

Between Fact and Fiction: Italian Immigration to South Africa

Robert Buranello
Chapman University

Let all the stories be told
Njabulo Ndebele

Italian immigration to South Africa has received only infrequent scholarly attention and, consequently, remains a somewhat elusive field of study¹. The few publications concerning Italians in South Africa vary greatly in scope and quality, ranging from the encyclopaedic to the particular, from rigorous scientific studies to personal narratives. It is the paucity of documentation relevant to the moderate number of Italian immigrants that leads researchers to rely on personal narratives in order to fill in the conspicuous *lacunae*. Each attempt to write a comprehensive history of the Italians in South Africa has met with formidable obstacles, primarily the lack of reliable source material. Though few and far between, these historical studies have been published by a variety of means and have made contributions to the understanding of the phenomenon of Italians in South Africa. Despite geographical, chronological, and ideological differences, Adolfo Giuseppe Bini's *Italiani in Sud Africa* (1957), Gabriele Sani's *Storia degli italiani in Sud Africa, 1489-1989* (1989), and Maria Clotilde Giuliani-Balestrino's *Gli Italiani nel Sud Africa* (1995) share the common trait of offering a survey of hundreds of years of history and profiles of eminent individuals and/or successful entrepreneurial enterprises by supplementing the scarce documentation with personal accounts². While not presuming to champion the «referential illusion» that the historical 'fact' may speak for itself (Barthes, 1987, p. 148), the close reliance on numerous subjective sources raises the question of the relationship between fact and fiction in the history of Italian

immigration to South Africa. This issue is further enriched (and complicated) by the recent appearance of Italians as historically grounded characters in South African novels. While this new development may signal a further migration from fact to fiction, it also introduces their stories to the current discourses of contemporary South African literature and historiography³.

As the South African novelist and critic, André Brink, has stated, in the post-apartheid era issues of censorship and the emphasis on the struggle against oppression have been supplanted by a desire to visit different «territories of experience», those silent spaces of history that were less obviously connected to the realities of apartheid. In much the same way as the stories of the victims of apartheid came out during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in the late 1990s in order to fill in the gaps of history, so too must the stories of all characters previously considered peripheral be brought to the centre of attention. He writes:

By decentering the conventional point of view and breaking down the master narratives of apartheid, [historians] have been offering not merely «alternative» accounts of our past to redress unjust emphases and perspectives, but a radical new view of the concept of «history». [...] [F]iction writers who wish return to the silent or silenced landscapes of the past have to tune in to the new perceptions of what constitutes history (Brink, 1999, pp. 30-32)⁴.

In this environment where South Africa's very identity is being renegotiated through the reappraisal of the narratives of the former «others» (Irlam, 2004, pp. 700-5) it is certainly intriguing that an Afrikaans author like Etienne van Heerden should choose to include a deaf, «dumb», and ultimately blind former Italian prisoner of war as a central figure in a novel that treats contemporary South Africa's attempts to come to terms with its history⁵. In particular, van Heerden's *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati* depicts the Italian protagonist of the title as the keeper of the secrets that burden but may also ultimately liberate the inhabitants of the fictional Karoo town of Yearsonend⁶. The present study attempts to outline the history of Italian migration to South Africa and to contextualize van Heerden's literary treatment of his Italian characters, suspended in their interstitial position between fact and fiction⁷.

When one compares the number of immigrants to South Africa with those to other countries in Europe, North America, South America, as well as Australia, South Africa pales (Gabaccia, 2004, pp. 8-10)⁸. Italian immigration to the African continent has always been very limited. Even during the colonial period the flow was a trickle in comparison with the trend of other western countries. Between 1876 and 1976 approximately 460,000 Italians immigrated to Africa, a figure that is perhaps only 2 per cent of the total of immigrants to the conti-

ment. The two periods of immigration to Africa that noted a significant increase, from 1901 to 1915 and from 1916 to 1942, coincided with Italy's conquest of the colonial territories in north and east Africa (Sani, 1992, p. 243)⁹. During the fascist period, while the flow of Italians towards the colonies in Africa was encouraged, in general, migration suffered a strong decline (Pretelli, 2004)¹⁰. Despite colonial aspirations similar to those of other European colonial powers, Italy was unable to leave a strong linguistic legacy with its former subject peoples. According to Ali and Alamin Mazrui, «Italian has not been adopted as a national language in any African country, but it is widely understood among élites in Somalia, Ethiopia and Libya» (Mazrui, 1998, p. 13)¹¹. For the Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah, this missing connection is due to the total lack of communication and desire of any form of encounter between the two groups. He writes that «[t]hey were two societies, in parallel existence, neither taking account of the other» (Farah, 2000, p. 62)¹².

After the Second World War emigration to Africa suffered a drastic reduction and, in more recent years, this flux of immigrants from Italy continued in diminished form, often consisting of professional and entrepreneurial endeavours¹³. Since there is no sense of geographical proximity or history of colonial pretensions further than east Africa, it is interesting that South Africa greatly overshadows other African nations as a destination for Italian immigration to the continent. By the mid-1990s, the Italian population in South Africa was estimated at approximately 120,000 people, evenly divided between native Italians and those of Italian ancestry (Favero and Tassello, 1978, p. 12)¹⁴. Indeed, as a consequence of the failed Italian attempt to carve out an empire in Africa, South Africa was the destination of certainly the greatest relocation of Italians on the continent: the approximately 92,000 prisoners of war who inhabited the Zonderwater Prisoner of War camp from 1941 to 1947¹⁵. While this group of prisoners would by no means be considered a typical case of mass immigration, those former Italian POWs who attempted to return to post-war, apartheid South Africa, thereby changing their previous status of enemy alien to welcome European immigrant, are an important feature of the story of Italian immigration to South Africa.

The Zonderwater prisoners have even managed to pique the interest of contemporary South Africa, as seen in the glossy seven-pages dedicated to them in the April 2001 issue of *Style* magazine in which the reporter enthusiastically declares:

One of these days someone will turn the Zonderwater story into the Great South African Movie and win an Oscar. Tom Hanks will play the honourable Afrikaner, Colonel Prinsloo, who got a medal from the Pope for his humane treatment of the enemy. Roberto Benigni will be the clown Edoardo Villa, whose gift for sculpture

made him a special prisoner. Isabella Rossellini will be Adriana Lupini, the prisoners' friend, Robert de Niro will be the prison gang boss, and Charlize Theron, the *boeremeisie* with an Italian bun in the oven.

It's an epic with all the right elements, and the strangest thing of all is that so few South Africans know anything about it. (Prendini Toffoli, 2001, p. 46).

The understandable impatience for this international blockbuster may be intensified by contemporary novels like van Heerden's *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati* where the plot thickens as the Italians arrive at their Karoo destination «with their cheeks hollow from the long, southbound sea voyage [subsequent to their capture after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1941] and their sojourn at Zonderwater prison; their clothes were tattered and their eyes mournful with longing for loved ones and familiar landscapes» (van Heerden, 2002, p. 50)¹⁶. From these examples we may detect how the stories of the Italians have begun to insinuate themselves in the popular and literary imaginations of South Africa, straddling the annals of history and the pages of fiction.

