

RUSHING FROM AND HASTENING TO: NATIONHOOD, WHITENESS,
AND ITALIAN-CANADIANS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the development of both Italian and Canadian nationhood and its effect on and contribution of racialization in Canada. It analyzes the manner in which scholarship on Whiteness tends to dehistoricize and decontextualize immigration in the creation of White subjects, and how this practice denies the conditions under which most individuals have become immigrants. The study challenged the discursive claims made by Italian-Canadian scholarship by applying a critical race analysis, and highlights how Italian-Canadians achieved Whiteness in Canada and its implications.

**My thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my Nonno
– Ettore Pandolfi –
for having endured many new beginnings.**

My Nonno and I often could not express what we thought and felt in a common language. Yet, we communicated on the central qualities that matter most in one's life – love, family, companionship, and generosity– rendering our experiences ever more precious and beautiful as a result. I sorely miss the palpable joy my Nonno displayed when welcoming his grandchildren, and the sweet little ways he would sing out our names when greeting us. He taught me not only the value of work; more importantly, the conviction that there lies no indignity in work.

"Where there's love nothing is too much trouble, and there's always time."
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Bahá'í Faith.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1997, Italian-Canadians celebrated the quincentenary anniversary of Venetian born Giovanni Caboto's voyage to Cape Breton Island and Newfoundland. To mark this occasion, a commemorative stamp of Caboto's voyage was issued simultaneously in Canada and Italy. In Montréal, the Italian parish Madonna della Difesa commemorated Caboto as "*scopritore del Canada*" (discoverer of Canada) in the booklet printed for its annual procession. The booklet provides the following biographical note:

Giovanni Caboto
1497-1997

On June 24 1497, The Matthew under the command of Giovanni Caboto, arrived to Cape Breton from Bristol. From this day, this land was no longer neglected but discovered, explored, inhabited and today is part of Canada.

There is no doubt that Giovanni Caboto was the first true discoverer of Canada. For these reasons, we of Italian origin proudly celebrate the quincentenary of the arrival on Canadian land of the first great navigator Giovanni Caboto and we do not feel strangers in this big and beautiful country: Canada. (cited in Fortier 1998, 34)

Italian-Canadian immigration to Canada is a relatively contemporary phenomenon, with the majority of influx coming from 1948 to 1972. (Ramirez 1989; Iacovetta 2004) Yet, what would have motivated this contemporary community to become preoccupied with securing claims as an "auxiliary founding people" (Fortier 1998, 34) by means of declaring Giovanni Caboto's 1497 expedition to Cape Breton Island and Newfoundland as "discoverer" of Canada? Such a claim predates the development of the Italian nation, and Caboto's "discovery" did not result in a transplant of his native population or culture. (Harney 1992; Fortier 1998) In other words, what does the Caboto story essentially do? I will highlight that the Caboto story structures Italians as the founders of the Canadian nation, and how such mythic origins further serve to neutralize processes of colonialization and cultural genocide into re-imagined narratives of Western sacrificial stewardship and the peaceful settlement of an "empty land." By emphasizing that a racialized project exists in Italian-Canadian narratives, I will further argue that Italian-Canadian scholars ought to acknowledge pre-existing systems of domination within Canada, and that they ought to be

vigilant in analyzing how racialized terms of membership allowed their “making it in Canada” narrative to take form.

Whiteness as a discursive practice is really a discussion on the perceived limits of belonging. I will contend throughout the thesis that Whiteness is negotiated, and that Italian-Canadians negotiated their way into Whiteness. Like Ruth Frankenberg, I believe that Whiteness has content as it “generates” ways of understanding history, self and others, normativity, and notions of culture itself. (1993, 231) As Frankenberg suggests, the processes of racialization and that of Whiteness involve engendering an erroneous belief in the innate superiority of Western society. As many racial theorists have pointed out, Whiteness is a “process of historically situated *projects*.” (Omi and Winant 2002, 124) Colonialism is one such project and the main strategic tools of colonialism is based on racism, terror, and the establishment of the “subhumanity” of the colonized for the economic privilege of the colonizers. (Memmi 1991) Further, Memmi believes that three factors typify any European in any colony: profit, privilege, and usurpation. (1991, 9) Yet, my primary focus will be on Italian emigrants in Canada and how the emergence of the “Story of Canada” (i.e. claims of Caboto as a founding father) is another such project as it promulgates a settler-centered discourse and denies the subsequent practices of material and cultural genocide that these processes and practices engendered. As a result, founding nation narratives are closely linked to ideas about the legitimate ownership and entitlement to the North American lands and its resources. (Fortier 1998; Harney 1992; Di-Scosiasti-Andrews-Andrews 2008; Razack 2002; Harris 1993)

In this thesis, I examine the process of racialization for Italians and how Italian-Canadian narratives rely on the concept of “Whiteness,” “nation-building,” and “belonging” to frame this encounter. While Italian-Canadian writing and discourse has not been widely regarded as an important body of work within Canadian critical race theories, I will illustrate that Italian-Canadian writing, such as historical anthologies or first-person migrant narratives, frequently engage with pre-existing concepts on the nature of race, and ideas about collective identity. As a cautionary note, we cannot assume that the engagement of individual members within the Italian-Canadian community is uniform or equals automatic loyalty or even knowledge of a particular brand of Italian-Canadian

collective vision. To do so, is certainly to deny Italian-Canadians the capacity to think for themselves. Yet, Settlers and immigrants must accord each other legitimacy, as each group must believe the other has a legitimate right to be in Canada. A migrant's quest of "legitimacy," and the discursive concepts employed to achieve that aim, parallels my wish to answer why certain groups assert their Whiteness as an identity and how and why groups become accepted as White within a Canadian context.

Canadian race theories, particularly studies emphasizing Whiteness, remain far too abstract and essentialized. Unlike their American counterparts such as Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White* (1998) or Jacobson's *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (1998), very little Canadian scholarship has attempted to produce a direct study on any European immigrant groups' racialization. For that reason I will challenge the kind of thinking that reproduces the "West" and therefore "White citizens" as a stable, ahistorical, and homogenous political and discursive entity. In the Canadian context, we are often told "Europeanness" equals "Whiteness." Yet, the markers of Whiteness migrate and to assume that all "Europeans" are or have been considered "White" is incorrect. The racial status of Italian-Canadians has not always been acknowledged as White, but rather their Whiteness has resulted from choices made by both the immigrant group and those receiving them. My primary aim will be to analyze the formation of Italian-Canadian belonging in Canada by examining the racialized identity narratives by which they are stabilized and legitimized within Italian-Canadian scholarship. What can the arrival and integration of the Italian-Canadian community into Whiteness tell us about the practices and processes of colonization, racialization, White supremacy, and nationalism in Canada?

Specifically, the purpose of this study is twofold. The first is to investigate the politics of exit. Green and Weil have argued, "the migration process cannot be fully understood without questioning the administrative, political, and ideological forces surrounding that move." (2007, 8) Therefore, the development of Italy as a modern nation state will illustrate how concepts of race and "othering" within Italy contributed to its Diaspora, and central to theoretical definitions of Diaspora is forced dispersal or displacement. (Clifford, 1994) The second is to examine the politics of entry. How have

Italian-Canadians conceived of Canada as home? To what extent do pre-existing processes of racialization engender attitudes and behaviours in line with those of a dominant culture (i.e. Anglo-Canadian culture)? Hence, I will highlight how the development of Whiteness served as a regulatory ideal in the pursuit of Italian-Canadian becoming and belonging.

I argue that examining the relationship between these concepts (exit and entry) demonstrates that Italian-Canadian's racial subjectivity has evolved. Readers will see throughout the thesis the reshaping of racial identities, particularly how Italian-Canadians went from being racially suspect and often regarded as racially inferior to claiming founding nation status, and how such depictions impact nation-building within Canada. Specifically, I analyze how race and nation-building as social constructions undergo processes of renegotiation by classifying some individuals with a sense of peoplehood; and hence nationhood, and others as less desirables based on presumably inherited biological or cultural differences.

On a personal note, as a French-Canadian and second-generation Italian-Canadian raised in a household by a father born in Southern Italy, I have been particularly interested in how concepts of race have manifested themselves within the Italian community. Mainly, my years living and studying in Toronto, with the largest Italian-Canadian population in the country, began to change my perceptions of what it means to be Italian-Canadian. I felt that the community was both visible (with our Little Italies, the proliferation of our food, and the stereotypical ways we could be visibly marked as being "Italian") and invisible. How was it possible for one of the largest contemporary ethnic groups to have immigrated to Canada, to remain unnoticed and undertheorized in Canadian works of critical race analysis?

While an Italian presence in North America can be traced to the 1880s, the transplant of Italian culture developed primarily after WW2. (Perin and Sturino, 1992) The late 1940s marked Italian emigration to Canada as a major *movement*. From 1948 to 1972, Italy would be the second only to Great Britain as the source of Canadian immigration. (Ramirez 1989, 6) From 1941 until 1978, Italian emigrants totaled 499,341. (Ramirez 1989, 7) At present, 1,445,335 million Canadians (4.6% of the total population) consider themselves to be of Italian origin, and of those 1.4 million Canadians, 366,205 are

first-generation, 439,275 are second generation and 311,210 are third generation. (2006 census of Canada) Further demographic studies shows that Italian-Canadians are the fifth largest ethnic group in Canada, the fourth largest ethnic group in Ontario and the fifth largest ethnic group in Québec. (2006 census of Canada) What the census illustrates is the relatively contemporary presence of Italian-Canadians in Canada. In other words, the Italian-Canadian community is still, on an ongoing basis mapping out what it means to be “Canadian” given that the majority of Italian-Canadians were either born in Italy or raised by immigrant parents. Or, as Gardaphe remarks “Far more significant, however, that the choice between the old and the new is the choice between two identities which are both new to them: white and American [in this case Canadian].” (1999, x) Consequently, the thesis will illustrate the process in which modern nation states not only perpetuate systemic racial classification, and hence White supremacy, but also how Italian-Canadians became willing participants and agents of precisely this system.

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 outlines my analytical framework and introduces and elaborates four interrelated theoretical concepts that are important in understanding how Italian-Canadians achieved Whiteness. Chapter 2 provides a socio-historical context for the unification of Italy, and how the formation of Italy embraced growing ideologies of racialization and how this impacted concepts of citizenship and contributed to the politics of exit. Chapter 3 examines Canada’s immigration policies and how they came to impact the politics of entry for Italians. Chapter 4 addresses the making of Italians as racially White by means of Italian-Canadian scholarship and other discursive claims. Chapter 5 summarizes and draws conclusions.

