The fifth chapter, "Answering Gramsci: The Anti-Fascists," examines at length key communist activists who protested the oppressive Fascist government. Activists who, akin to their literary predecessors of the Risorgimento, were intellectuals rather than professional revolutionaries. Among the works of various anti-Fascist writers (Alicata, Rossi, Terracini, Levi, Bassani, Lo Sardo and Monti) the *Lettere dal carcere* of Antonio Gramsci takes precedence. Klopp's attention is drawn to the evident intervention of the censors in the correspondence of these prisoners. Gramsci's letters were not only read by the prison censor but also by Mussolini himself.

The final chapter "The Death of a President/ The Effacement of an Author," evinces the utmost extreme case of censor intervention. Klopp presents the case of Aldo Moro, kidnaped in 1978 by a group of terrorists from the Red Brigades. Not only was the hostage sealed in a noise-proof cell, but all his letters were read and edited by his captors before releasing them to the national newspapers, thus making his situation a very public affair. Having lost contact with the outside world both physically and linguistically, Moro was left with a one-sided discourse whose cries for help fell on deaf ears.

Taking into consideration the final two chapters, the reader is forewarned that the letters of such political prisoners as Moro and Gramsci were heavily scrutinized by censors who sought to erase the very cause these authors fought for. Nor can the memoirs be considered accurate sources, since many authors were subject to occasional lapses of memory. Still, these autobiographical texts offer important insights into the social conditions of prison life and the historical background of the period in confinement.

One final point made by Klopp touches on the importance of writing and on the exchange of information for political prisoners while in jail. Very few prisons were permitted reading and writing materials, especially during the Fascist era, so many prisoners wrote messages in code scratched on wood or on other surfaces and often used a form of 'inchiostro simpatico': invisible ink made out of acidic liquids like lemon juice, starch from meals or urine (used by Cellini). Other options for writing materials included toilet paper, pages from smuggled books, blood and pus.

In short, Klopp provides a fascinating collage of letters and memoirs of Italian political prisoners covering a broad amount of historical periods and social issues that span some five centuries. While generous consideration is given to the famous and influential individuals such as Pellico and Gramsci, Klopp goes to great pains to evince other significant and otherwise unknown writers. This book, complete with an expansive bibliography, is an important contribution to both the social and the literary history of Italy.

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ItaliAfrica: Bridging Continents and Cultures, ed. Sante Matteo. Stony Brook, NY: Forum Italicum Publishing, 2001. Pp. xii, 410. ISBN 1-8931-2722-2, US\$ 20.

In the 1970s, when the world discovered that Italy had become a rich country, a sustained flow of immigrants and "boat people" from Africa, Asia, and Eastern

Europe crowded the shores and airports of Italy in search of work and a better life. In the last two decades of the twentieth century this flow of people brought to Italy more than one million Africans. The problems of these Africans were discussed in an interdisciplinary and international Symposium on Africa and Italy held at the University of Miami, 6-8 November 1998.

ItaliAfrica..., a multi-voices and multidisciplinary dialogue, illuminates the complex historical and cultural dichotomy, love-hate or attraction-repulsion, underlying the relations between Africa and Italy from the time of ancient Rome to the present. Symptomatic of this love-hate relation are, in ancient times, the Cleopatra-Mark Anthony love and the consequent Roman military stand against it; and, more recently, the reaction against the election of Ms Fernandez, a black woman, as Miss Italia 1996.

Though Africa and Italy are geographically close and geologically similar, the reader of this absorbing book will learn that the knowledge contemporary Italians have of Africa and Africans is based on the stratification of cultural époques and fanciful legends spanning from the Roman period, through the Middle Ages, to modern imperialism. In this Euro-Christian-centric view, Africa presents sharply contrasting features. In the pre-Christian era, Mediterranean Africa had been seen as a land of great civilizations such as those of Egypt and Carthage; in the Middle Ages Africa's hinterland was seen as an enchanting land inhabited, however, by troglodytes, cannibals, and home to slavery and nomadic tribes. In modern times, positivistic anthropologists such as Lombroso theorized Africans as a subhuman race, thus ideologically justifying the slave trade and opening the way to the imperialistic expansion of industrialized countries.