In the complicated and turbulent history of South Africa, Italian involvement may be perceived from the very beginnings of European colonial expansion. While attempting to avoid what the historian Robert Harney has referred to as the trap of *scopritorismo* - a desperate search for eminent Italian historical figures, a kind of Italian «Mayflowerism» (Harney, 1993, pp. 8-10)¹⁷, the history of Italians in South Africa does predate the early development of the Dutch colony to include the voyages of discovery, particularly those of the Portuguese. Whether searching for a route to the riches of the orient, or to contact the mythical Prester John, or inspired by missionary fervour, by the end of the fifteenth century the Portuguese had rounded the Cape of Good Hope with Bartholomew Dias and opened the way to the Indies with Vasco da Gama. By the early sixteenth century, the first Italian is reported to have gone ashore on the beaches of South Africa: Giovanni da Empoli, «on his way to India with Alfonso de Albuquerque in 1503, [...] landed at Mossel Bay, then called "Bay of Saint Biagio"». Many Italian explorers and entrepreneurs continued to navigate the route from India to Europe with the Portuguese, and narrate their experiences with the Cape and South Africa (Sani, 1992, pp. 1-7)¹⁸.

Until the latter half of the seventeenth century, the Italian presence in South Africa was almost non-existent, except for the occasional sailor or traveller in transit to points further east. Certainly the antagonisms between Catholics and Protestants in Europe during this period would have made Italian Catholics wary of travelling to the southern tip of Africa where the Cape Colony, founded by the Dutch East India Company (or *voc*, *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) in 1652, remained in Dutch control for almost another 150 years as a supply base for its ships en route to the east. The situation changed when the Valdesi,

a group of Piedmontese religious dissidents, sought religious freedom in the colonies in 1688 and 1689. With the repeal of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 that resulted in the persecution of the Huguenots in France, analogous action was taken against the Valdesi of Piedmont, inspiring both groups to flee to the Cape Colony. The Company added the Valdesi to the list of Huguenot refugees to be despatched to the Cape since they were defined as «coreligionists» seeking asylum from persecution. The Dutch considered these refugees able settlers who, with trades and farming skills, would successfully populate the station and breathe more life into the economy. The fates of the Valdesi and Huguenot met again in the Cape Colony and have been intertwined ever since, from claims to illustrious South African families like the Malan, to the birth of the wine industry, and the introduction of *biltong*¹⁹.

Apart from the Valdesi, the anti-Catholic sentiments of the colony resulted in the virtual absence of Italians among the new immigrants for a number of years. Except for notable exceptions like the business and diplomatic interests of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in the 1770s and the Republic of Genoa in the 1790s, the Italian presence in South Africa would remain unexceptional until after Napoleon's creation of the puppet Batavian republic in the Netherlands in 1795 (the same year as the British invasion of the Cape), the British capture of the Colony in 1797 (culminating with the formal British takeover in 1814), and the dissolution of the Dutch East India Company in 1798. The unfolding of these momentous events had serious repercussions for the Cape Colony where the change in government led to a diminishment of anti-Catholic sentiment that, consequently, created more favourable circumstances for Italian immigration (Sani, 1992, pp. 11-24)²⁰.

The British takeover of the colony brought increased English immigration (and the Anglicization of the many non-English who also arrived), the political, economic, and cultural marginalization of the local Dutch (Boers), the emancipation of the colony slaves, increased investment in such ventures as ostrich feathers, ivory, diamonds and gold, and violent wars with the Xhosa, Zulu, and the Boers that culminated with the South African War of 1899-1902²¹. Italian involvement is traceable in many aspects of these formidable nineteenth-century South African events. One of the most remarkable is the 1836 *Great Trek* of the Afrikaners who set out into the eastern hinterland in order to forge a homeland of their own, away from the oppression of the British²².

The discoveries of diamond fields in Kimberly and then gold in the Witwatersrand, behind which stood such dominating figures as Cecil Rhodes, came to focus much of the interest in South Africa at the end of the 1800s and attracted a number of *uitlanders* (foreigners) hoping to make a fortune through these new industries. While there is documentation showing that many Italians were among them, the research conducted by the Italian Geographical Society in

the Kimberly area in the 1880s is, again, conflicting and unreliable (Milanese, 2002, p. 6). According to these official Italian statistics, there were 79 Italians in the colonies of the Cape and Natal, with none registered in the other territories. However, by 1891 the figures indicated that there were 210 Italian citizens in the Cape, 60 in the Transvaal, 10 in the Orange Free State. In fact, on 10 April 1890, the first community initiative of Italians in South Africa, the Italian Society of Mutual Aid and Charity in Cape Town, was established with 47 founder members and boasted virtually uninterrupted activity until 1947 (Bini, 1957, pp. 125-30). In comparison with the massive Italian emigration to the Americas in this period, the number of Italians who went to South Africa remains truly negligible.

The South African War between the English and the Boer Republics resulted, for the most part, in wide spread pro-Boer sentiment among much of the Italian community in South Africa, particularly in the Rand area. This was also translated into Italian arrivals for the volunteer corps on the side of the Boers. Although there were Italian volunteers on both sides of the conflict, the most notable Italian in this period was the polyglot Piedmontese officer, Captain Camillo Ricchiardi who formed an Italian volunteer militia in the service of the Boer cause known as «Ricchiardi's Legion» (or, *Italiaansche Verkenning Corps*)²³. The approximately one-hundred-man group was composed of native Italians (mainly from the north), South African Italians, and a vast group of Italians or their descendents from Argentina (Giuliani-Balestrino, 1995, p. 35). During the war they distinguished themselves for their bravery and skill and appealed even more to the popular imagination for their role in the capture the young English war correspondent, Winston Churchill (Sani, 1992, p. 94). After they were officially disbanded in September 1900, many of the Legion continued to fight alongside the Boers until their defeat in 1902. Ricchiardi continued to aid the cause after the war by helping the many Boers who wanted to escape British domination immigrate to Argentina (Sani, 1992, p. 135)²⁴.

After the South African War, the victorious British restricted immigration to the mining areas of the Transvaal to 8 Italians per month, though these restrictions would not apply to other parts of the country. Italian government bodies, like the Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione, ultimately found the conditions in the mining area unfavourable and discouraged emigration. Although there was sporadic immigration to South Africa in this period, the trend was toward consolidation of the small community, not expansion (Sani, 1992, p. 178). The English also had to temper the past relations between Italy and England with the current colonial positionings of European powers in Africa. Despite conflicts over military contributions to WWI and WWII, most South African administrations concentrated their efforts on the consolidation of white power in the new state through restrictive policies of segregation and

discrimination (Thompson, 2000, pp. 154-86). In the early part of the century, the government consistently struggled to attract immigrants to a South Africa that was still recuperating spiritually, politically, and economically from the catastrophic effects of the Boer War and was now poised to enter WWI. In this period, the Italian community within South Africa tended to focus on their commercial and social interests, like local business ventures and mutual aid societies (Sani, 1992, pp. 187-98). Despite consistent Afrikaner apprehension at intensified immigration, caused by the fear of having their ethnicity further diluted, Italian immigration increased in the years between the First and Second World Wars, with the result that nearly half of the Italian community was comprised of recent immigrants by 1936. They also tended to declare English as their home language rather than Afrikaans (Corgatelli, 1989, pp. 23-29).