CHAPTER 1 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The challenge of conducting a study that encompasses divergent disciplines and fields is to attempt to provide both a broad and nuanced understanding of the construction of Whiteness in Canada with reference to an identifiable group. My understanding of Whiteness is developed through a critical race analysis, which argues that while race is a social construct, race serves as a major site of institutional power and impacts how certain subjects are privileged and others not. In order to achieve this aim, my analysis will draw on and connect the areas of scholarship to the following four interrelated concepts in order to illustrate how Italian-Canadians became White. The four broad concepts are 1) nationhood, 2) history, 3) citizenship / identity and 4) migration. These four concepts, with nationhood serving as an ideological and conceptual “umbrella,” I believe are the most salient, interconnected and often used markers in terms of both identity production and boundary construction in multi-ethnic states, and have considerable influence on our identities. How nationhood has been conceptualized in terms of history, patterns of migration, and citizenship will guide my analysis of how individuals have not only been produced as citizens, but also bound by race. While colonialism is a fundamental marker in the development of Canada, my analytical framework will focus largely on the development of the Italian-Canadian community.

Naturalized perceptions of nationhood and migration are grounded in racialized hierarchies. In this way, I will examine and critique how Italian-Canadian scholarship has attempted to imagine not only a “community,” but also a collective vision. I will share the idea of nationhood and citizenship as an imagined community. Both Benedict Anderson (2006) and Etienne Balibar’s (1991, 1994) work have significantly influenced my interpretation of the development of modern nations and racialized communities, and how both concepts came to eventually inflect the formation of Italian nationalism and Diaspora.

Anderson's seminal work, *Imagined Communities*, defines nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" whose members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." (2006, 6) Anderson purports that the amplification of primordial traits or distinguishing national symbols and territory intersect in order to distribute meaning within a community. Hence, the emergence of the Italian or Canadian state is then perceived as an obvious and objective reality. The aim of this section is to analyze the passage to nation-states in a number of structural processes, with particular emphasis placed on the emergence of national culture as discourse.

Grosby states "the nation is a social relation of collective self-consciousness,"¹ (2005, 10) but the processes by which a particular nation is formed, and the identities that are subsequently produced, serve as the basis for my investigation. As noted by Balibar "how can it [the nation] be produced in a way that it does not appear as fiction, but as the most natural of origins?" (1991, 96) According to Balibar there are two complementary routes to this process: language and race. (1991, 99) For the purpose of my thesis, this study will examine the investments made by Italian-Canadians into White supremacist ideals, privileges, and entitlements within Canada.

In order to develop these ideas, I believe it is helpful to provide a brief overview on the rise of the "West," and how the development of Western Europe as an idea or ideology as opposed to geography impacted Italian concepts of nationalism based on notions of superiority, progress and civilization, which eventually contributed to Italy's mass migration. Prior to the sixteenth century, "Europe" did not exist as either a geographical or ideological concept. (Held 1996, 58) Yet, Held warns against applying a "mono-causal explanation" for the rise of the modern state. (1996, 73) Rather, the creation of "Europe" or "the West" was the result of "a cluster of interconnected ideas which were influential in the ways people thought about the social world and human relationships." (Hamilton 1996,

¹ Grosby defines the term "collective self-consciousness" as "refer[ing] to a social relation of each of a number of individuals as a consequence of those individuals participating in the same evolving tradition." (2005, 9)

52) How people began to think about the social world and human relationships was greatly influenced by the emergence of the Enlightenment, which originated in France in the eighteenth century. Hamilton defines the Enlightenment as “the creation of a new framework of ideas about man, society, and nature, which challenged existing conceptions rooted in a traditional world view, dominated by Christianity.” (1996, 24) The Enlightenment offered more than mere ideas about critical rationalism or the beginning of the secularization of Europe; it provided the means and norms for discussing progress and human evolution.

The emergence of the “West” not only provided an internal framework for social, economical, and political organization, but also provided an external standard against to judge and compare. Hall states that the “rise of the West is also a *global* story.” (1996, 187) This particular mode of thought, “the West” is at its heart defined by what it claims not to be, “the Rest.” (Hall 1996) Hence, the basis by which national membership is stratified is influenced by specific conceptions of human nature. A brief discussion on the role of human nature shows how it influenced a number of important ideological pursuits, such as colonialism and imperialism (or acted as its catalyst to these enterprises).

A prime assumption of modernity, and therefore beliefs of nationhood, rests on the theory of Western diffusionism. Diffusionism regards “a world divided into two categories, one of which (greater Europe, ‘inside’) is historical, inventive, and makes progress; the other (non-Europe, ‘outside’) is ahistorical, stagnant, and unchanging and receives progressive innovations by diffusion from Europe.” (Henderson 2000, 60) While modernity resulted in a growing rise of republicanism and processes of unification across Europe, this practice also manifested a race-based valuation of life and shaped human difference by ascribing an “alterity” against which to judge and compare. Cornel West delineates three processes that he views as fundamental to the development of racial classification. The first is the revival of classical antiquity, which later served as a “normative gaze” for aesthetic standards of beauty and human form. The second is the development of the natural sciences and its subsequent contributions to the rise of positivist anthropology. The third is the advancement of the scientific revolution and how

it attributed observation as evidence by means of the development of empirically-based scientific methods. (2002, 94, 97-98)

According to Balibar, every universalism is forced to undertake “a definition of the human species, or simply the human, that results in an “infinite process of demarcation between the human, the more than human and the less than human (or *Supermen* and *Untermenschen*) and the reflection of these two limits within the imaginary boundaries of the human ‘species.’” (1994, 195, 197) As explained in my introduction, Whiteness is negotiated. As we will see in later chapters, Italy post-1750 was politically subaltern and economically subordinate to imperialistic nations. Common perceptions began to emerge that the social, cultural, and economic life of Western Europe (which later came to be regarded as central to the development of presumably universal norms) was moving at a different pace than that of Italy. The significance attributed to Italy was structured by a recognition of this difference. (Moe, 2006) Italy eventually contested this presumably inferior recognition by distancing itself from its impoverished southern provinces, and by othering Southern Italians as less desirable based on presumed inherited biological and racial differences. These conceptual shifts of modernity and the development of Western nations had an impact on Italian life and the development of its national community, as will be outlined in Chapter 2.

I will now focus on the role of history as a strategy of national identity. The social and historical narratives to which we are exposed helps shape the identities we create and imagine for others and ourselves. As I will argue in later chapters, identification with a national history, such as the “Story of Canada,” helps to construct cultural identity for the present. The retelling of history and selection of historical evidence informs national ideology in specific ways as “history continues to determine both the institutional conditions of knowledge as well as the terms of contemporary institutional practices.” (Young 1990, vii) In other words, historical narratives are in no way inseparable from the cultural perspectives that created them. Rather, the analytical tools historians use to produce knowledge of the past mirror the assumptions and values of a specific belief system, and the stories of the dominant are thus privileged and widely circulated. (Mackey

2002, 17) Moreover, the role of formal education also reinforces specific historical narratives where certain ideas become both normative and “factual.”

The emergence of the “Story of Canada” amalgamated Eurocentric concepts of universality, time, progress, and civilization and denied the subsequent practices of material and cultural genocide that they engendered. National cultures are composed of grand narratives or what Hall would define as *a foundational myth*. (1996) North American history focuses primarily on the beginnings of a nation and, in the case of Canada, presumably involved only the French and English as founding nations. For Edward Said, beginnings are meaning-making processes: “A beginning, then, is the first step in the intentional production of meaning.” (1975, 5) For the most part, historical origins are meaning-making processes that provide a set of rules and assumptions that guide how truths about the past and by extension the present, are to be created and understood. For that reason, “grand narratives” are the “the stuff of the most widely circulated, ‘commonsense’ representations. . . . [Which in turn], supplies historical accounts that make it seem both normal and natural that certain things are associated with Canada.” (Stanley 2006, 34) As a result, we will see how Italian-Canadians attempt to imagine a Caboto as a “founding father” served to deny processes of colonialization and cultural genocide into re-imagined narratives of Western sacrificial stewardship and the peaceful settlement of an “empty land.” The question of land use and land ownership continues to play a pivotal role in the creation of Canada, as innocent. Yet, these representations also provide a quintessential image of Canada’s “nation-builders,” as White and European.

In order to fully develop these ideas, I believe it is helpful to expand on my ontological understanding of Whiteness. In the Canadian context, Himani Bannerji states that “Europeanness as ‘whiteness’ thus translates into ‘Canada’ and provides it with its imagined community.” (2000, 64) Yet, these markers of Whiteness migrate and to assume that all “Europeans” are or have been considered “White” is incorrect. Rather, we will see throughout this study, that Whiteness is negotiated. While race is a social construct, racialization and Whiteness becomes a social reality by way of social practices. The idea of who is part of any “race,” particularly the “White race” becomes integrated into social

knowledge and structural racism. Due to these processes, I am primarily interested in how countries consolidate or deal with inherent contradictions within a specific vision; for example, how the flow of immigrants to Canada, beyond France and England as sending countries, complicated not only the historical narratives, but also Canada's notions of citizenship and Canada's ideas of the "original" people. Or, how the unification of Italy, after centuries of foreign occupation, complicated the discourse of citizenship by delimiting who was foreign and who was Italian?

I will question the representation of citizenship / identity formation as an objective, static, and simple condition. Rather, identity formation particularly within the experiences of White racial formation, must be located within the processes of historically situated projects. (Omi and Winant 2002, 14) White racial identity does not solely emerge from a monolithic attachment to one's primordial traits; rather, Whiteness is "established only after the phenomena that it came to define as inadequate or abnormal." (Montag 1997, 291) Indigenous culture is the absolute "other" within Canadian national identity. Yet, for the sake of my thesis it is just as important to analyze how both the racialized perspectives that accompanied emigrants and the formation of emigrants as the racialized "others" from their respective countries, were set against the ultimate othering of the original Peoples. How did immigrants prior to their arrival conceive of Canada, and by what processes was their ideas of "Canada" ascertained? In other words, to what extent do pre-existing processes of racialization (both in Italy and encountered in Canada) engender attitudes and ideologies in line with those of a dominant culture? I will argue that there is a need to recognize that immigrants are not empty vessels without history, struggles, ideologies, or motivations. Rather their ideas of "Canada" often coincided with ready-made beliefs regarding Canada as White and European. We will see in Chapter 2 how Southern Italy was imagined as on the margins of Europe and came to constitute a troubling border zone, which eventually contributed to Italy's Diaspora and subsequently influenced their claims to Whiteness. (Moe 2006)

My analytical framework, then, includes the role that migration plays in the racialization of nation-states. The emergence of "the West" as a global story continues to play a significant role in how nations define themselves. Yet, such an assumed

“naturalized” or “normative” discourse must be framed within the historical, cultural, and political context that created it. What causes people to leave? What reasons do people stay? Green and Weil have argued, “the migration process cannot be fully understood without questioning the administrative, political, and ideological forces surrounding that move.” (2007, 8) To think otherwise may very well support a normative position or positioning of immigration that both denies the conditions to which most individuals have become immigrants, and secondly, how that misinformation is built into the ideological foundation of a colonizing country and the stories they tell of themselves and their history. In other words, migration is linked to racialization as we shall see in Chapter 3.

