Bachi and Pietro D'Alessandro (Durante, *Italoamericana*, 201-237, 292-311).

The relationship, therefore, between the narrated and narrator and English is an effective synecdoche of Gallenga's relationship with the migration experience both in the present of the story and of the discourse. In the present of the story language is an "objective correlative" of the cognitive estrangement experienced through the migration process, symptom of the young Gallenga's relative extraneousness in the new context; in the present of the discourse, the narrator's reflections on his past struggles with language effectively mark the distance between the narrated and narrating "I"'s (also, implicitly, being described in a text written in English). On the English backdrop, Italian language became part of a peculiar diglossia. Dante's speech, associated with the Risorgimento's exiles in the United States, acted, for Gallenga, as primary indicator of the self: a symptom of his otherness in the new country, but also a source of income, thanks to teaching positions, at the same time an element that prevented a full assimilation as part of the local elites, as well as a positive element in the building of a presentable social image of the self.

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falls and snares about some parts of speech, and especially about the prepositions *in* and *on*, *at* and *to*, *by* and *with*, etc. But I aspired to something more than mere correctness. I wished my English to be as much as possible like that of the authors I most admired, Bulwer, Disraeli, Carlyle, Washington Irving, and the like" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 152).

DISTANTIATING UTOPIA

Utopian projections[16] interact with identity-building processes in Italian American experience, an *American otherness* was repeatedly imagined and conceptualized at different levels and in different moments of the migration process. I am assuming as a working hypothesis that mechanisms of utopian (in the broader sense) extrapolation offered critical tools that authors were able to exploit while conceptualizing their experience of the North American *otherness*—which became an ideal mirror, and a vantage point from which to reflect on the present state of the country of origin and personal trajectory (a critical perspective that in recent years is being fruitfully applied to other cultural and/or linguistic areas, within the framework of postcolonial studies as it intersects with speculative fiction studies).[17]

In *Episodes of My Second Life,* we can notice a utopian drive at work in the building of certain expectations. Before arriving in the United States, the narrator came into contact with other people, who tended to present a positive image of the country. For example, when Gallenga decided to leave Tangiers, the English consul advised against England ("London, he said, was, for a friendless stranger, a terrible place. Competition in every branch of business was appalling, overwhelming, crushing," 10), and directed him to his American colleague, who, in turn, depicted an opposite image of the United States:

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[16] Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (1986) (New York: Lang, 2014); Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini, eds., *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* (New York: Lang, 2007).

[17] E.g. Lyman Tower Sargent, "Utopianism and National Identity," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 3 (2000): 87-106; Ralph Pordzik, *The Quest for Postcolonial Utopia: A Comparative Introduction to the Utopian Novel in the New English Literatures* (New York: Lang, 2001); Pordzik, "A Postcolonial View of Ireland and the Irish Conflict in Anglo-Irish Utopian Literature since the Nineteenth Century," *Irish Studies Review* 9.3 (2001): 331-46.

> "A big country that! Room for everybody there! You will find your place ready for you as if you had bespoken beforehand. It is of men like you that want is particularly felt in our trading community. We have plenty of storekeepers, land-agents, and politicians. Give us scholars and gentlemen, men of taste and refinement. I shall be more than happy—I shall be proud—to introduce you to the best of my acquaintance " (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 12-13)

The narrator was here reporting the American consul's words, while he himself appeared from the beginning to be more skeptical and aware of the uncertainties that lay ahead. In a chapter significantly entitled "The Pillars Of Hercules"—underlining that an invisible, yet intensely perceived line had been crossed—, the trip to America is described as an unsettling "leap in the dark:" "I had torn myself from my moorings, and was like a waif adrift in the ocean, with no other prospects on landing than to be launched into another unknown sea of trouble and dangers" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 16). The decision was made, the young Gallenga had resolved to carry out his project, but there would appear to be no promises: "If I was to go, the sooner and the farther I went, the better. I would follow in the wake of Columbus and Cortes. Like the latter, I would burn my ships. Like the former, I would find a new world—a new life—or be drowned" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 12). A sensation that the young Gallenga would not lose, even after arriving in New York and then Boston, when his new life had to be faced with all its (mostly financial and professional) difficulties: "I felt now, as I had expected, that it would not be without a struggle that I could obtain a footing on this slippery and stubborn though on the whole friendly and hospitable Yankee-land" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 35).