The next significant period of Italian immigration to South Africa is from 1941 to 1947, when about 92,000 prisoners of war from north and east Africa were housed in the Zonderwater prison in Cullinan, 43 kilometres from Pretoria²⁵. From the make-shift *tendopoli* of its very beginnings, at its peak the camp was divided into fourteen blocks and subdivided into four camps, boasting theatres, sports facilities, workshops, schools, a hospital, and literary and artistic competitions. With certain restrictions, the Italian POWs were allowed to work outside the camp, primarily on farms or in works of civic construction nearby, in order to compensate for the lack of white male labour during the war.

It was established as early as 1941 that Italian POWs could be used for work in the country of their detention as long as this work did not contravene any aspect of the Prisoners of War Convention of 1929 (Union of South Africa, 1941, p. 2161). Although this trend increased over the years, it intensified considerably after the fall of the fascist state on 25 July 1943. Already by February 1943 there were 2,730 Prisoners of War employed by the state in government works, 2,209 were employed by farmers, and another 152 were employed by other bodies (Union of South Africa, 1943, p. 1171). By February 1944, 10,434 POWs were working on farms, and 3,678 were employed in government works (Union of South Africa, 1944, p. 3062). The basic principle for the employment of POWs was the satisfaction of the Adjutant-General that the applicant must be in a position to maintain the prisoners in terms of the Prisoners of War Convention, and that health and security considerations were adhered to (Union of South Africa, 1943, p. 1910).

Although not covered by the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Prisoners of War Convention did insist that the employers provide the POWs with food, clothing, accommodation and medical treatment. While they were not allowed to be within 15 miles of the South African coastline, they were allowed to drive lorries in connection with farm work (Union of South Africa, 1943, pp. 586, 1639, 5296). While the general consensus was that the POWs were treated

fairly and paid a decent wage for their work under the circumstances [1 shilling per diem] (Union of South Africa, 1944, p. 3062), there were reported cases of indecent or obscene behaviour. One such issue was reported from the Worcester farms in 1944²⁶. To address these problems, the Minister of Defence J.C. Smuts declared that the POWs must travel in second-class coaches while in transit to and from off-camp employment or between camps, and must be escorted by their employers, their representatives or personnel of the Union Defence Force. The prisoners were allowed to be away from the farms only by special pass signed by the employers and according to which they were not to fraternise with the general public, to travel on public vehicles other than local buses, to visit any place of entertainment, bar, café, or public or private dances, nor to enter any private house except with the special permission of the employers. They were allowed to stay away from the farm from an hour fixed by the employer and stated on the special pass. They were permitted to stay out «not later than one hour after sunset» (Union of South Africa, 1944, p. 3802). There was also an increased attention to the prisoners' pursuits within the camp. Among the camp activities that received special consideration was the newspaper *Tra i reticolati*, complete with advertisements by such local Italian South African companies as Fatti's & Moni's pasta. It was in Block 1 that the *Tra i reticolati* headquarters was located.

These activities and pursuits were made possible by the considerate administration of the camp commander, Colonel H.F. Prinsloo, himself the descendant of Afrikaner inmates of the English concentration camps of the Boer War. The accomplishments of the Zonderwater prisoners were realised thanks to the mutual spirit of cooperation and respect that would later be the motivation behind the post-war Zonderwater Block Association. This was referred to as the «Zonderwater spirit» (Sani, 1992, p. 301)²⁷. Given this remarkably positive situation, many Italian POWs expressed interest in remaining in South Africa before the end of the war. Nonetheless, in 1944 the government declared that that these men «cannot be naturalized and cannot marry Union women» (Union of South Africa, 1944, p. 2590).

In the immediate post-war period, the South African government granted only 830 of the 1500 immigration applications by Italian ex-POWs, though the United Party government of Jan Smuts would soon after relax its restrictions. For example, in 1947, of the 28,839 immigrants who entered South Africa, 945 were Italian (Sani, 1992, p. 288). When Smuts' United Party was defeated by D.F. Malan's National Party in 1948, the initial reaction to the surge in immigration was to halt it in the interest of the local Afrikaner population. After discarding the initial strategy of discouraging non-Germanic immigrants, the South African government began to encourage the immigration of Italians who were known as hard working and adaptable people with whom they had

forged positive interpersonal relationships during the war. To this must be added the sympathetic ears of the Italian immigrants who harboured similar feelings of anti Communism. For these people in particular, South Africa was a viable and attractive alternative (Sani, 1992, pp. 310-14). Omitting the war years 1940-1944, for which there are no official statistics (and during which time Italian prisoners were the only «immigrants» to the country), the total number of recorded immigrants is 2620; for the years 1948-1951, the total number of Italian immigrants has been documented at 4217 (Corgatelli, 1989, p. 42). This drastic increase is certainly the result of the favouritism that prospective white immigrants received from the apartheid government. In the 1950s and 1960s, there is evidence of increased Italian investment in South Africa, where large Italian corporations like Fiat, Olivetti, and Iveco opened branches throughout the country. Also, business partnerships between Italian and South African companies flourished, causing well-known local companies and individuals to achieve significant economic success (Sani, 1992, pp. 294-308).

By the mid-1980s, the political pressure of economic, cultural and sporting sanctions imposed on South Africa led to a withdrawal of Italian investment in the country. This also had a negative impact on Italian immigration²⁸. The situation changed in 1994 with the democratic elections that resulted in the ouster of the National Party from power. This led to the signing of bilateral commercial, scientific, and cultural agreements between Italy and South Africa. Although the data concerning the Italian population is not completely clear, it is apparent that the approximately 120,000 Italians settled in South Africa constitute a well-established and affluent sector of the country that, historically, has had numerous economic advantages and was exposed to fewer hardships (Giuliani-Balestrino, 1995, pp. 85-87)²⁹. In this context, it may appear surprising that such an obviously talented and advantaged community does not boast of a South African literature of its own among its long list of other accomplishments³⁰. Perhaps the fact that the only consistent body of literature in Italian was produced by the Italian prisoners of war at the Zonderwater camp has had an impact on its reception among the community. Nevertheless, this important episode in Italian South African history has been translated to the pages of South African literature and given fuller dimensions by *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati*.

Etienne van Heerden's novel appeared in a «bumper year» for South African novels that sought «a historical and genealogical grounding for one's sense of identity, even as it offers a telling critique of such enterprises» (Attidge, 2005, p. 159)³¹. Opening with the genealogical «Yearsonend Blood Tree,» the author deconstructs the myths of purity, linearity, and separation upon which apartheid was founded by mixing white, black, English, Afrikaner, Indonesian,

and, with Mario Salviati, Italian, in a family tree whose labyrinthine contours reflect the difficulty of untangling not only the family history but also the challenging narrative that makes frequent chronological leaps between centuries. *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati* relies on allegory and magical realism to convey a story about the old South Africa and the new one, emerging from the rubble of apartheid yet still bound to its centuries of violence and haunted by the ghosts of its past³². Numerous phantasmic characters inhabit Yearsonend concurrently with the town's human population, for various reasons mutually obsessed by a mysterious cache of Boer gold that is apparently hidden near the town and upon which all the residents' darkest and dirtiest secrets are based. In the background there is a wooden statue of the «Staggering Merman» that mysteriously emerged on the town's barren Karoo landscape and upon which there is often perched an ambiguous angel figure³³.