Settlement narratives typically document the impact that migrants have on local host cultures and the processes through which local cultures reshape or are shaped by the emergence of multi-ethnic populations. However, what has been consistently lacking in scholarship is how emigration contributed to defining citizenship and belonging in both homelands and host lands. Leave-taking tells us what settlement cannot. The integration of Italians in Canada may possibly force us to ask how Canada’s connections to the wider world contributed to the country’s national history and, its composition, and to the national histories of sending countries. (Gabaccia 2000, 9)

Novelist Nino Ricci’s forward in Vincenzo Pietropaolo’s *Not Paved with Gold: Italian-Canadian Immigrants in the 1970s* adeptly states that:

in immigrant communities the chasm between public and private can be particularly treacherous to negotiate, given the injunctions against exposing the group to any sort of shame before outsiders. As a result, the identities of such communities usually get defined by the safest, most stereotypical images, not only because these are the easiest to get access to, but because the communities often begin to perpetuate self-stereotypes as a way of packaging themselves for outsiders. (2006, viii)

It should not be surprising that when a nation denies its own complicity in projects of national racial formations, that migrant groups who have benefited from these practices, will more or less avert, deny, or overlook discussions involving their participation in racism in Canada. Yet, like George Yancy, I will argue that “Whites must come to see how they have become seduced by whiteness, and how they make choices based upon that

seduction.” (2004, 90) Therefore, I believe it is time for Italian-Canadian scholars to move away from the invention of historical national cultural heroes, from articles purporting modern-day Italian culture as synonymous with a presumed Golden Age found either in Roman times or the Renaissance, and from dominant images and stereotypes of familism involving their Nonna’s² or concerning pizza in order to critically understand and contest the existence of a hegemonic racialized rubric within Canada.

To conclude, what the analysis enables is an exploration of how the development of modern states, both abroad and at home, created and invested in the conditions for racialized subjugation. In other words, the thesis will take up in the following chapters the question of how a country like Italy, which was invaded and dominated by an assortment of foreign powers, came to the conclusion about who was foreign and who was Italian. The thesis will also question how European settlers and their formation of a country like Canada, came to the conclusion about who and for whom the national “body” was to represent and subsequently deny and why? To forgo a direct analysis on the creation of White subjects, is to suggest that anyone presently considered White has always been White, will forever remain White, and that Whiteness at its core static and ahistorical. I hope the thesis will prove otherwise.

² Grand-mother

CHAPTER 2
ITALY'S FORMATION AS NATION-STATE THROUGH INTERNAL DOMINATION
AND GROWING EVOLVING IDEOLOGIES OF RACIALIZATION

When we speak of Italian culture or the Italian nation, we are really speaking of a relatively modern and unstable invention. This chapter, then, explores the growing evolving ideologies of racialization that came to mark Italy's unification. As explained in Chapter 1, the emergence of the idea of "the West" was a historical process of interconnected ideas conditioned by the growth of a capitalist economy, global expansion, industrialization, and a new ideological concept of humanity's destiny. This chapter relies on secondary literature tracing the unification of Italy and analyses how nationhood was premised on racial formation.

Throughout the centuries before the unification of present-day Italy, the Mediterranean peninsula, was in a perpetual state of change. What is now known as Italy was once a Roman Republic, part of the Holy Roman Empire, and home of the Renaissance. Beginning in 1000, Italy's influence rose as the economic, political, and cultural centres of the east began to shift to the west. (Gabaccia 2000, 16) The Mediterranean peninsula held primacy over Europe's shipping and trade, its artistic expression, economy, and served as the centre of Christendom itself. Moreover, the thirteenth century was also marked by the emergence of cities of great economic and political importance such as Venice, Genoa, Milan, and Florence. As a word of caution, Italy, unlike France or England, did not generate a national dynasty or dynastic state with one ruling family. Rather, cities like Rome or Venice were regarded and governed as regional republics. (Gabaccia 2000) As the peninsula began to be frequently invaded, beginning in the 1490s, Italy's influence began to diminish. (Absalom 1995) Once the centre of Europe, Italy's geopolitical power shifted away to new and imperial nations of Western Europe, and by the 1700s, Italy's second "Renaissance," the Baroque Period, was influential only in matters of artistry. (Gabaccia 2000, 2)

Italy's economic and political decline during the 1700s was further influenced by its subordination to and foreign dominance by Spain, Austria, and France. The rise of countries to the north was another shift away from the Mediterranean world as a whole (with the exception of Spain). (Moe 2006, 14) While Spain and France began to build mercantilist empires with the intention of global extraction and dominance, Italy became further subsumed by their foreign occupation and defined by its dependency on those economies. (Gabaccia 2000, 22) Northern cities like Amsterdam, Vienna, Dresden, London, and Paris had in fact replaced Florence, Rome, and Venice as the cultural capitals of Europe. Italy's resources were steadily in decline, or rather they were exploited for the needs of the Spanish empire. Italy's economic downturn during this time is often referred to as a period of "*Spagna spugna*" ("Spain the sponge"), as Italy's main economic resource, agriculture, was taken for the coffers of their Spanish landlords. With the exception of Venice, Absalom describes Italy post-Renaissance (seventeenth century) as "a poverty-stricken backwater dominated by religious obscurantism and the Holy Inquisitions." (1995, 7)

Generally speaking and by the 1800s, the Italian peninsula was made up of several states ruled either by foreign powers or local sovereigns. The northern Kingdom of Piedmont, which included Sardinia and Liguria was ruled by Vittorio Emmanuele II of the House of Savoy. Italy's northeastern part was under the direct control of the Austrian Empire and the Habsburgs, and its indirect control of the duchies of Parma, Modena, and Tuscany. Italy's central part, which included Rome and the Papal states, was defended by French troops. The southern "Kingdom of Two Sicilies" (Naples and Sicily) were ruled by the Spanish branch of the Bourbon family. (Doyle 2002, 30) Italian elites seeking to establish a unified Italian nation-state were confronted with these various regions ruled by either native or foreign powers.

While a more destitute, foreign occupied, and starving population came to define the Mediterranean peninsula, this process did not go unnoticed, especially by the elite. Generally speaking, the elite were middle-class nationalists, urban, educated and bourgeois. While consisting no more than 10 percent of the population, this group as explained by Gabaccia (2002) identified mainly with pride in the accomplishments of

medieval merchants and Renaissance artists, or what later came to be known as *civilta italiana*, a distinguished culture that had spread from Italy to Europe between 1000 and 1600. (2000, 8) To feel “Italian,” according to the elites, was to identify culturally with *civilta italiana*, and that Italy needed to reawaken the presumed civilizing mission of *civilta italiana*. Yet, in the nineteenth century, Italy, for all intent and purposes, began to be regarded as Europe’s periphery. (Gabaccia 2000, 22) Italy’s place (or lack thereof) in the construction of modern Europe had an impact on how the Mediterranean peninsula came to be unified.

The Unification of Italy

Italy was among the last of the major Western European nations to emerge in the age of nationalism. The elite’s construction of modern Italy in the nineteenth century accentuated the divide between Europe and its Others. We will see in the following sections, that the south was imagined as on the margins of Europe and came to constitute a troubling border zone. (Moe 2006) As Italy post-1750 was politically subaltern and economically subordinate to imperialistic nations, common perceptions began to emerge that the social, cultural, and economic life of Western Europe was moving at a different pace than that of Italy. The diminished significance attributed to Italy was structured by a recognition of this difference. (Moe 2006)

As previously explained in Chapter 1, modernity beginning with the Enlightenment and beyond, influenced the way individuals thought about the social world and human relationships. Human progress and social development was presumably linear. Progress was marked by a belief in a series of fixed evolutionary stages (from hunter-gatherer, to agrarian, to civilizations). Italy, it was believed by the elites, was steadily going in the wrong direction from Europe’s “master” (hence “civilizers”) to a “poverty-stricken backwater.” (Absalom 1995, 7) In order to challenge Italy’s status as a backwater state, by the mid-nineteenth century “Italian intellectuals shared a strong sense of rejoining the intellectual community in Europe, after a period of isolation.” (Moe 2006, 21) In an attempt to achieve legitimacy through establishing nation-state status, Italy endeavoured to rise to the same economical and political levels attained by Western Europe. Italy’s goal

was to reassert its presence in Europe by unifying the Italian peninsula in similar fashion to the countries of the north.

A rising perception of Italy's "difference" held by the elite was further exacerbated by the fact that, unlike France and England, residents of the Mediterranean peninsula did not share a common government, culture, or even language. As explained by Donna Gabaccia, these linguistic and cultural differences were not trivial. While the Tuscan dialect did eventually become the national language, the inhabitants of the Mediterranean peninsula "lived as if they occupied different islands, each speaking their own regional dialect – Piedmontese, Tuscan, Neapolitan, Roman, or Sicilian." (2000, 32) Yet, what the Italian educated minority did share was a common desire to reassert Italy's role within Europe. If Italy could not reclaim its past luster, the elites wanted at least parity with Western Europe. (Moe 2006) Such parity, it was believed, could only be achieved by way of a national embodiment of both *civiltà italiana* and modern industrialization.

Readers will recall from Chapter 1 that Benedict Anderson's seminal work, *Imagined Communities*, defines nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" whose members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." (2006, 6) Anderson purports that the function of an imagined community, be it in the amplification of primordial traits or in distinguishing national symbols and territory, is to distribute meaning within a community. Ideas about the nation combine elements of narrative, ideology, and concepts of geographical space. Central to this discourse is the importance of the Other – "defining the nation by what it is not." (Dickie 1996, 22) In the Italian context, as we will soon see, the key "Others" have been the south. Yet, before I describe the creation of the south and the eventual racialized discourses attributed to the region, I will first elaborate on the unification of modern-day Italy.

While an entire thesis can be devoted to the exploration of the unification of Italy, the following section provides a brief historical overview on the establishment of the

Italian Republic beginning with a summary of its aim and its key figures.³ Beginning in the nineteenth century, Italian nationalists named their movement of independence “*Risorgimento*,” which was a metaphor for either “bubbling forth” or “the resurgence.” (Gabaccia 2000) The *Risorgimento* movement had two aims: “first, to end the occupation of Italy by foreign powers and their surrogates, and second, to establish in its place, a legitimate form of republican constitutionalism.” (Richards 1999, 77) The leading nationalists were generally from middle-class or aristocratic families and pushed from 1817 to 1831 for the unification of Italy.