Though arriving late to the imperialistic banquet, Italy wanted her "*posto al sole*" too. In 1896 her first attempt to conquer the Ethiopian Empire on the Horn of Africa turned into a military disaster and, according to nationalists, a nightmarish stain on the nation's prestige. Italian imperialists acquired, however, their *posto al sole* by invading Libya in 1911-12 and expanded it with Mussolini's anachronistic conquest of Ethiopia in 1935-36. The fascist colonial experience "left behind no credible legacy and/or prestige" (p. 158). After the Second World War, because of her massive knowledge of the Horn of Africa, Italy was supposed to play a significant role in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya and Nigeria, but her policy of expedience, lacking clear and long term objectives, was "a diplomatic disaster": she "has been bypassed and eventually sidelined by the much more effective initiatives taken by France and later by the United States," says Giampaolo Calchi Novati of the University of Pavia (pp. 171-172).

Having traced the historical, cultural, military and political presence of Italy in and on Africa in the first three chapters of the book, the following four chapters trace the footprints of Africans in the Italian peninsula. Accustomed to hosting only tourists, Italy was neither politically nor psychologically prepared to receive large numbers of hetero-cultural and hetero-racial people in search of security, work, peace, and a better life for themselves and for their families. Italian policy makers have unfortunately carried out a questionable policy by granting the right to vote to Italians long established in other lands and to their offspring born

abroad, but have ignored the millions of immigrants who have lived, worked, and paid taxes into Italy's treasury for decades. Only after ten years of uninterrupted residence, these immigrants acquire the right to naturalization. Furthermore, most of these immigrants are not covered by social legislation: only 21% of "foreign" workers are protected by INPS (Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale).

The humiliation, discrimination, racial abuse, mistreatment, and violence that black immigrants have endured and continue to endure in Italy at the hands of neo-racists find expression in the artistic works of these immigrants. Italian black and white artists have authored or co-authored, novels, poetry, plays, feature films, and documentaries. The aim of this artistic activity is to break out of the cultural and linguistic parameters by which the Euro-centric colonial and post-colonial ideologies have marginalized African culture, life, and civilization first in Africa and now in the Peninsula.

A most interesting experiment to overcome cultural marginality is the vanguard, cooperative Teatro delle Albe in Ravenna in which local and Senegalese playwrights and actors collaborate on an equal basis, using on stage Italian, its dialects, and Wolof (the Senegalese language). Known also as "zebrato artistico" and "teatro polittttttico" (the word is written with seven "ts" to stimulate multi-interpretations), Teatro delle Albe has produced several co-authored plays that have been acclaimed at home and abroad. They have staged Goldoni's *Arlecchino*. With very little alterations to the original text, director Martinelli says, a *bergamasco del 700* became an African of the closing of the Millennium in Italy. The actor playing Harlequin was the Senegalese Mor Awa Moang.

Even the poems written by black poets aim at overcoming the marginal role allotted to Africans and their culture in Italy. Similar to Italian Canadians, black artists in Italy want to break through their isolation, assert their individuality as artists and as members of an economically active community. It can also be argued that African literature in Italy is becoming a new off shoot of the literature of political protest and utopian vision in the best political and/or *meridionalista* tradition.

ItaliAfrica: Bridging Continents and Cultures is an absorbing and fascinating discourse of many voices, conducted on different levels. It is an exploration of more than two millennia of Italian history and cultural involvement in the life of Africa, as well as a bird's eye view of the many legends describing the multidimensional, real and imaginary, world of Africa. This volume seems structured as a crash course on Africa and Italy. It raises many questions and stimulates interest in further readings. What clearly emerges, however, is the commitment of black and white Italians to overcome the socio-economic marginal status of Africans in Italy by challenging the nineteenth-century Euro-centric ideology that still lingers on in the Italy of the twenty-first century.

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