The story unfolds as a beautiful young Cape Town artist and art dealer, Ingi Friedländer, arrives in Yearsonend to purchase the «Staggering Merman» statue from Jonty Jack Berg, the mixed race artist who is reputed to have carved it from local wood, so that it may be praised as the symbol of the new South Africa in the museum. As the novel progresses, she encounters the various inhabitants of the town (both alive and dead) and begins to unravel the town's secrets that are all connected to the cache of gold that a fleeing Boer commando buried near the town in 1902. The gold, to be used to finance the failing war effort, was also accompanied by the severed hands of the Boer children who had died in the concentration camps and were being sent to England as proof of English atrocities. The commander of the group, Fieldcornet (Redbeard) Pistorius, used one of the children's hands for a spell against the bewitching power of the kidnapped Siela Pedi, whom the commando systematically raped on its way across the country from the Transvaal. These horrible transgressions were then accompanied by the murder of the commando by Pistorius and the Cape rebel and ostrich-feather magnate, Meerlust Berg, after the group had hidden the gold. Pistorius and Berg each had a part of the map that indicated the burial spot of the gold (and the soldiers) and both kept quiet for fear of the consequences of their crimes. After generations of tension and rumour, the town remained obsessed with the gold's location. It was said that Big Karel (Thin Air) Berg took the secret location of the gold with him when he buried himself in a cave in the 1940s, after his ambitious plan to bring water to the arid town apparently failed. In fact, however, the plan worked and his foreman, the deaf and mute Italian POW and stone cutter, Mario Salviati is believed to know the location of the Boer gold.

While, on the one hand, it should not appear too odd to include the episode of the Italian POWs in a novel that treats centuries of South African history as magically ever-present, it is curious to have a deaf, mute and blind Italian stone

cutter as a central character. Of all the exotic figures that inhabit this fictional world, he may appear as the most incongruous. It is rather curious the way that the exoticism of Mario Salviati outshines many of the other characters. For example, the Italians are occasionally referred to as stereotypical *lotharios* «with lynxes in their loins, as the saying goes in this part of the world» (p. 210). However perplexing, Mario is the only character in the novel who appears to possess an attractive yet dangerous sexuality.

When she [Ingi Friedländer] came in the old man had pushed himself up against his pillow. He wore only pyjama trousers and his chest was still strong and well-shaped despite his years. The white chest hairs grew up to his neck. He had large nipples, she noted, almost rudely large, and his hands spread brown and broad on the bed as he pushed himself up (p. 329).

The relation of his physique to implied sexuality (despite his advanced age) relates to the preconceived notions that the other townspeople would have had of the Italians³⁴.

At first glance, Mario Salviati is the most emarginated of the Yearsonenders. In addition to his obvious handicaps, he is an Italian prisoner of war who is constantly looked at with suspicion, from a radically different land and culture, and appears to have no choice in his destiny or location. The disorientation and miscommunication, typically associated with the combination of seemingly incompatible elements, certainly characterized the meeting of the Italians with the Karoo townsfolk. The hopes and expectations of each group were hopelessly confused by the farcical babelisation caused by the drunken Italian interpreter at the train station:

While housewives pointed to spice racks and shouted eagerly, «Pasta! Pasta!» young men shrugged their shoulders helplessly. A tailor bent over the engine of a motor-car and scratched his head (p. 59).

Remarkably, there was no misinterpretation with Mario Salviati. In order to silently convey his talent at the train station, Mario grabbed an oval ironstone and held it above his head. Karel Berg, who was looking for a stone cutter for his «lightning water channel» that would bring needed water to the arid community, noticed the mute Mario, took the stone from his hand and made a cutting movement across it. Mario «took the stone ceremoniously from Big Karel, and with an archetypically Italian gesture, he raised the stone dramatically to his lips and kissed it.» From that moment, they knew that «their understanding was a contract chiselled in stone; an understanding of certainty and durability» (p. 59)³⁵.

This initial encounter is significant for it indelibly marks Mario Salviati as a character who, despite all his disadvantages, is deeply connected to the land and whose rough, heavy, strong, silent features, and stoic expression mirror the Karoo landscape³⁶. As Zoë Wicomb has pointed out, Etienne van Heerden is an Afrikaans author whose aesthetics of the land and use of geographical tropes serves to question previous notions of identity and affiliations (Wicomb, 1998, p. 8)³⁷. It is from this perspective that the figure of Mario Salviati becomes truly intriguing. As an Italian POW who remains in South Africa after the war, this character certainly fits the description of that small minority of former prisoners who stayed in the country, thereby changing their status to immigrant. His being deaf, mute, and blind would certainly be considered a hindrance to any immigrant's goal of successful social integration (Perin, 1989, pp. 22-24). This character's fundamental association with his surroundings is therefore surprising since his sense of occupying space and time relies most on touch and smell which, by evoking memories, cause a profound temporal and spatial disorientation in his attempt «to fight off the madness of utter silence and darkness» (p. 124)³⁸.

Mario Salviati's association with the land is so profound that, after Karel Berg carved the directions to the gold on Mario's ironstone just before sealing himself off in Cave Gorge, the stone never left Mario's hand for the rest of his life. In fact, he always «held his smooth stone as though it were his only grip on the world» (p. 137). Even when Jonty Jack dynamited the blocked cave and found his father's skeleton still clasping between two bony fingers a mysterious paper, likely containing the map to the hidden gold, that «disintegrated into a little cloud of dust that wafted away and disappeared» (p. 432), the secret remained only in Mario's stony hand. One day, when Ingi was taking care of the old, handicapped stonecutter and tried to remove the stone from the palm of his hand, «she saw that his skin had grown over the stone. It sat in the palm of his hand as if he had been born with it» (p. 182). In his dying moments, after having realized that Ingi, another outsider, was the only person who truly cared about him and was not obsessed with the hidden gold that would unlock all the town's secrets, he slowly «cut away the skin that grew over the stone in his palm. The sour stink of old flesh and sweat pierced his nostrils, and then his sense of smell was suddenly gone» (p. 431). When Ingi found the stone on her bed the next day, the day of her departure, she took it to the Murderers' Karoo and «without looking at it properly, flung it as far as she could into the plains, among the other stones and low shrubs». To the herd of exuberant springbok that pranced by her car, she whispered «Mario Salviati» (p. 434).

This liberating gesture of freeing oneself from the burden of history was only possible through the actions of Mario Salviati, the silent stone cutter of the Karoo who, due to the very disabilities and disadvantages that made him

an outsider, possessed the necessary unaffected perception to avoid self-interest and self-deception. As Ingi Friedländer says,

«We argue about Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism and tangle ourselves up in gestures and symbols that in the long run don't [...] *smell* of anything. We have to go back to being ...» and she pointed to Dumb Eyetie almost angrily. «We need to go back to being like him; with just the faculty to taste, smell and touch» (p. 201).