Revolutions and insurrections dominated this particular period of Italian history, and it is commonly believed to include the insurrection of Two Sicilies (Naples and Sicily) in 1820,⁴ the Piedmont insurrection of 1821,⁵ and the 1830 insurrections and revolts.⁶ (Absalom 1995) However, by the spring of 1831, the Austrian army began to crush resistance in each province that had revolted. The Revolutions of 1848-1849 were marked by revolts and disturbances in Sicily, Lombardy and Tuscany, and this time resulted in constitutional concessions. By 1859, France’s Napoleon III allied with the Piedmont king, Vittorio Emanuele II, in a successful campaign to remove the Austrians from Lombardy, Parma, Modena, Tuscany, and portions of the Papal states followed suit and elected to unite with Piedmont. The French allies had received Nice and Savoy as compensation. (Doyle 2002, 31) By May of 1860, Garibaldi’s “*Mille*” (Thousand) troops landed in Sicily, defeating the Bourbon troops by late July and moving up the mainland south to enter Naples triumphantly by September, defeating the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. (Moe 2006, 156) A plebiscite was held on the 21st of October unifying the south to the northern provinces, and by 17 March 1861, the Italian peninsula, with the exception of Venice and

³ For a detailed account on Italy’s Unification, please see Absalom’s *Italy since 1800*; Mack Smith’s *Italy: A Modern History*; and Beales’ & Biagini’s *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*.

⁴ Guglielmo Pepe commanded the Two Sicilies insurrection and its aim was to establish a constitution. Although, King Ferdinand I agreed to the enactment of a new constitution, the revolutionaries failed to secure popular support and were subsequently defeated by the Austrian troops of the Holy Alliance. The revolutionaries were either killed or sent into forced exile. (Absalom, 1995)

⁵ Santorre di Santarosa, who wanted to remove the Austrians and unify Italy under the House of Savoy, commanded the Piedmont insurrection of 1821. While the King’s regent initially approved a new constitution, King Charles Felix disavowed the constitution and defeated Di Santarosa’s troops.

⁶ The 1830 insurrections saw revolts in the Papal Legations of Bologna, Forli, Ravenna, Imola, Ferrare, Pesaro and Urbino. Similar revolts took place in Modena and the Duchy of Parma.

Rome⁷, became a united kingdom under Vittorio Emanuele II of Piedmont-Sardinia. (D'Agostino 2002, 231)

The rise of an Italian *Risorgimento* movement was unified by a sense of a common external enemy: the Austrians to the North, the French in the Centre, and the Spaniards to the South. Italy, unlike France or England, had never developed a dynastic republic, which might have provided both a sense of purpose and a collective identity and vision. Italy post-unification was now left to forge a national identity and nationhood out of a seemingly and endlessly balkanized historical experience of diverse citizens. For the purpose of my thesis, I will analyze the attempts by Italy's nationalists to develop a unified "Italy" focusing on how the south's integration as Italy's "absolute other" eventually led to a racialized ideology.

The development of "Southern Italy" as an imagined and ideological concept

The development of "southern Italy" ran parallel to the elite's construction of modern Italy. As previously emphasized, the elite wanted to re-legitimize Italy's place in the cultural construction of Western European civilization. As Italy was politically subaltern and presumably without the necessary tenets of a modern nation (i.e. possession of a complex administrative bureaucracy and highly industrialized), we will see how the above pressure to conform resulted in the geographical division of Italy into two parts, "a European north and a south that deviated from the European model." (Moe 2006, 23) Piedmont's step-by-step absorption of Italy served as the catalyst of what soon developed into a north vs. south divide; a divide that continues to impact Italian political, economical, social and cultural processes and definitions in contemporary times. First, elaborations are needed regarding the Piedmontese geopolitical position within Italy. The only state with a native royal house, the Piedmontese were characterized by a strong military, and a rising middle-class of administrators, who had established as a semi-autonomous republic, to some degree, a national identity. (Absalom 1995, 10, 25)

The Piedmontese intellectuals believed that essential political, economic or social reforms would have to come from above. The creation of the "south" as a racialized

⁷ Venice joined the Italian Republic in 1866 and Rome in 1870.

concept first began in the spring of 1860 to the summer of 1861. Italy was greatly influenced by the rise of modernity, which presumed that agrarian societies naturally developed into an industrial society. For the Piedmont, the pressing problem was:

not only how to govern the south but also how to make sense of it, and this ‘sense,’ this ensemble of interpretations, descriptions, and representations, far from being secondary, actually served as the framework within which decisions of how to govern, administer, and control the south were made.” (Moe 2006, 157)

That of course is the key question: are Southern Italians different, and if so, in what ways and to what extent do the differences influence national discourse?

These challenges were perfectly characterized by Massimo D’Azeglio’s, a moderate Piedmontese politician whose statement on attaining political unity declared, “We have made Italy; now we have to make the Italians.” (Richards 1999, 80) It is precisely this idea of “making” Italians that serves as the basis of investigating how Italian national discourse became a racialized discourse. Both Alizia Wong’s *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911: Meridionalism, Empire, and Diaspora* (2006) and Nelson Moe’s *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (2006) guide an examination of the origins of the divisions between northern and southern Italy. Southern Italy generally includes the regions of Basilicata, Campania, Calabria, Apulia, Molise, and Abruzzo, historically part of the Kingdom of Naples.⁸ As identified by Nelson Moe, the south was produced within broader geographical and historical contexts, “especially the combined pressure of Western Eurocentrism, nationalism, and bourgeoisification.” (2006, 1) As a result, and due to Italy’s geopolitical downturn post-Renaissance, Italy as a whole was already regarded as Europe’s South. The solution, therefore, for those seeking to make Italy and to establish Italy as a legitimate nation was to “displace the failures of the country unto its most sensitive and volatile region,” the south. (Wong 2006, 6)

⁸ Nelson Moe further explains that “The Kingdom of Naples was quite simply *il regno* (the kingdom), distinguished both by its size and its monarchical form of government in the otherwise fragmented political geography of the peninsula. . . . It was not only the kingdom that provided a unitary conceptual framework in which to imagine the inhabitants and lands of southern Italy; it was also the capital city of Naples itself.” (2006, 40)

The “Southern Question” originated in 1875 via Pasquale Villari’s *le lettere meridionali* (Southern Letters) in the moderate Rome newspaper *L’Opinione*. (Dickie 1999, 53) Villari was a Neapolitan Liberal who had been forced into exile in Florence by the Bourbons in the 1850s, and had never returned to live in the South. (Moe 2006, 225) Villari’s texts were written in the form of letters addressed to the journal’s editor, Giacomo Dina. (Moe 2006, 226) John Dickie provides the following analysis and detailed account on the content of Villari’s four letters:

For at least a decade, the central aim of Villari’s work had been the same; it was to infuse a new sense of a national mission into his bourgeois readers. In the first “southern letter,” Villari deals with the *camarillo*, describing it as the natural and inevitable consequence of the depressed state of Neapolitan society (he focuses particularly on housing). Writing on the mafia in the second letter, Villari argues that it is not a secret organization but has been “spontaneously generated” by the social conflicts on the island. . . . In the third letter, Villari argues that the condition of the southern economy inevitably produces a society divided between a tiny class of landowners and a mass of brutalized peasants who are often forced by their desperate circumstances into brigandage. Villari’s final letter makes an impassioned plea for government intervention aimed at fostering the growth of a class of smallholding peasants: upon such preventative reforms depends the very moral and economic future of the nation. (1999, 53-54)

As a result and with the help of Villari, the south is singled out as a regional case of special importance, and hence, Southern Italians (also known as the *Mezzogiorno*⁹) came to occupy a central role in national Italian politics. While many Southern Italians were complicit in the making of the south as the “south” (especially its stereotypes), their intentions did not stem from a core desire to contribute to the “myth building that constructed a barbarian, other-ed south.” (Wong 2006, 32) Rather, “the early *meridionalisti* [the body of expertise on the Southern question]— Pasquale Villari, Giustino Fortunato, Leopoldo Franchetti, and Sidney Sonnino – were all positivists and ardent supporters of the unitary state. They were above all tireless analysts of the *Mezzogiorno* –

⁹ John Dickie defines the *Mezzogiorno* as the creation of an ethnoessentialized South in which the “*Mezzogiorno* is conceived as a single, simple reality that is Other. In other words, theoretically speaking, there is no absolute divide between ethnocentric stereotypes of the South and the idea of the South as a geographical totality.” (1999, 14)

they wanted to understand it and make others understand it, without glossing over anything.” (Gribaudo 1996, 75-76)

In the end, the emergence of the *Mezzogiorno* as an imagined and ideological concept, provided a standard from which to judge superiority and inferiority, or as Nelson Moe pointedly inquires, “how and when did Southern Italy become ‘the south,’ a place and people imagined to be different from and inferior to the rest of the country?” (2006, 1) To answer Moe’s question, four historical and interrelated processes must be considered, they were 1) the Jesuits’ civilizing missions in Naples in the 1550s, 2) the role of travelers’ tales, 3) the cultural pathologization of the south, and 4) the role of positivism, anthropology and criminology in the scientific racialization of the south. All of these processes not only racialized the south by means of ethnocentrism (see footnote #14 on page 31), but also led to its exploitation by the north and contributed to its mass emigration.

Southern Italy as Europe’s “Indies”

While the thesis largely focuses on post-unification, I need to first provide a brief summary regarding the genesis of southern Italy’s problematic peripheral status within Europe. How Southern culture, especially that of Sicily and Naples, was framed and imagined conceptually to be at odds with the interest of the nation, fundamentally altered how Sicily and Naples were integrated post-unification. As the northern countries had built mercantilist dynastic empires, the West’s encounters with “many new worlds” also conditioned how Italy came to be examined and understood. For example, the Jesuits’ civilizing mission in Naples not only contributed to the making of Southern Italy as “foreign” to the rest of Europe, but these “Jesuit texts vividly articulate the overarching framework of subalternity and peripheralization that characterizes the history of southern Italy in the modern period.” (Moe 2006, 51) Therefore, my exploration of urban missions in Naples from 1550-1620 will guide how the above framework was achieved. (Selwyn 1997, 4)

Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 1534 in Paris. The Jesuits’ concept of a civilizing mission developed in conjunction with the Catholic Counter-Reformation and the conquest of the “New World.” The Jesuits’ concept of a civilizing mission

developed within this socio-political context, and contributed to its ideology by providing a theory on the “levels of civilization,” outlined below, which guided their missionary efforts both within Europe and abroad. While Jennifer Selwyn’s article entitled “Procur[ing] in the Common People Better Behaviours: The Jesuits’ Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples, 1550-1620” focuses on three areas of Jesuit activities in early modern Naples: the reform of prostitutes, the evangelizing of prisoners, and the conversion of Muslim slaves, (1997, 4) I will mainly focus on the development of distinctly Southern “characteristics” vis-à-vis the rest of Italy.