When he spoke to the captain of the *Independence*, with his little English, "the dialogue soon sinking to a pattering monologue,

in which all I could make out was that, what with the bigness of his country, the Boston gals, mint-juleps and sherry cobblers, and dollars, and again dollars, and many dollars, I had only to wait till I came in sight of Sandy Hook, and would soon see what a Paradise 'Merikey' would be for me" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 18). While it is clear that the young Gallenga moved to the United States in search of a better professional position for himself, we can sense how the perspective of the narrator is weighing up the words of others critically even while he is reporting them, using the knowledge of his experience. Gallenga is reporting on an early American dream, quite conscious of its volatile substance.

The ship's captain's exaggeration is made rhetorically clear, the black cook on the *Independence* is a runaway slave from Georgia, the whole trip to New York is described as an excruciating experience (sea sickness and lethargy, equinoctial tempests, the "horrid monkey" [Gallenga, *Episodes,* 20] that the captain keeps as a pet, the shortage of food...). America is a land of trades, of dollars, of self-promotion,[18] but also of women's independence,[19] of the religious tolerance that characterizes New England after an early season of prosecution and bigotry (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 72),[20] and so on.

[18] When the young Gallenga is looking for a job as a private tutor and has to write an advertisement to be published in a newspaper in Boston, he is advised by Pietro Bachi: "'That I call blowing my own trumpet,' said I. 'Who do you expect will blow it for you?' Bachi answered. 'How do you like America?' And he went on without awaiting my answer: 'You will like it, I am sure. A great country, sir! Room for everybody here! ...' They were apparently the stereotyped phrases with which a stranger in want of employment was usually encouraged in the United States" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 40, 48).

[19] For example: "I knew absolutely nothing of the nature and fashion of American women. Women in the States were then, and are still more now, absolute mistresses of their own world and of themselves" (Gallenga, *Episodes*, 54).

[20] Here the narrator comments with curiosity on Congregationalist communities and religious discussions which are "daily bread to the Anglo-Saxon race ... I had lived in countries where tyranny forced me to agree; I had come to countries where liberty allows them only to agree upon disagreeing" (Gallenga, *Episodes,* 75).

Final Remarks

Sampling those *loci* in which Gallenga's narrating "I" throws a retrospective gaze on how his younger self, we focused how the migration experience, working as a source of estrangement, changed the author and his self-perception. The linguistic self-consciousness of the narrator—his working as a teacher of Italian and Modern Languages and his being part of Boston literary society, the relationship that the young Gallenga had with his first and second languages are important parts—and at the same time effective synecdoches—of his relationship with the migration experience, both in the present of the story, when the young Gallenga is struggling to find a socially and professionally well integrated and successful position, and in the present of the discourse, when an older Gallenga is looking back on his American experience.

Language contributed to how an *American otherness* was imagined and conceptualized by Gallenga. Here pragmatism and disenchantment—for example in the skeptical and/or ironic reception of ideal images of the US proposed by other characters, and in the lucid pondering of small and big difficulties encountered while trying to settle in the country of adoption—influenced identity-building processes, affecting the articulation of expectations, the metabolization of new encounters and circumstances, the creation of narratable images of America, and, in them, the (cultural, social, professional) placement/locating of the self.

The *Episodes* case shows how critical categories refined in speculative fiction studies such as cognitive estrangement and utopian projections can be put to use to better study and understand early Italian American narratives, bringing into focus the *disadjustment* experienced through migration and how it is at work in the complex identity negotiations of which these narratives are testimony.

In the last three decades, Italian/American culture has at last experienced a veritable renaissance and has begun to be studied from diasporic, transnational, trans-lingual, and global perspectives by a growing number of scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. Working from an interdisciplinary standpoint, and taking as basis the latest developments in the field, the essays in this volume are meant as a contribution to the ongoing, collective effort at expanding and updating knowledge concerning Italian/American literature, cinema, and culture in their various articulations. They explore the effects that the texts' imaginary—often linked to the idea of space, mobility, and change—produces on our understanding of Italian/American culture. This knowledge can help construct a new narrative of Italian/American life, as well as provide a more complex understanding of American history and culture in a transnational context.

As the international conference *Re-Mapping Italian America. Places, Cultures, Identities* (Roma Tre University, 2016) has made clear, it is high time to reformulate the notions of place, culture, and identity in order to arrive at a more dynamic definition of these concepts. This re-consideration allows for new paradigms, flexible enough to make sense of the most significant changes in the field of contemporary Italian/American studies and suggestive of additional future perspectives in Italian/American criticism.

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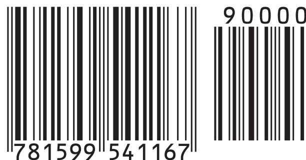
ISBN 978-1-59954-116-7
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COVER PHOTO:
St. George Terminal, Staten Island Ferry
3D image from *SI3D* film by Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno