Mann minore, il Mann di un racconto poco noto, *Il sangue dei Walsungs*, uscito nel 1905. La rilevanza intertestuale di questo racconto, incentrato sulle vicende di una famiglia ebrea tedesca, consiste nell'essere il "thematic centre of irradiation of the entire *Romanzo di Ferrara*" (38). Il che dimostra come, dal punto di vista di Kroha, l'influenza di Mann su Bassani sia perfino superiore a quella attribuibile a Nietzsche e Freud. Per esempio, dell'opera centrale del *Romanzo di Ferrara*, *Il giardino dei Finzi Contini*, si dice che contiene molte evidenti allusioni al racconto di Mann, a partire dalla somiglianza fra il rapporto che lega Micòl e il fratello Alberto e quello che caratterizza i gemelli protagonisti del *Sangue dei Walsungs*. Riferendosi agli *Occhiali d'oro*, poi, Kroha arriva ad affermare che questo romanzo sancisce "Bassani's own identification with Mann at the literary level" (244). Ma vale la pena notare come il contributo, sul piano critico, più stimolante ricavabile dall'analisi che Kroha traccia degli *Occhiali d'oro* poggia non sul racconto di Mann summenzionato ma sul più famoso *Morte a Venezia*. La tesi intrigante che ci viene offerta (la tesi senz'altro più intrigante e convincente dell'intera disamina del rapporto Bassani-Mann) è che *Gli occhiali d'oro* si presta ad essere interpretato attraverso l'ottica della teoria di Harold Bloom, ovverosia come "a creative—and corrective—misreading" (83) di *Morte a Venezia*.

In conclusione, quello di Lucienne Kroha è uno studio che unisce meticolosità e originalità. Si è tentato qui di fornire un quadro più esauriente possibile dei meriti dell'autrice, persuasi come siamo che il suo studio consenta ai lettori di ampliare e approfondire notevolmente la conoscenza di uno dei maggiori scrittori italiani del novecento.

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Marcella Bencivenni. *Italian Immigrant Radical Culture: The Idealism of the Sovversivi in the United States, 1890–1940*. New York: New York University Press, 2011. Pp. 287. ISBN 9780814791035. \$ 65.

Marcella Bencivenni's text is a timely and relevant addition to the steadily growing body of literature on Italian immigrants and Italian-Americans in the United States. This book stems from her doctoral dissertation completed at New York University. This text makes meaningful contributions to the study of Italian-American print

culture, social organization, and political radicalism. It is a richly textured history inflected by Bencivenni's adept understanding of Marxist and socialist political and literary theory.

The United States experienced an influx of Italians throughout the latter half of the 19th century, continuing through the first half of the 20th. Some 4 million Italians crossed the Atlantic from 1880 to 1920. Luciano J. Iorizzo and Salvatore Mondello described the Italian exodus in this way, "City streets in the United States became transplanted into Italian towns and provinces, where old parochialisms, including endogamy, flourished. This situation encouraged more and more Italians to set out for America" (103). Bencivenni's study examines the radicalism born of these conditions, which provides readers with an excellent opportunity to understand the continuity between Old World desperation and strife and New World hope. She weaves together compelling narratives of persons ignored by mainstream history with Marxian politics. This book seeks to mediate cultural practices of a specific Italian-American community on the backdrop of economic and political difficulties. In this sense, Bencivenni gives voice to the *souversivi* in ways not before completed.

As it is typical of Marxian historians, Bencivenni has an eye for the materialist conditions of the people she studies. Readers are richly rewarded with this perspective as it gives body to the traditional approach to social movements, which quite often veers toward the theoretical and away from conditions as they were on the ground. Bencivenni powerfully places the reader into the social milieu of Italians in the early part of the 20th century. Those interested in supplementing Bencivenni's work with theoretical approaches to Italian radicalism should consult Dario Gentili's *Italian Theory: Dall'operaismo alla biopolitical*, Lorenzo Chiesa and Alberto Toscano's edited collection *The Italian Difference: Between Nihilism and Biopolitics*, or Matteo Pasquinelli's excellent short article, "L'Ascesa in Cattedra di un Pensiero Critico" published in *Il Manifesto*. These works would better ground Bencivenni's Marxian history in Italian radical political theory.