The Jesuits’ concept of a civilizing mission sought to “elevate the cultural level of a given community as a prerequisite to religious conversion. The Jesuits believed that unless a community lived according to basic principles of civility, Christianization was not possible.” (Selwyn 1997, 8) The Spanish Jesuit Jose de Acosta developed an evolutionary theory of the stages of societal development. In his *Dr Produranda Indorum Salute (On the Evangelization of the Indians*, ca 1588), Acosta argued that there were three levels to a barbaric society and different strategies were needed for its Christianization. (Selwyn 1997, 8-9) The three stages began with the highest category and were “those nearest to learned Europeans in the possession of ‘right reason.’ Societies such as the Chinese, Japanese, and East Indian “have stable republic[s], public laws, fortified cities. . . and, what is more important, the use and knowledge of letters, because where there are books and written monuments, people are more humane and politic.” (Selwyn 1997, 8) The following level was primarily reflective of the Incas and Mexicas of the New World, as these civilizations were “relatively urbanized, economically active, and followed complex religious cults.” (Selwyn 1997, 9) The last stratum, according to Acosta, were the “savages” represented by groups like the Caribs, or the Tupinamba of Brazil. Such societies were composed of peoples who “scarcely have human feeling” and who existed “without law, without king, without pacts, and with neither judges nor republic.” (Selwyn 1997, 9)

What is significant to this study is how Southern Italians, particularly the peasantry, were associated with the Jesuits’ second and third levels of a “barbaric” society. Missionaries described Italian peasants as “backward,” “sexually licentious,” suffering

from a “dreadful ignorance,” “superstitious,” “savages” who acted “as if they lived in the bush” and lacked of “right reason.” (Selwyn 1997, 10; Moe 2006, 51) Widespread perceptions by the Jesuit of social and spiritual “disorder” in southern Italy, was reproduced in a number of letters written by Jesuit missionaries between the 1550s and 1650s. For example, the Spanish missionary Michele Navarro, after having lived in Calabria and Sicily for seven months, provided a detailed account to his father superior on not only his missionary work, but what ought to be required there:

Oh dearest father, if you could see the extreme ruin of so many souls and how they are lost due to the frightful ignorance that reigns in these mountains, both spiritually and temporally, you would have compassion for them. And just as some of our brethren go to the Indies [North America], in this India [Southern Italy] they could labor so as to render a service to God that is not inferior to that rendered by those who go down there: in fact there is a great need here to extirpate errors and superstitions and abuses of which there is an abundance. Here, without traveling so many leagues across the sea at the risk of one’s life, and without waiting a long time to learn a language, they could exercise their talents profitably. . . I am of the opinion that insofar as the Company [of Jesus] has probationary houses for its novices, these mountains of Sicily would be Indies [North America] for those who were eventually to travel down there. I am certain in fact that whoever does well in these Indies of ours [Southern Italy], here, will be fit for those across the ocean as well [North America]; likewise, he who finds it difficult to withstand these will certainly have a hard time in those others. (cited in Moe 2006, 50)

The South, particularly Sicily and Naples came to be viewed as Europe’s “Indies.” (Moe, 2006) The conceptualization of Western civilization during the fifteenth to sixteenth century emerged within the context of European expansion in the “New world,” and southern Italy was not only integrated into this worldview, but the south came to be viewed as *Indias de por aca* (Our own Indies). The comparison between the imagery of an Indies “over here” and “over there” offered an historical opportunity for re-imagining the south and its inhabitants, as a region that further warranted “civilizing.” While Southern Italians were connected to the “Indies over there,” during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the following section will illustrate how this comparison dissipated only to be replaced with the emergence of the next “absolute other,” which, according to Western civilization during the eighteenth century and beyond, was Africa.

Picturesque vs. barbaric dichotomy

The second conceptual and ideological shift in the imagining of the South occurred during the eighteenth century. Between the mid- eighteenth century and the mid- nineteenth century, Southern Italy went from being Europe's "Indies" to Europe's "Africa" as the *Mezzogiorno* came to be regarded as a "liminal zone between Europe and Africa." (Moe 2006, 50) A binary vision soon developed emphasizing the backwardness of Southern culture, while simultaneously presenting the south as picturesque. The dualistic vision emerged through two historical yet interrelated processes: 1) the representation of the south in a selection of travelers' texts produced mid-1820s to mid-1840s by foreigners, and 2) the initial responses and reactions to the south by the north during Italy's post-unification. (Wong 2006; Moe 2006)

While the south came to be defined via an ethnoessentialized ideology, my analysis will predominantly focus on the role of Naples and how it reconceptualized the inhabitants of southern Italy. Naples, which is the capital of the region of Campania, is significant in this process since it was the third or fourth most populous city in Europe, the most populous in Italy and is located at the edge of what was presumed civilization. As a result, travelers often stopped at Naples. (Moe 2006, 41) Two examples, both by French writers in the early 1800s, will help to illustrate the binary conceptualization of the south. In his *Voyage en Italie et Sicile* of 1806, French traveler and Napoleonic administrator Augustin Creuzé de Lesser promoted a barbaric concept of southern Italy when he wrote that: "Europe ends at Naples and ends there quite badly. Calabria, Sicily, all the rest belongs to Africa" (*L'Europe finit à Naples et même elle y finit assez mal. La Calabre, la Sicile, tout le reste est de l'Afrique*)." (Moe 2006, 37) Creuzé de Lesser further went on to portray Sicily as "a country without roads, without bridges, without agriculture, without hotels, without any of life's niceties, or the delicacies of society." (Moe 2001, 121) Southern Italy, according to a Eurocentric and bourgeois mentality was "inferior" to not only the countries of the north, but also northern Italian states.

Regarding the picturesque qualities of the South, Madame de Staël in *Corrine ou l'Italie* of 1807 highlights the exoticism of Naples' due to its close proximity with Africa, and to a lesser extent the East. She writes that:

One can almost sense the African shore that borders the sea on the other side, and there is something indefinably Numidian in the wild cries heard from every direction'. There is something 'very original' about Naples' hybridity, about 'the blending of the savage state with civilization'. A tinge of the dark continent, 'the tanned faces' of the Neapolitans, 'give a picturesque quality to the city's populace.' (cited in Moe 2001, 121)

Staël's "tinge of the dark continent" and "the tanned faces of the Neapolitans" implicitly revives for the reader the ninth century invasion of southern Italy by Moorish forces, and suggests that Southern Italians were more akin to Africans and Arabs due to their history of contact and connection. This alternating view of southern Italy and its inhabitants as either barbaric or picturesque impacted how the south came to be regarded and governed with each passing decade.

The above binary was further entrenched by Northern politicians upon their arrival in Southern Italy. General Paolo Solaroli, after a visit to Naples, wrote in a diary entry dated 12 December, 1860, "We have acquired a most evil land, but it seems impossible that in a place where nature has done so much for the terrain it did not generate another People." (Wong 2006, 18) Or as illustrated in a letter to Cavour [Piedmontese Prime Minister] dated 27 October, 1860, Luigi Carlo Farini, head administrator of the south during the first months of Piedmontese control, wrote "But my friend, what kind of lands are these, Molise and Terra di Lavoro! What barbarity! This is not Italy! This is Africa: the Bedouin, in comparison to these hicks, are the flower of civil virtue." (Wong 2006, 15) The south's "barbarity" according to the values of the north warranted the south's eventual northern invasion and political centralization.

The proverbial descriptions of Naples as a "paradise inhabited by devils" (*il paradiso abitato da diavoli*) or by its famous topos "see Naples and die" (*Vedi Napoli e poi muori*) or that "Italy ends at the Garigliano"¹⁰ developed in accordance to these interrelated connections of orientalism and Western constructs of modernity. (Wong 2006; Gribaudi 1996; Moe 2006) What these letters, stories, and proverbs divulge is an unstable and contradictory understanding of the south, one marred by a disconnect between a

¹⁰ The Garigliano River is located halfway between Naples and Rome and had historically been used to separate the Papal States (Central Italy) from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Naples and Sicily).

picturesque, and hence supposedly verdant and possibly prosperous south, and the production of a presumably “barbaric” people (or, as Solaroli lamented, the land had “not generated another People”) due to Naples’ and Sicily’s close proximity with Africa, and therefore African blood.

Both foreigners and Piedmontese politicians – whether celebrating southern Italy as picturesque or denouncing it as backward – further emphasized differences between southern and northern Italy, and the rest of Europe. Prior to the 1820s, southern Italy held little interest in the minds of central-northerners. Yet, beginning with the *Risorgimento* discourse and up until unification, these publications helped to solidify a relationship between the north and south that valorized the north by vilifying the south. The following section will analyze how the north’s supposedly “benevolence” toward the south (as master) grew out of this binary, first imagined by the Jesuits’ and reinforced by traveler’s tales, and which serve to pathologize southern culture even further.

Further pathologization of Southern Italian culture

The third conceptual and ideological shift in the imagining of the south occurred post-unification. In Diamode Pantaleoni’s letter to Massimo D’Azeglio on 21 August 1861, Pantaleoni emphasizes the north’s supposedly benevolent sacrifice to have unified with the south, “Believe me, we are not the ones who benefit from this union, but rather those wretched peoples without moral, without courage, without knowledge, and endowed only with excellent instincts and a mixture of credulousness and cunning that always delivers them into the hands of the greatest crooks.” (Moe 2006, 167) The Piedmontese leadership once again, began to shift away from a barbaric vs. picturesque binary, toward a new facet of an old idea, which further negated Southern peoples. The Piedmontese believed, due to southern Italy’s foreign occupation, that it was incapable of self-rule and thus warranted liberation at the hands of Northern Italians. Southerners supposed lack of agency was the result of both their “poverty and ignorance in which the mass of the people were kept, and which made them incapable of defending themselves and asserting their own interest, and, on the other hand, the predatory nature of the ruling classes which further contributed to the poverty and ignorance.” (Gribaudo 1996, 76)

The origin of the South's dehumanization, at the hands of Northerners, was further introduced, along with earlier accounts of Jesuit civilizing missions, during the *Risorgimento* movement. Prior to Italy's unification, southern Italy was under the control of Spain. Ferdinand II adopted an isolationist and anti-liberal regime, and the Bourbon regime was believed to be "the enemy of both European civilization and the cause of Italian nationhood. The Bourbons, it was said, had built a 'wall of China' between southern Italy and the rest of Italy and Europe." (Moe 2001, 123) Therefore, southern Italy's continental isolation and foreign control prevented it from possessing the capacity for self-governance.¹¹

The idea that Southern culture was incapable of self-governance was developed during Garibaldi's time in southern Italy. As Nelson Moe explains in "*This is Africa: Ruling and Representing Southern Italy, 1860-1861*:"

During the last weeks of August 1860, as Garibaldi and his troops made their way up through Calabria towards Naples, Cavour and his associates were dismayed by the fact that the Neapolitans would not rise up against the Bourbons before Garibaldi's arrival. They were concerned that without a Neapolitan insurrection, Garibaldi's solo conquest of the Bourbon capital would give him overwhelming control of southern Italy, as well as undermine French support for the cause of Italian unity. The Neapolitans, however, despite the work of Piedmontese agents provocateurs, would not budge. Two remarks were made about the Neapolitans on this occasion by Cavour and his envoy in Naples, the Marquis de Villamarina, in some sense mark the beginning of the lengthy 'jeremiad' against Naples and the south that fills the letters exchanged among the moderate political and military leaders involved in the annexation of southern Italy in 1860-61. Cavour writes: The Neapolitans' conduct is disgusting: if they won't do anything before Garibaldi's arrival, they deserve to be governed as the Sicilians were by the likes of Crispi and Rafaeli

The next day, Villamarina writes back from Naples:

It is my fault, dear Count, if the Neapolitans are spineless. . . if they have become, so to speak, brutish? (2001, 124)

¹¹ Giuseppe La Farina encapsulates this philosophy in his 21 November 1860 letter to Camillo Benso, conte di Cavour and Piedmontese Prime Minister in which he states "The Bourbons surrounded Naples with a Great Wall of China, and the Neapolitans are so used to considering their great city as a world unto itself, that it is necessary not only to invite them but to force them to enter into the common life of the nation," (Moe 2001, 135)

Already in these two remarks, we see the significant development of the Piedmontese attitude towards the south: one that denied its self-determination by culturally pathologizing the inhabitants as disgusting, spineless, and brutish. What is significant to my thesis, is that the Bourbon isolationist regime had, according to the north, rendered the south ill and incapable of self-governance.