With *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati*, Etienne van Heerden seems to indicate that the untold stories of outsiders offer a unique perspective that may ultimately complete the historical picture. This fictionalized account provides an eloquent reassessment of the roles of literature and history, and the privileged insight – like that of the Italians in South Africa – that results from being suspended between fact and fiction.

Notes

- ¹ This opinion is shared by Valentina Iacoponi (2008), who claims that Italian historiography has traditionally neglected South Africa and southern Africa in general (p. 219). For a more detailed assessment of the state of the historiography, see Maria Cristina Ercolessi (2005). The latter correctly claims that the lack of a «massa critica» of studies – that «si contano letteralmente sulle dita di una mano» – in this area «impedisce un qualsiasi tentativo di “decostruire” un “discorso italiano” sull’Africa australe» (p. 162). The recent appearance of Lorenzo Carlesso’s *Centomila prigionieri italiani in Sud Africa. Il campo di Zonderwater* (Ravenna: Angelo Longo Editore, 2009) and the volume edited by Giampaolo Romanato, entitled *Veneti in Sud Africa* (Ravenna: Angelo Longo Editore, 2008) bodes well for a quantitative and qualitative change in the current state of scholarship.
- ² Adolfo Giuseppe Bini’s *Italiani in Sud Africa* (1957) remains primarily, as the author himself relates, a «memoriale biografico delle molteplici attività esplicate dagli italiani in Sud Africa» that relies heavily on anecdotal accounts (p. 9). In a note to «Un grazie all’Autore», the editor, Annibale del Mare, mentions that the book was published at the author’s expense (p. 8). Nonetheless, this volume was the only publication of its kind for over thirty years and, consequently, the lone resource material for subsequent historical research of its kind. See Pietro Corgatelli’s «Introduction» to *Tapes and Testimony: Making the Local History of Italians in the Western Cape in the First Half of the 20th Century*, (1989, pp.1-8). Gabriele Sani’s *Storia degli Italiani in Sud Africa, 1489-1989*. (1989) [*History of the Italians in South Africa, 1489-1989*, (1992)] is, by far, the most optimistic in scope. Its treatment of «a chaotic galaxy of potential sources often contradictory, fallacious or unreliable» (p. 2) is also uneven. Like Bini’s study, Sani’s *History* was published privately without peer reviews or the benefit of circulation through standardized academic channels. Maria Clotilde Giuliani-Balestrino’s *Gli Italiani nel Sud Africa* (1995) freely draws on the

previous two works in the presentation of her investigative journalistic treatment that, unfortunately, often smacks of condescension in her attempts to redeem the Italian South African community in the eyes of Italian readers. An excellent critical evaluation of these studies is offered by Alessia Milanese (2002, pp. 11-20). In her study on the Italians in South Africa, Iacoponi similarly mentions the need to research alternative documents (p. 219) since «[l]a natura frammentaria e disomogenea delle fonti a disposizione, come pure lo stato della ricerca, non permettono di arrivare a conclusioni definitive per la storia dell'emigrazione italiana in Sudafrica» (p. 223). In the American context, the importance of the personal anecdote has been noted by, for example, Robert Viscusi (1991) and Fred Gardaphe (1999).

- 3 See André Brink (1999, pp. 29-42). In the same volume, see Njabulo Ndebele (1999). Although the focus of the literary treatment of Italians is with Etienne van Heerden's *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati* (2002) due to the broad implications and the conspicuousness of its Italian protagonist, there are two other recent works of fiction worth mentioning by Dalene Matthee, *The Mulberry Forest* (1987), and Patricia Schonstein, *A Time of Angels* (2003).
- 4 Michael Green (1999) states unequivocally that «The new South Africa is fertile ground for the recalling of forgotten, bypassed, and suppressed stories, and the invention of new stories, historical and fictional» (p. 122). His analysis of South African fiction and historiography leads him to the following ambitious (re)conciliation: «A work of fiction may be considered as effectively engaging with history if it calls up the past as a point of resistance to the present, if the past is allowed to exist in the work in all its difference from the present, if the very act of creating the past in the work is powerful enough to hold at bay the appropriation of that past by the present moment of creation» (p. 131). Reingard Nethersole (2002) declares that the “truths” that emerged from the TRC were «narrated and interpreted rather than verified and validated» (p. 5).
- 5 The terminology employed to describe the protagonist as «deaf, dumb, and blind» is taken directly out of the novel where this politically incorrect description reflects the attitudes of the fictional small town of Yearsonend. This novel employs broad use of nicknames for the characters (Lorenzo «Devil Slap», «Look Deep» Petrelli, «Lost Cause» Moloi, «Red beard» Pistorius, etc.), intended to convey the reality of a small and isolated town where identities are more aligned with the person's more obvious physical or psychological attributes. Hence, Mario Salviati is frequently referred to as «Dumb Eyetie.» Mario was born deaf and mute but became blind subsequently, in Yearsonend. This is revealed later in the novel when it is related that Lorenzo «Devil Slap» (also known as the «dark Italian» - names given to him by the Yearsonenders due to the «glowing red strawberry on his right cheek » and «because of the rumour that the cheek was so red because he so steadfastly refused to obey the biblical injunction to turn the other cheek» [van Heerden, 2002, p. 210]), another Italian POW who would ultimately kill Mario's wife, became enraged that Mario did not divulge the location of the hidden cache of Boer gold after he had plied him with great quantities of grappa on Mount Improbable, and left him in his comatose state with his eyes half open under the piercing African sun. In his vindictive, drunken rage, Devil Slap urinates into Mario's eyes and leaves him to blindly stumble down the mountain (van Heerden, 2002, p. 426). The landscape

and landmarks also bear such portentous names as «Blood Tree», «Murderer's Karoo», «Mount Improbable», «Little Hands», «Plains of Melancholy». The novel was originally published in Afrikaans as *Die Swye van Mario Salviati* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2000). In the «Author's Acknowledgements», van Heerden relates how the inspiration for the character of Mario Salviati was «formed around a photograph of an Italian mason working at the Meringspoort Pass [...] unable to communicate with his fellow workers» during WWII, and reprinted in 1990. This was reinforced by «a plaited leather belt given to my father by an unknown Italian prisoner of war who worked on our farm in Doornbosch during the Second World War» (van Heerden, 2002, p. 438). Etienne van Heerden has been identified as part of a new group of South African writers producing «front-rank fiction» that is freed from the liberation struggle rhetoric and attempting to address a «new identity». See Russell-Walling (2003, p. 24). See also Cowley (2003, pp. 22-24) who identifies many of the issues that contemporary authors, like van Heerden, are addressing in the new, post-apartheid South Africa. A bibliography of van Heerden's novels, short stories, poems, and other publications is most easily accessible at <http://www.etiennevan-heerden.co.za/index.htm>. He is currently Hofmeyr Professor and Head of Afrikaans and Netherlandic Studies, School of Languages and Literatures, University of Cape Town.