The book is organized into seven chapters, each of roughly equal length. Bencivenni should be commended for the book's adroit organization, which clearly demarcates the cultural forms she analyzes, and for her meticulous notes and helpful index. Scholars will find her able use of references a tremendous contribution in and of itself for further study. She wields both English and Italian, primary and secondary, scholarly and popular, and contemporaneous (to her study) and

modern sources with ease, making this book noteworthy for its bibliographic account of early Italian-Americans

Perhaps one of the most understated and significant contributions are Bencivenni's analysis of the cultural forces that encouraged emigration and the resulting complexities experienced by immigrants upon arrival. For Bencivenni, disaffected Italian radicals experiencing an increasingly fascist political climate came to the United States, which was more open, to produce a particular flavor of radicalism. In this way, Bencivenni subtly carves out a theory of Italian-American radicalism that she will hopefully continue to explore.

Bencivenni recounts the successes of the *sovversivi* with the same passion and historical acumen she uses to recount the failures of these radicals. She writes, "Despite their struggles for freedom, equality, and social justice and their devotion to the cause of the poor and oppressed, the *sovversivi's* dream of revolution remained unfulfilled" (66). Her even-handed approach helps readers understand the ways in which the *sovversivi's* dreams were unfulfilled. As Bencivenni writes in the conclusion, quoting Nunzio Penicone, radicalism died out because Italian immigrant radicals failed to reproduce themselves creating neither a biological nor an ideological basis for sustained radicalism (224).

One fault of Bencivenni's text is that she evades larger economic and political discussions, preferring to focus on cultural practices. This fault can be remedied by consulting Joel Perlmann's *Italians Then, Mexicans Now: Immigrant Origins and Second-Generation Progress, 1890–2000* or Emily Rosenbaum and Samantha Friedman in *The Housing Divide: How Generations of Immigrants Fare in New York's Housing Market*. Read together these texts provide a fuller view of immigrant struggles and the evolution of political radicalism.

Yet, Bencivenni's interest in cultural practices is rewarding in its own right. Italian immigrant cultural production is no small matter. Take, for example, the foci of her chapters. While Chapter 1 provides historical context for Italian immigrant radicalism, and Chapter 2 provides cultural context, Chapter 3 takes up the issue of the radical press. Chapter 4 addresses radicalism on stage, taking readers through the complex cultural politics of leisure. Chapter 5 explores the Italian immigrant literati suggesting both authors and literary works helped shape radicalism. Chapter 6 explores Arturo Giovannitti, a poet and labor radical, who shaped radical politics both as a poet and as a union leader. Lastly she analyzes political cartoons, explaining the ways in which these cartoons helped shape political ideology. The book includes some of these cartoons, giving readers the opportunity to

interpret the cartoons themselves. *Italian Immigrant Radical Culture* brings to life the lived experiences of Italians during this tumultuous half-century.

Bencivenni's text is a welcome addition to immigrant, social, and Italian-American history. Her arguments are well-cited and her prose fluid. She has advanced numerous fields and her book should be influential in mapping modes of radicalism among Italian-Americans and in the first half of the 20th century.

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Somalitalia: Quattro Vie per Mogadiscio. Somalitalia: Four Roads to Mogadishu. Con allegato il documentario La quarta via: Mogadiscio. Ed. Simone Brioni. Roma: Kimerafilm, 2012. Pp. 37. ISBN 9788890771408. € 15.

Sibhatu, Ribka. Aulò!Aulò!Aulò! Poesie di nostalgia, d'esilio e d'amore. Aulò!Aulò!Aulò! Poems of Nostalgia, Exile and Love. Con allegato il documentario Aulò: Roma postcoloniale. A cura di Simone Brioni. Introduzione di Graziella Parati. English trans. by André Naffis-Sahely. Roma: Kimerafilm, 2012. Pp. 41. ISBN 9788890771415. € 15.

In 2011, Italy celebrated 150 years of unification. Freeing itself from many centuries of foreign domination, the new independent country quickly caught up to other European powers: in 1882 it began colonizing parts of Africa and, later, a few islands of the Mediterranean. The Italian colonial question should be part of the national discussion, but Italy never confronted its colonial past. There is a widespread belief that Italians were "*brava gente*" (good people), that no atrocities were ever committed by Italian soldiers. Many are not even aware that Italy colonized Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Libya and the Rhodes archipelago.

Only recently, have writers and filmmakers begun to narrate the reality of Italian colonization, a history that the propaganda of the Fascist Regime and of subsequent Italian governments had managed to re-write. Most of what we can now call *post-colonial Italian literature* is produced by immigrant writers from the ex-colonies. What is particularly interesting about Simone Brioni's project is that it represents a joint effort, a comprehensive view of the colonization of Eritrea and Somalia seen from both Africa and Italy.