During this specific period (post-unification), images of disease and medical treatment emerged and constituted one of the most common modes of visualizing the south and its relationship to the north. The south is frequently described as a “*piaga*” (wound) or a “*cancrena*” (gangrene) that needs curing. (Moe 2001, 135; Wong 2006) Further, unless the south’s “abnormality” is contained, the Piedmontese leadership believed that it had the power to threaten the health of the entire nation. In a letter dated October 17, 1860 to Diomede Pantaleoni, an Italian politician who later became the first president of the Italian senate, Massimo D’Azeglio, a moderate Piedmontese politician, states that “in all ways the fusion with the Neapolitans makes me afraid; is it like going to bed with a smallpox patient.” (Wong 2006, 19)

The allegation of these statements and ideas, implies that the south’s presupposed “infirmity” naturally led to its submission, which in turn perpetuated northern “moral superiority and organizational primacy in politics, administration, and military operations.” (Wong 2006, 20) Southern “sickness” from the north rendered it incompatible with the goals of Western Eurocentrism, nationalism, and bourgeoisification. For that reason, the north saw themselves as liberators of an oppressed south. While the Jesuits’ wanted to “civilize” the south into Catholic orthodoxy, the Piedmontese leadership wanted to “cure” the south from its own self-induced historical and developmental paralysis.

The following section reveals yet another shift in the southern “problem.” Up until this point southern culture, although represented as antithetical to Western “progress,” was not innately incapable of change. In other words, biological or cultural determinism had yet to be explicitly linked to the south. However, these previous interrelated processes (the Jesuits’ civilizing missions in Naples in the 1550s, the role of travelers tales and their contributions to the creation of a barbaric vs. picturesque binary of the south, and the pathologization of the south) set in motion a new scientific understanding of the south. If

the Jesuits' could not civilize them, a presumably fertile landscape could not enlighten them, and if the north could not cure them, then perhaps Southern Italians were prisoners of something altogether different? As explained by Wong "The pathologization of the Italian southern question, which compared the misery of the south to a plague threatening the healthy, prosperous north, contributed to the developing discourse of physiognomy in Italy." (2006, 47) We will see in the following segment how the "southern problem" eventually came to be understood by means of a presumably inferior biological and hence racial capacity.

The "scientific" racialization of the south

The following section will explore the development of the Italian school of criminal anthropology, and how this school's rise contributed to the "scientific" racialization of the south. While not an exhaustive study on the rise of scientific racism, the following section provides only a brief historical overview of its aims and key figures. According to Peter D'Agostino, the Italian school of criminal anthropology "coincided with the intellectual ascendancy of positivism and evolutionism," (2002, 320) which held immense currency during this era as anthropological notions of primitivism and the belief in racial and biological differences dominated Western concepts of human progress and capacity. Positivist anthropology uses statistical information, such as rates of crime, education, mortality, suicide and economy, in order to measure the alleged state of civilization in a given society. (Dickie 1999, 2)

The founder of criminal anthropology, Cesare Lombroso, was a Jewish physician and Italian patriot born in Verona. Lombroso's understanding of "criminology" differed from "Cesare Beccaria's Enlightenment model of the criminal as an ordinary individual who freely chose an immoral act." (D'Agostino 2002, 322) While the classical school sought to secure a punishment that fit the crime, Lombroso considered such a philosophy unjust and more importantly, unscientific. Rather, Lombroso, in his 1876 book entitled *Criminal Man*, claimed to have:

discovered atavistic anomalies of the body in a particular type of criminal, known within positivist discourse as the 'born criminal.' These stigmata of the body were ancient 'savage' evolutionary remnants inherited from an earlier stage of development. This notion of 'the congenital criminal as an anomaly, partly

pathological and partly atavistic, a revival of the primitive savage,' was the root idea of Italian criminal anthropology. (D'Agostino 2002, 322)

Accordingly, immoral acts were not caused by free will, but by biology. Physical malformations (largely determined by means of phrenology and craniometry) were equated with moral and psychological limitations, and the severity of one's deformities determined the degree to which an individual was "compromised." Therefore, punishment "should not be made to fit the crime, but rather to fit the criminal." (Wong 2006, 48)

Lombroso believed that Italy was divided into three races – the Semitic South, the Latin Centre, and the Germanic, Ligurian, Celtic, and Slavic North. (Gibson 1998, 102) Lombroso's work, particularly *Criminal Man* and *In Calabria*,¹² is significant because he equates apparent high levels of criminal deviancy with Southern Italians' racial disposition. Lombroso argued that it was "the African and Eastern elements (except the Greeks), that Italy owes, fundamentally, the greater frequency of homicides in Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia, while the least occur where the Nordic races predominate." (Gibson 1998, 102) Lombroso's writings on Calabria claimed to have recognized "within entire Calabrian populations atavistic characteristics evinced in primitive behavior, local folklore, and dialects." (D'Agostino 2002, 323) Lombroso further declared in 1900, that an "inferior civilization" marked by a "criminality of blood" existed in southern Italy.¹³ (D'Agostino 2002, 323)

While Lombroso spearheaded the criminal anthropological movement in Italy, I will now briefly discuss one of his main followers: Alfredo Niceforo.¹⁴ Niceforo was

¹² Lombroso had resided in Calabria for a period of three months when he volunteered as a doctor for the national army and had participated in a military campaign against the brigands.

¹³ As a point of departure from this particular timeframe, one may suggest that Lombroso's observations on the innate violence and "undesirable characteristics" of Southern Italians continues to hold currency to this very day. Ongoing depictions and stereotypes of Italians as mobsters or mafia members continues to plague North Americans of Italian descent.

¹⁴ As a word of caution, although criminal anthropology garnered influence within meridionalist discourse, racial scientific theories did not go uncontested. D'Agostino reveals that "Neo-idealists Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce lambasted positivism and the pseudo-science of Lombrosians, and Franciscan Father Agostino Gemelli, a medical psychologist, ridiculed criminal anthropology. Italian feminists, both liberal and socialist, challenged the Italian school's findings and their monopoly on scientific discourse." (D'Agostino 2002, 328) Also, Mary Gibson in *Biology or Environment? Race and Southern "Deviancy" in the Writings of Italian Criminologists, 1880-1920* questioned the possibility of a biological "pure" race in Italy given its balkanized history: "While Lombroso and many of his fellow positivist criminologists made race central to

born in Castiglione, Sicily, in 1876, and although a Southern Italian, believed that “race was the key to understanding southern ‘barbarism.’” (D’Agostino 2002, 326) In his best known work entitled *L’Italia barbara contemporanea* (Contemporary Barbarian Italy), he proposed that Italy was divided by “two races”¹⁵ as “an abyss separates Italy of the north from the south; . . . They are truly *two Italies* standing in stark contrast, with complete distinct moral and social characters.” Also, “This diversity is physical, since Italy is formed by two dissimilar races, in fact, they have physical and psychological characters entirely different from one another.” (D’Agostino 2002, 326) Niceforo further elaborated that “The Aryans, northern Italians, have a more developed sense of social organization rare among Mediterraneans, southern Italians, who have by contrast a more developed individualistic sentiment.” (D’Agostino 2002, 326) Therefore, the notion of two races underwrote Italy’s formation as a nation state.

What I wish to make pertinent for my analysis is not simply the unstable categorization of race, but how such categorizations began to essentialize the south vis-à-vis racial projects on a society-wide level. As emphasized by Niceforo, Italy’s “two races” were not only physically different, but psychologically as well. Consequently, physiognomists argued that “identity was formed on the basis of biology and heredity.” (Wong 2006, 55) Niceforo further attested that one of the central differences between northerners and southerners was based on their “varying perspectives of the self, or the ‘I.’” (Wong 2006, 65) On the whole:

the physical difference between Aryans and dark Mediterraneans, is, essentially, in the major and minor excitability of the *I*: one, - the dark Mediterraneans, - have the

their analysis of southern “deviancy,” the term itself posed special problems for Italian thinkers. First, archeological research had revealed such a variety of peoples migrating to the Italian peninsula throughout its long history that every writer rejected the idea of one “Italian” race as ridiculous. How could one identify the races of Italy? The distinction between white and black, employed in colonial ventures, was not useful, nor was the northern European tendency to trace the origin of a nation to a pure “Aryan” stock. Were the labels that turned up in archeological research, such as Umbrians, Ligurians, Latins, and Etruscans, applicable to different races? What about the more recent migrations of Greeks, north Africans, and Albanians to the South?” (1998, 100)

¹⁵ What should be noted is, although racial scientism furthered the concept of essentialized differentiation within Italy, both Lombroso and Niceforo had difficulty-defining race clearly. While both presented a racial polarity in Italy, they both could not agree on the specific “groupings” and their numbers. While Niceforo believed in the existence of “two Italies,” Lombroso alternatively divided Italy into three parts, or defined them as either “blondes” or “dark-haired” or further added racial categories, such as the Umbrians, Etruscans, Oscans, Phoenicians, Albanians, and the Greeks. (Gibson 1998, 102)

restless and extremely excitable *I*, the other – the Aryans, - have the very balanced and cold *I*. Whereas the restlessness and excitability of the Mediterranean ‘self’ generated ‘*inattention, the weakness of the will, excess of banal emotion, impulsiveness, excess of the imagination, the absence of a practical sense of life, a quick and rapid intelligence,*’ the Aryan, with the more docile and less excitable *I* had a ‘sentiment of social organization much more developed than the dark Mediterraneans, who, having an *I* more excitable and very mobile, has a more developed sense of individualism and rebels at every spontaneous social and collective organization.’ (Wong 2006, 65)

The south could simply not “control” themselves, and in turn could not possibly govern themselves. In conclusion, anthropology, psychology, and positivism, provided sweeping statements on ethnicity, race, regionalism and capability and made it possible for Northerners, and a few Southerners, to adhere to immense generalizations about who Southern Italians not only were, but how they should be governed.¹⁶ In the end, the monolithic racialized portrayals of the south erased their unique history, homogenized their cultures, but more importantly denied their access to self-rule.