- 6 The Great Karoo, a sparsely populated, land-locked semi-desert, covers an area of approximately 400,000 square kilometres and features some of the country's greatest biodiversity in addition to fascinating dinosaur and reptilian deposits. It has never been a major destination of immigrants to South Africa. Hence, the character Ingi Friedländer's surprise at hearing of Mario Salviati's stone «Florentine» cottage: «Florentine, she thought, could you believe it? Florence in the old Karoo» (van Heerden, 2002, p. 16). In this cottage there are two important photographs: one is of Mario Salviati with a caption that identifies him as the builder; the other is of the town's train station, «*The Italian Prisoners of War from Zonderwater Prison arrive at Yearsonend*» (van Heerden, 2002, p. 22). For van Heerden and other Afrikaans writers, there is an intense identification with the land of South Africa, particularly the heartland. See Michiel Heyns (2000).
- 7 On the importance of «interstices» in history, see Eric Hobsbawn, *On History*, London, Abacus, 1997, p. 14.
- 8 Iacoponi makes the important point that while Cape Town and Johannesburg are geographically no further than New York or Buenos Aires, «un viaggio in terza classe poteva arrivare a costare il doppio o il triplo rispetto a un passaggio per le Americhe» (p. 219).
- 9 As this article is written in English, my references to Sani are from this English translation.
- 10 For an assessment of the Italian colonies in the Horn of Africa, see Giampaolo Calchi Novati, (1999). The studies of Angelo del Boca and Nicola Labanca also merit close attention for their deconstruction of fascist mythology concerning the colonies and the state of the scholarship related to the phenomenon. For concise views from these scholars, the reader is directed to their respective essays in the volume prepared by Patrizia Palumbo (2003). For a comparative view of South African and Italian perspectives on the postcolonial, contrast Reingard Nethersole's call «to

- decolonise the mind» (p. 7), with Armando Gnisci's points on the decolonisation of the European mind (1995).
- 11 The authors also make reference to Italian having been briefly adopted as an official language (p. 96). For an interesting discussion of the similar linguistic nationalisms between the Somali and the Afrikaner, see pages 7-9. According to Calchi Novati, «L'Italia non si lasciò dietro nessuna eredità credibile e quindi nessuna vera possibilità di esercitare una qualche forma di influenza o di prestigio così da prepararsi un ritorno in Africa nel mondo post-coloniale che venne in essere con la fine della seconda Guerra mondiale. La verità è che l'Italia non è stata in grado di istituire quella struttura di partnership mutua o se si preferisce di complicità che normalmente caratterizza l'imperialismo europeo e che ha spesso fornito dei rapporti più forti e duraturi dell'amministrazione coloniale diretta» (p. 101).
 - 12 This peculiar arrangement seems to have persisted, according to Sabrina Brancato (2008) who mentions how Italy (like Spain), «seem[s] to have been struck by an acute form of colonial amnesia, leading to a complete erasure of the memory of past guilt» (p. 5). However, she does mention the positive recent developments in italoophone literature, «usually identified as 'migration literature'» and the pioneering work of such scholars as Armando Gnisci (pp. 8-9).
 - 13 Marcella Dalla Cia (2008) mentions the current increase in economic migration to North African countries of the Mediterranean.
 - 14 See also Giuliani-Balestrino (1995, pp.85-6). There is still much discrepancy over the numbers of Italians in South Africa. According to The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Elenco riassuntivo degli Italiani all'estero* of 1998, the figure is around 35,000 (<http://digilander.libero.it/maxdll/italianiallestero.html>, retrieved on 14/10/08).
 - 15 There were other, smaller POW camps in South Africa, for example, at Pietermaritzburg, as well as an internment camp at Koffiefontein. See Mario Gazzini (1987). Cecilia Kruger (1996) outlines the preparations made for the establishment of the camp by South African authorities (88-90).
 - 16 All subsequent parenthetical references to this novel will give only the page numbers.
 - 17 One occasionally wonders about the degree of *scopritorismo* in Sani's history when, for example, he declares early in the text, «A Franciscan priest (probably of Italian origin as were most of the clerics then) wrote a book in Spanish between 1350 and 1360 entitled *Libro del Conoscimiento de todos los reynos*» (2). Despite such lapses, Sani's comprehensive study offers valuable information.
 - 18 Of similar interest are the chronicles of Francesco Carletti (1964) whose «Fifth Chronicle of the Second Oriental Account» relates the voyage from Goa to Lisbon, via the Cape of Good Hope, in 1601.
 - 19 Unknown, *Viva l'Italia. A catalogue of photographs with text* (n.d.), p. 3. Sani also mentions how these early Valdesi immigrants underwent assimilation to the dominant Dutch culture rather easily and rapidly (p. 15). On the Valdesi, see Giorgio Tourn, (1993 [1977]); for the Malan family and the Huguenots in South Africa, see Alet Malan (1998) and Hercules Malan (n.d). *Biltong* is a typically South African dish consisting of spiced, dried meats that, though similar to beef jerky, differs in terms of typical ingredients, taste and production process. It is commonly made of

- beef, though not infrequently from chicken or the more exotic ostrich or kudu. The etymology is Dutch, deriving from «bil» (rump) and «tong» (tongue or strip).
- 20 For the early history of the Cape Colony to the English capture, see Leonard Thompson (2000, pp. 31-69).
- 21 See Iacoponi for a discussion of Italian immigration to South Africa under English rule in this period.
- 22 While there is not much documentation of an Italian presence, the diary of the reverend Erasmus Smith who followed the trek tells of Teresa Viglione, a brave young Italian girl who saved a number of the trekkers' lives during an attack by the Zulu chief Dingane on 26 February, 1836. For her act of bravery, she is immortalized in a bas-relief at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. See Sani (1992, p. 35). It should be remembered that for the Afrikaaner, the *Great Trek* has great symbolic meaning and is as inspirational as the opening of the west in the USA. Sani also posits that due to the similarity, the popular Afrikaans surname of Viljoen may actually be a corruption of the Italian Viglione (36). Another notable figure in this period is Giovanni Albasini, the Portuguese-Italian paramount chief of the Shangaan Magwambe tribe. See Sani, pp. 30-33. Brief outlines are also given by Giluliani-Balestrino (1995, pp. 17-20), who also includes a photograph of the bas-relief to Teresa Viglione.
- 23 For the Italian volunteers in the English forces, among them Peppino Garibaldi, the son of the hero of Italian unification, see Sani (1992, pp. 126-28).
- 24 See also Mario Lupini (1988). Among the many notorious events during the conflict, the English concentration camps loom very large in the memory of the *Boerevolk* for the cruel deaths that they suffered and the dispersal of Afrikaners that also resulted from this practice. See Thompson (2000, p. 143). With dire consequences, this war deeply influenced Anglo-Afrikaaner relations for the next fifty years. In fact, it would even play an important role in the treatment of Italian POWs during WWII and is a significant aspect of van Heerden's *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati*.
- 25 Corgatelli points to the particularly dramatic spike in Italian immigration in the 1951 Census for the years 1941 and 1942 (p. 36).
- 26 With the flare typical of *Style* magazine, Prendini Toffoli (52001, p. 52) mentions one such incident in her interview with a former POW, Ugo Spetto: «Three girls of one family were made pregnant by one Casanova. A prisoner who impregnated a 15-year-old in Worcester was sent to another district, only to come cycling back to seduce the mother, making her pregnant as well. "When a farmer complained to the police," said Ugo Spetto, "the commissioner told him, 'You'd better put an extra lining in your pants or you'll be next'».
- 27 Tangible proof of the enduring Zonderwater spirit is found in the activities of the Zonderwater Block organisation, coordinated by the existing former prisoners throughout Italy, South Africa and around the world. Of particular importance is the continued publication of *Tra i reticolati*, the former prison newspaper that was published in the Zonderwater POW camp from 1941 to 1946. From 1963, *Tra i reticolati* was the ex-prisoner of war bi-monthly magazine, published out of the association's headquarters in Milan. A selection of reprinted original articles, together with more recent publication (dating up to 1998), were collected to form an independently-published 300-page volume, complete with archival photographs,

edited by Ugo Tebaldini (n.d). On page iii, there is the following explanation of its genesis: «Questo libro è stato stampato a cura dello Zonderwater Block (libera Associazione ex reduci dai campi di concentramento in Sud Africa). Non è in vendita. Viene dato in “omaggio” a tutti i suoi associati e simpatizzanti.» Kruger (1995, p. 93-94) informs us that the association was officially formed on 23 October 1965 in Orange Grove, Johannesburg (the city's former «Little Italy» enclave), though it was first discussed in 1954, in Milan.