The interweaving of racial ideologies with the material conditions of the south

The failed political reforms had little to do with the south’s cultural or racial temperament. Rather, the south was beleaguered by both environmental and infrastructural difficulties. (Dickie 1999, 9) Environmentally, the south had to contend with a mountainous geography, soil erosion, and a limited amount of arable flat land. Infrastructurally, the south had a weak transport network with a fragile internal and continental labour and produce market. (Dickie 1999, 9) Not only did environmental and

¹⁶ Wong and Gribaudi furthermore note that physiognomists also included stereotypes of gender and sexuality. Stereotypes that continue to hold currency in modern times as recounted by Gribaudi’s following observations: “Common opinion (and, unfortunately, some academic circles too) still attributed the same characteristics to Northerners and Southerners as Niceforo, who used the then current terms ‘Aryans’ (*Ari*) and Mediterraneans. The dark Mediterraneans are individualists and in consequence their society is ‘fragmented’ or ‘disaggregated’. The peoples of the North, on the other hand, have collective consciousness and therefore social organization, institutions, and discipline. Neopolitans, dissolute and weak by nature, are a ‘popolo-donna’, a female people, while the others are ‘popoli uomini’. In their context these statements might appear amusing but if one thinks of passages one has read, conversations heard in the street, on television or even in learned discussions of the *Mezzogiorno*, one cannot fail to notice similarities. I remember a discussion in 1992 in *La Repubblica* about the fact that in the North people follow the dictates of the father and in the South dictates of the mother: the male principle and the female principle, very much like Niceforo’s male/female distinction.” (1996, 77-78)

infrastructural restrictions plague southern economic viability, but political underrepresentation and failed land reforms also contributed to its anomalous position.

John Dickie explains that southern Italy's underrepresentation in government is attributed to the implementation of Liberal economic measures which saw the abolition of government offices in Naples, and thereby removing support from associated services and industries (1999, 8); and lack of land reforms. Basically, Southern Italians became disillusioned, largely due to failed political changes, especially within the context of land reform. While the eventual unification of Italy in the 1860s ensured the end to foreign occupation, the south felt that "there was no change in the social relations in the South of the sort that one might reasonably have expected; rather, the old rulers were replaced with new, much more distant ones, and the landowners alone had the right to vote, reinforcing the traditional master-slave ethos of proprietors over the peasants." (Richards 1999, 104-105)

The "making" of Italian nationhood was largely realized through a northern bureaucratic centralism justified through racialized ideologies of Southern inferiority. Furthermore, Italy's growing industries were located in the North, and the economic downturn of European agriculture and trade wars with France and Spain over citrus fruit further strained southern Italy's economic prosperity. (Dickie 1999, 10)

The picturesque and barbaric binary attempted to portray the south as a fertile land squandered by barbarians. The same barbarians who had, it was claimed by both foreign travelers and the Piedmontese, reached a level of agricultural prosperity in ancient times, (particularly under the Greeks and Romans). However, as Giustino Fortunato attests, "the notion of the south's fertility a 'fatal prejudice' that 'caused it untold damage.' It was a land whose soil and climate on the one hand, and topographic configuration on the other, rendered it essentially poor – and yet it was believed to be, and believed itself to be, exceptionally rich." (cited in Moe 2006, 46) As a result, the south's integration into Italy was inappropriately measured by ideological concepts and beliefs that the region and its inhabitants could not possibly engender.

In addition, rather than contend with appropriately measured plans to deal with southern environmental and infrastructural problems, Northern political planners chose to

adopt a form of colonial governance in regards to their Southern brothers. Consequently, northern bureaucratic centralism further left the south besieged since:

every regime that governed southern Italy from the Norman establishment of a centralized monarchy in the twelfth century to the unified government which took over there in 1861 was foreign and governed with a logic of colonial exploitation. Nor did southern Italy's semi colonial status suddenly disappear with unification. The region was joined to the North by a process of royal conquest, its fragile commercial sector brutally merged with the North's more flourishing economy, a uniform tax system and suctions union imposed on its vulnerable industries, and brigandage rooted out by a full-scale military campaign. Politically, the South's communes and provinces were governed by northern administrators who regarded the region as a *terra dimissione*, and its economy was penetrated by carpetbaggers in search of new markets and raw materials. (Putman, 13)

In essence, the unification of Italy did not lessen the exploitation of the south. While the *Risorgimento* movement was able to overthrow foreign occupation, the south was still a victim, in a sense, to "foreign" rule by the north. In turn, Northern politicians and academics lay blame on the "racial" disposition of the *Mezzogiorno* without taking into account their own colonialistic attitudes as a reason for southern Italy's lack of political and economic cohesiveness. This north/south dichotomy further served, along with the inability of the north to adequately integrate southern Italy into the political spectrum, as an additional reason for the *Mezzogiorno's* exorbitant high levels of emigration during the nineteenth and twentieth century. In the years between 1876 and 1976, an estimated 26 million people emigrated from Italy. (Richards 1999, 98) From the south alone, 4,913,136 people left from 1876 to 1914. (Wong 2006, 113) In reality, the *Mezzogiorno's* future could only be secured elsewhere during this period due to environmental, infrastructural, economical, political and racial ethnocentrist-imposed limitations.

Conclusion

Although, southern Italy was populated by a startling mixture of cultures and societies as rich and complex as any the world had to offer, Northern Italians produced and reproduced a monolithic image of the south through processes of racialization. As previously addressed, ideas about the nation combine elements of narrative, ideology, and concepts of geographical space. Central to this discourse is the importance of the Other – “defining the nation by what it is not.” (Dickie 1996, 22) Southern Italy’s racialized

formation constituted a process of historically situated projects such as the four historically and interrelated projects that contributed to the development of the *Mezzogiorno*, which included 1) the Jesuits' civilizing missions in Naples in the 1550s, 2) the role of travelers' tales, 3) the cultural pathologicization of the south, and 4) the role of positivism, anthropology and criminology in the scientific racialization of the south. All of these interrelated processes led to Northern Italians' construction of Southern Italians' as racially and culturally inferior, and reinforced a Eurocentric standard from which to judge superiority and inferiority. Yet more importantly, it provided a standard on how to "govern" the south within Italian national discourse. While the south's questionable racial composition allowed Northern Italians to doubt Southerners suitability within Italian concepts of citizenry, we will see in the following chapter how that experience not only contributed to the mass emigration of Southerners, but also affected their behaviour after emigration, particularly in asserting their Whiteness as an identity.

CHAPTER 3

CANADIAN RACIALIZATION: IMMIGRATION POLICY AND ITALIAN IMMIGRATION

Perceptions of race have always been present from the onset of Canada's colonial history. (Backhouse, 1999) To define what is "Native" or "Western" often falls within the precepts of what one considers to be "human." As previously stated, I am primarily interested in how countries consolidate or deal with inherent contradictions within a specific vision (e.g., those within the terms of membership to and bearers of Canadian White "culture," and as we will later see in "Project Canada"). For example, I consider how the flow of immigrants to Canada, from countries other than France and England, complicated not only the historical narratives, but also notions of citizenship and ideas of the "original" people. This chapter, then, begins by providing a historical analysis of Canada's immigration policies. I stress that Canadian citizenry was predominantly based on a set strict set of national, ethnic, and set of racial preferences, which privileged the United Kingdom and northern European countries. I will also emphasize that Canada's racially differentiated immigration policies resulted in ambivalence towards Italian emigrants, particularly Southern Italians, in Canada.

Toni Morrison has noted that: "It is just as important to know what these people [European emigrants] were *rushing from as it is to know what they were hastening to.*" (1993, 34-35, italics added) I will argue that Italians "hasten[ed] to" a country specifically invested in what Richard Day would describe as "keeping with the ideology of 'Anglo-conformity,' which held that all 'new Canadians' must be assimilated, or at least *assimilable*, to an English-Canadian model." (2000, 8) For that reason, I will analyze 1) how Canada established racial hierarchies based on White supremacy, 2) how such notions were further manifested in the evolving nature of immigration policy, and 3) how the importation of Italy's prejudices against the south affected both Canadians' and Italians' reception of Italy's emigrants.

Before I present a historical overview of Canada's immigration policy and its impact on Italian-Canadian settlement, I will briefly discuss the role of Treaties to demonstrate both a recognition of this history and how they expressively affirmed the right of self-determination and Indigenous collective consciousness. *The Royal Proclamation of 1763* by King George III is often regarded as the first recognition to affirm the right of Indigenous self-determination as the *Proclamation* required the negotiation of treaties. As noted by Battiste and Semaganis, Treaties created "the hidden constitution of Canada" and was not a surrendering of Aboriginal rights, but rather Treaties guaranteed First Nations' rights "to culture, consciousness, and continuity." (2002, 96, 106) The true nature and intent of treaty commonwealth with the British sovereign can be defined as "the alternative idea to colonialism." (Henderson 2000, 23) Already in these two quotations, we come to understand that the original form and scope of treaty obligations were international covenants between sovereign nations.

The order of the treaty commonwealth questions the dominant falsehood that regards Aboriginal rights as identical to minority claims, and therefore, argues that such rights must be theorized in a different way. Such a theory recognizes rights accrued by reason of Aboriginality and guaranteed by treaty federalism and international conventions and agreements. Therefore, rights to land, political sovereignty, language, and access to self-identity and group-identity formation is derived from pre-existing Indigenous rights prior to the establishment of the Canadian state. However, the denial of the "hidden constitution" resulted in the creation of an unbalanced power structure, which subsequently advanced appalling official policies regarding Aboriginal lands and the displacement and subordination of Aboriginal peoples.