- 28 For an analysis of Italy's sometimes conflicting policies regarding aid, development, investment, and foreign policy in this period, see Maria Cristina Ercolessi (1990).
- 29 On the population figures, see, note 14, above. According to Kruger, «The Italian community in South Africa is a comparatively closed group who, to this day, concern themselves mainly with their own affairs» (p. 104).
- 30 There are only two studies dedicated to Italian South African literature. The first is by Annajulia Mariani (1991); the other is by Robert Buranello (2003). The latter study is the first to focus on the large body of literature produced and published in Italian in the POW newspaper, *Tra i reticolati*.
- 31 The other novels mentioned in this article are by Zoë Wicomb and Zakes Mda.
- 32 This phantasmic quality is noted by Sandra Federici (2002) when she declares that «i fantasmi di questo e quel passato ritornano nella letteratura, nell'arte, nel fumetto» (p. 2).
- 33 This potentially menacing figure with talons that leaves feathers and excrement behind is perhaps the force that keeps the ghosts of the past at Yearsonend until the secret is revealed (p. 231). Given the novel's preoccupation with history and the renewal of society, it is tempting to read this figure as similar to Walter Benjamin's «angel of history». See Walter Benjamin, (2003, p. 932), and O.K. Werckmeister (1996).
- 34 This would seem to run parallel to colonial discourse's connection between sexuality and racism. See Robert C. Young (1995). See also note 26, above.
- 35 Mario Salvati's connection with Karel Berg is also strengthened by the latter's swarthy complexion (thanks to his Indonesian mother, the model, Irene Lampak) that marked him as an outsider too. During their first encounter, Mario silently wonders, «And he stands slightly apart from the other farmers. Is he above them, [...] or have they pushed him out?» (p. 59).
- 36 This is made explicit by Ingi who led the deaf, mute and blind Mario up the mountain in order to feel the statue of the Madonna that he had sculpted and situated on a cliff many years before: «Eventually he turned and sat with his back to the statue. Like a rock, thought Ingi, he looked like a rock himself» (p. 201).
- 37 Lewis Nkosi (2005) similarly interrogates contemporary South African literature's association between identity and attachment to a particular place. On the topic of the literary expression of place and belonging in South African literature, a particularly insightful study is provided by Itala Vivian (2000). In particular, see her development of colonial literature's «constructed [...] cultural identity» in relation to the «plaasroman» and post-apartheid black South African literature's expressions of belonging (pp. 53-61).
- 38 Zoë Wicomb (2005) observes the importance of identity and occupying space through «proprioceptivity». In his article (see note 37, above), Nkosi (2005, p. 176), quoting

Bill Ashcroft and Helen Tiffin (1995), refers to the applicability of the «complex interaction of language, history and environment» in determining «place» in South African literature.

Bibliography

Ashcroft, Bill and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Reader*, New York, Routledge, 1995.

Attridge, Derek, «Zoë Wicomb's Home Truths», *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 41;2 (November 2005), pp. 156-65.

Barthes, Roland, *Rustle of Language*. Trans. Richard Howard, New York, Hill and Wang, 1987.

Benjamin, Walter, «On the Concept of History» *Selected Writings. Volume 4. 1938-1940*, Trans. Edmund Jephcott and Others, Cambridge, Mass., The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 389-411.

Bini, Adolfo Giuseppe, *Italiani in Sud Africa*, Milan, Scuole Arti Grafiche Artigianelli, 1957.

Brancato, Sabrina, «Afro-European Literature(s): A New Discursive Category», *Research in African Literatures* 39;3 (Fall 2008), pp. 1-13.

Brink, André «Stories of history: reimagining the past in post-apartheid narrative» in Sarah Nuttall, and Carli Coetzee (eds.), *Negotiating the Past. The Making of Memory in South Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 29-42.

Buranello, Robert, «*Tra i reticolati*: The Literature of Italian Prisoners of War in South Africa» in von Maltzan, Carlotta (ed.), *Africa and Europe: Myths, Masks and Masquerades*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2003, pp. 259-71.

Calchi Novati, Giampaolo, «L'Italia e il Corno d' Africa: L'insostenibile leggerezza di un colonialismo debole» in Matteo, Sante and Stefano Bellucci (eds.), *Africa Italia*, Santarcangelo di Romagna, FaraEditore, 1999, pp. 100-16.

Carletti, Francesco, *My Voyage Around the World. The Chronicles of a 16th Century Merchant*. Trans Herbert Weinstock, New York, Pantheon Books, 1964.

Carlesso, Lorenzo, *Centomila prigionieri italiani in Sud Africa. Il campo di Zonderwater*. Ravenna, Angelo Longo Editore, 2009.

Corgatelli, Pietro, *Tapes and Testimony: Making the Local History of Italians in the Western Cape in the First Half of the 20th Century*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Economic History, University of Cape Town (1989).

Cowley, Jason, «Profile: The White South African Novelist», *New Statesman* (13 October 2003), pp. 22-44.

Dalla Cia, Marcella, «Nuove migrazioni: italiani in Marocco» *Altretaliaie* 36-37 (gennaio-dicembre 2008), pp. 205-17.

Del Boca, Angelo, «The Myths, Suppressions, Denials, and Defaults of Italian Colonialism» in Patrizia Palumbo (ed.) *A Place in the Sun. Africa in Italian Colonial Literature from Post-Unification to the Present*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, pp. 17-36.

Ercolessi, Maria Cristina, «L’Africa Australe e la storiografia italiana» in A. Giovagnoli and G. Del Zanna (eds.), *Il Mondo visto dall’Italia*, Milan, Guerini e Associati, 2005, pp. 161-72.

Ercolessi, Maria Cristina, *Italy and Sub-Saharan Africa in the Eighties: Development Aid and Foreign Policy*, Rome, Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, 1990.

Farah, Nuruddin, *Yesterday, Tomorrow. Voices from the Somali Diaspora*, London, Cassell, 2000.

Favero, L. and G. Tassello, «Cent’anni di emigrazione italiana, 1876-1976» in G. Rosori (ed.), *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana, 1876-1976*, Rome, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1978.

Federici, Sandra, «Il nuovo Sudafrica tra passato e presente», *Africa e Mediterraneo* 38 (2002), p. 2.

Gabaccia, Donna Rae, «Per una storia italiana dell’emigrazione» *Altreitalie* 16;6 (2004), pp. 8-10.

Gardaphe, Fred L., «The Evolution of Italian American Autobiography» in Pellegrino d’Acierno (ed.), *The Italian American Heritage. A Companion to Literature and Arts*, New York, Garland Publishing Inc., 1999, pp. 151-64.

Gazzini, Mario, *Zonderwater. I prigionieri in Sud Africa (1941-1947)*, Rome, Bonacci, 1987.

Giuliani-Balestrino, Maria Clotilde, *Gli Italiani nel Sud Africa*, Naples, Geocart Edit, 1995.

Gnisci, Armando, «Tre paragrafi sulla decolonizzazione letteraria degli europei», *Studi d’Italianistica nell’Africa australe* 8;2 (1995), pp. 55-64.

Green, Michael, «Social history, literary history and historical fiction in South Africa», *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 12;2 (December 1999), pp. 122-36.

Harney, Robert F., *From the Shores of Hardship: Italians in Canada*, Welland, ON: Éditions Soleil, 1993.

Heyns, Michiel, «The Whole Country’s Truth: Confession and Narrative in Recent White South African Writing», *Modern Fiction Studies* 46;1 (Spring 2000), pp. 42-66.

Hobsbawn, Eric, *On History*, London: Abacus, 1997.

Iacoponi, Valentina, «Al Capo di un altro Mondo. Appunti di ricerca sui percorsi di mestiere dall’Italia al Sudafrica tra il 1870 e il 1913», *Altreitalie* 36-37 (gennaio-dicembre 2008), pp. 218-28.

Irlam, Shaun, «Unravelling the Rainbow: The Remission of Nation in Post-Apartheid Literature», *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103;4 (Fall 2004), pp. 700-5.

Kruger, Cecilia, «The Zonderwater Italian prisoners of War 1941-1947: Fifty Years Down the Line», *S.A. Journal of Cultural history / S.A. Tydskrif vir kultuurgeskiedenis* 10 (2), November 1996, 88-104.

Labanca, Nicola, «Studies and Research on Fascist Colonialism, 1922-1935: Reflections on the State of the Art» in Patrizia Palumbo (ed.), *A Place in the Sun. Africa in Italian Colonial Literature from Post-Unification to the Present*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, pp. 37-61.

Lupini, Mario, *Camillo Ricchiardi. Italian Boer War Hero*, Melville, RSA, Scripta Africana, 1988.

Malan, Alet, *Jacques Malan and His Family*, Franschoek, RSA, Huguenot Memorial Museum, 1998.

Malan, Hercules (ed.), *International Malan Reunion 2000. Torre Pellice, Piedmont, Italy*, Port Elizabeth, RSA, The Malan Family Association, n.d.

Mariani, Annajulia, «Amarezza e pietas nella lirica di Giancarlo Mattana» in Marchand, Jean-Jacques (ed.) *La letteratura dell'emigrazione. Gli scrittori di lingua italiana nel mondo*, Turin, Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1991, pp. 567-69.

Matthee, Dalene, *The Mulberry Forest*, London, Penguin Books, 1987.

Mazrui, Ali A. & Alamin M., *The Power of Babel. Language & Governance in the African Experience*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1998.

Milanese, Alessia, *Italian in South Africa: Challenges in the Representation of an 'Italian' Identity*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town 2002.

Ndebele, Njabulo, «Memory, metaphor and the triumph of narrative» in Sarah Nuttall, and Carli Coetzee (eds.), *Negotiating the Past. The Making of Memory in South Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 19-28.

Nethersole, Reingard, «Rainbow or Renaissance? Changing Tropes for South Africa's Self-image», *Africa e Mediterraneo* 38 (2002), pp. 4-9.

Nkosi, Lewis, «Luster's lost quarter: Reading South African Identities», *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 41;2 (November 2005), pp. 166-78.

Perin, Roberto, «The Immigrant: Actor or Outcast» in *Arrangiarsi. The Italian Immigration Experience in Canada*, Montréal, Guernica, 1989.

Prendini Toffoli, Hilary, «The Prisoners of Zonderwater», *Style* [South Africa], April, 2001, pp. 46-52.

Pretelli, Matteo, «La risposta del fascismo agli stereotipi degli italiani all'estero», *Altretalie* 28 (2004), pp. 48-65.

Russell-Walling, Edward, «Young Authors go Beyond the Protest Mode», *New Statesman* (13 October 2003), p. 24.

Sani, Gabriele, *History of the Italians in South Africa, 1489-1989*. Trans. Lorenza and Rosella Colombo, Edenvale, RSA, Zonderwater Block, 1992.

- Sani, Gabriele, *Storia degli Italiani in Sud Africa, 1489-1989*, Edenvale, RSA, Zonderwater Block, 1989.
- Schonstein, Patricia, *A Time of Angels*, New York, HarperCollins, 2003.
- Tebaldini, Ugo (ed.), *Tra i reticolati. Dal notiziario trimestrale dello Zonderwater Block* n.p. Zonderwater Block, n.d.
- Thompson, Leonard, *A History of South Africa*, Third Edition, New Haven, Yale UP, 2000.
- Tourn, Giorgio, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa (1170-1976)*, Turin, Claudiana, 1993 [1977].
- Union of South Africa, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, Vol. 45, Cape Town: UNIE-VOLKSPERS BPK., Parliamentary Printers, 1941.
- Union of South Africa, *Debates of the House of Assembly.*, Vol. 46, Cape Town: UNIE-VOLKSPERS BPK., Parliamentary Printers 1943.
- Union of South Africa, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, Vol. 47, Cape Town: UNIE-VOLKSPERS BPK., Parliamentary Printers 1944.
- Union of South Africa, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, Vol. 48, Cape Town: UNIE-VOLKSPERS BPK., Parliamentary Printers, 1944.
- Unknown, *Viva l'Italia. A catalogue of photographs with text*, n.d.
- van Heerden, Etienne, *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati*, Trans. Catherine Knox, New York, HarperCollins, 2002.
- Viscusi, Robert, «A Literature considering Itself: The Allegory of Italian America» in *From the Margin. Writings in Italian Americana*, in Anthony Julian Tamburri, Paolo A. Giordano, and Fred L. Gardaphe (ed.), West Lafayette, Purdue UP, 1991, pp. 265-81.
- Vivan, Itala, «Geography, Literature, and the South African Territory: Some Observations on the Western Map and the Representation of Territory in the South African Literary Imagination», *Research in African Literatures* 31;2 (Summer 2000), pp. 49-70.
- Werckmeister, O.K., «Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, or the Transfiguration of the Revolutionary into the Historian», *Critical Inquiry* 22;2 (Winter, 1996), pp. 239-67.
- Wicomb, Zoë, «Five Afrikaner Texts and the Rehabilitation of Whiteness», *Social Identities* 4;3 (October, 1998), pp. 363-83.
- Wicomb, Zoë, «Setting, Intertextuality and the Resurrection of the Postcolonial Author», *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 41;2 (November 2005), pp. 144-55.
- Young, Robert C., *Colonial Desire*, London, Routledge, 1995.