Historical overview of Canada's immigration policy

Racial classification did not solely focus on non-white subjects, but also attempted to legally differentiate White subjects. The *British North American Act* of 1867 established the British and French as founding groups, and hence all other groups admitted (or incapable of being "assimilated") were expected to assimilate to the established stratified power structure. Canada's immigration policy and history up until the early 1900s consisted primarily of immigrants from the British Isles as the British conquest of

New France in 1760 ended any significant migration from France. Increases in the French-Canadian population were almost exclusively due to natural growth. (Iacovetta, Quinlan, and Radforth 1996, 91)

The question of race and suitability (apart from the ongoing and historical othering of Aboriginal nations) began to emerge more concretely in immigration policies during the nineteenth century. Groups such as the Irish or Asians were often met with virulent hostility. (Backhouse 1999; Avery 1995) Irish immigrants, due largely to anti-Catholic nativism, were associated with urban poverty, crime and violence. (Iacovetta, Quinlan, and Radforth 1996, 92) Asian workers, particularly in British Columbia, faced growing anti-Chinese measures. While Chinese men began to work in the early 1880s on the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), by 1885 when the CPR was completed, the Canadian government introduced a discriminatory \$50 head tax on Chinese entering Canada. (Iacovetta, Quinlan, and Radforth 1996, 96) The immigrant expansion of the West in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was largely due to global factors, such as the collapse of Europe's tenure systems and increasingly favourable world wheat prices. While 2.5 million immigrants entered Canada between 1900 and 1914; of these 1 million were from Britain, 750,000 from the United States, and more than 500,000 were Continental Europeans. (Iacovetta, Quinlan, and Radforth 1996, 99) The majority of these immigrants were English-speaking, but a considerable number of Germans, Scandinavians, and Ukrainians also settled. As explained by Iacovetta, Quinlan and Radforth, "Ethnic tolerance went hand-in-hand with economic self-interest: these normally "undesirable" ethnic minorities could be put to good national use by homesteading the west and enlarging the domestic consumer markets. (1996, 99-100) What ought to also be noted is that the "good national use" did not apply to Blacks. Restrictions on Black immigrants was legally enshrined by Wilfred Laurier in 1911 in Sub-section (c) of Section 38 of the Immigration Act which deemed the Black "race," "unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada." (Avery, 1995)

During the early twentieth century and up until the 1930s, Canada was affected by an internal war (WW1) and economic depression followed by the subsequent rise of another international war in 1939. (Hawkins 1991, 96) One of Canada's responses to

depression and war was the restriction of the number of eligible immigrants and refugees. Nevertheless, while Canada was ambivalent about the number of new immigrants to accept, the government was straightforward concerning who they considered to be racially "appropriate." Canada's Order-in-Council, P.C. 1957, issued in 1930, demonstrates this thinking as the Order restricted immigration from Continental Europe. (Kage 1962, 94-95) Proponents for an ethnically selective immigration policy argued primarily on the basis that racial stratification was needed to ensure a homogeneous Canadian identity, and therefore, immigration was seen as a domestic policy. Mackenzie King expounded on the above belief by stating that: "Canada's post-war immigration policy has been to foster growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration, without altering the fundamental character of the Canadian nation." (Kage 1962, 119) The homogenous defense was to secure the promulgation of British modes of law, administration, and politics and secure Canada as a nation for the "White" race. This is evidently displayed in the Order-in-Council, P.C. 659 issued in 1931, which prohibited immigration to Canada with the following exemptions:

- A) British subjects from Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Irish Free State, Australia, Union of South Africa and New Zealand, provided that they had means to maintain themselves until employment was secured;¹⁷
- B) Citizens of the United States with the means to support themselves;
- C) The wife and unmarried children under eighteen years of age of a Canadian resident who could receive and care for his dependents;
- D) Agriculturists having sufficient means to farm in Canada. (Kage 1962, 95)

It was only after post-war industrialization that Canada's immigration policy drastically changed. Prior to this period, Canada:

powerfully reinforced legitimacy of the British presence in Canada. Second, it reinforced the legitimacy of an ethnically based hierarchy, which was complicated, but generally further reinforced by the founding role and cultural persistence of French-Canadians. Third, it reinforced what Northrop Frye has called the "garrison mentality," a tendency to view the outside world, both natural and human, as threatening, and to erect barriers against it. And fourth, it accentuated what might be called a general European predisposition to view the North American landscape in primarily economic terms. These cornerstones of Canadian sensibility have been

¹⁷ Section A refers only to "British subjects" who were indeed White.

reproduced in the country's evolving processes and institution." (Seiler 2000, 98-99)

However, during the thirty years following WW2, Canada witnessed prolonged economic growth, increasing urbanization, industrial expansion in both mining and manufacturing, high employment and mass migration. (Iacovetta, Quinlan, and Radforth 1996, 103)

Italy's Diaspora

Before I provide a detailed account on Italian immigration to Canada post WW2, I need to briefly explain to the reader that Italian emigration ought to be regarded within a broader global focus. Between 1876 and 1976, an estimated 26 million Italians left Italy. (Richards 1999, 98) In 1871 less than 2 percent of Italy's 26 million residents lived abroad. By 1911 it was 14 percent and by 1920, 9 million - which represented a quarter of Italy's resident population. (Gabaccia 2000, 177) The United States contained the largest group at 5 million, South America (particularly Argentina and Brazil) held 2.7 million, and 1 million were in Europe. (Gabaccia 2000, 177) Presently, 5 million or 8 percent of the Italian population are emigrants. Yet, descendants of Italy's migrants stand at about 60 million, more or less equal to Italy's current population. For example, approximately 15 million of Argentina's 27 million residents are of Italian descent, as much as 10 percent of France's population, and about 5 percent each of Canadian, American, and Brazilian citizens are persons of Italian descent. (Gabaccia 2000, 177) I believe that these numbers are important to my analysis of the politics of entry and exit.

The following section will briefly define Diaspora. Key to theoretical definitions of Diaspora is forced dispersal or displacement. (Clifford, 1994) Yet, the point to keep in mind are that, the Italian Diaspora cannot be compared to the exile of Jews or the enslavement of Africans. However, the Italian Diaspora cannot also be integrated, according to Fortier, to the "voluntary migration of individuals – usually professionals or highly semi-skilled workers – between countries of the overdeveloped worlds." (2000, 17) As we have seen in Chapter 2, the development of modern Italy ran parallel to the racialization of southern Italy. Due to the ongoing northern bureaucratic centralism and environmental and infrastructural difficulties in the south, Southern Italians were left with little options but to leave. Like Fortier, I believe that specific diasporic imaginings connect

with historically specific conditions of “dispersal and (re)settlement.” (2000, 18) Race plays a role in the constructs of both our ideas of nationhood and citizenship. Or, as Gabaccia states, “how the history of modern migrations from Italy is in large part a history of state efforts to incorporate migrants [or their citizens] into multi-ethnic nations.” (2000, 10)

Italian emigration to Canada

To begin, Italian immigration to Canada is marked by two distinct periods: the sojourner movement and post-war immigration. Briefly, the sojourner movement was characterized by a small number of predominantly Northern Italian immigrants, and contained a substantial number of craftsmen and professionals during the 1880s. Sojourners typically resided in North America anywhere from a few months to a few years, and their intent was primarily geared towards economic pursuits as opposed to settlement as sojourners typically returned to Italy. (Perin 1992) The post-war immigration will be characterized as a mass movement from 1948 to 1972. Such a movement saw Canada’s Italian population increase fourfold, from 150,000 to 450,000 between 1951 and 1961. (Harney Jr. 1998, 21) Similarly between 1946 and 1983 it is estimated that between 433,159 and 507,057 Italians came to Canada. Of these emigrants almost 70 percent came from the south, 12 percent from central Italy, and 18 percent from the north. (Harney Jr. 1998, 21)

We must recall that the notion of Italy’s marginalized “place” in Europe (be it the Jesuits’ “Indies” or the Northern Italians’ “Africa” of Europe) migrated as well. As explained by D’Agostino, the racialization of southern Italy contributed to the notion of Italian migrants “unsuitability” in North American as:

American liberals, socialists, and conservatives alike made selective use of the Italian school’s racial metaphysic as a form of scientific authority. It helped them articulate a racial hierarchy distinguishing ‘new’ from ‘old’ immigrants, facilitating an argument for immigration restriction. Restrictionists thus had a ready-made scientific commentary regarding the largest ‘new’ immigrant group, Italians, who were overwhelmingly from the *Mezzogiorno*. (2002, 320)

The following sections will analyze how Southern Italians presumed lack of “civility,” and “adaptability,” played a role not only in regards to Italian immigration to Canada but, more importantly, how these ideas impacted Canadian reaction to Italian immigration.

For the sake of expediency, I will focus on Italian-Canadian settlement within Toronto, which holds the largest Italian-Canadian population, and how the presence of Italian-Canadians came to shape the predominantly British character of post-war Toronto. Prior to the post-war immigration boom, Toronto comprised predominantly of a homogenous culture. In 1911, nearly 80 percent of Torontonians claimed British descent while in 1941, that number not only still neared 80 percent, but also reached a population of 700,000. The only other significant ethnic minority was that of the Jews comprising of 5 percent. (Harney Jr. 1998, 35)

While Canada favored emigrants from northern Europe, how were Italian emigrants received during this era? I will analyze the Canadian reaction to Italian immigration, focusing on what was viewed as “undesirable characteristics” of the new immigrants. During this period two groups stood out: Jews¹⁸ and Italians due to the stereotypes associated with them. Jacobson adeptly states “it was not just that Italians did not look white to certain social arbiters, but they did not *act* white.” (2000, 57) Therefore, I will begin by documenting how Italian-Canadians inability to “act white” framed the way their emigration status and applications were perceived.

The “Italian invasion” of Toronto, as some observers called it, was a component of a larger diaspora that saw seven million Italians migrate during the three decades after the Second World War. (Iacovetta 2004, xix) Further, between 1951 and 1961, 90,000 Italians settled in Toronto, while 33,000 came by 1965 and another 38,760 by 1971. (Iacovetta 2004, xxi) By 1961 the Italians had replaced the Jews as Toronto’s largest non-British ethnic group, and Toronto had replaced Montréal as the home of the largest Italian population in a Canadian city. (Iacovetta 2004, xxi) Similarly, and due to this influx,

¹⁸ For an elaboration on Jewish-Canadian history and relations, please see Irving Abella’s and Harold Troper’s “None is too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1938-1948.” Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys Limited, 1982.

Torontonians claiming a British heritage dropped from 73 percent in 1952 to 59 percent in 1961. (Iacovetta 2004, xxii)

Italian-Canadian scholar and historian Franca Iacovetta's *Such Hardworking People: Italians in Post-war Toronto* will guide our examination on the immigrant experience by "combin[ing] an internal history of the immigrant group with an external examination of the views and responses of the host society." (2004, xxiii) As previously discussed in Chapter 2, huge disparities existed between northern and southern Italy. The 1951 Italian census reveals that only 1.5 percent of Northern Italians were living in poverty as defined by government standards compared to 25 percent for Southern Italians. Further, almost 40 percent of all southern dwellings lacked sanitary arrangements and over half were without on-site drinking water. Similarly, another 53 percent of Southerners were living in overcrowded conditions compared to only 19 percent for Northern Italians. Lastly, almost 900,000 of Southern Italians did not reside in proper dwellings, but rather lived in shells of bombed houses and buildings. (Iacovetta 2004, 8) The country's unification in 1861 did little to promote southern industrial development, and the subsequent depression, fascism and war had simply exacerbated the problems in the Southern agricultural sector and limited the available choices for Southern Italians to remain in Italy.

What should be noted is that men dominated the initial waves of Italian immigration (both during the sojourner period and the early post-WW2 period). Migrants who left alone or with other men essentially "emigrated as members of families." (Iacovetta 2004, 54) What this means is they resettled with the purpose of making money for their families and to also pay back debts to sponsors, relatives, employers or the Canadian government who aided in their relocation to Canada. (Iacovetta 2004, 54) As Italian men began to work abroad, we witness the development of international family economies. Remittances to Italy soared from 13 million lire in 1861 to 127 million lire in 1880, to 254 million lire yearly after 1890, and 846 million lire yearly from 1906. (Gabaccia 2000, 92) Eventually, these remittances also served to aid in the emigration or sponsorship of family members, particularly wives and children left behind in Italy.

Now, we have previously read “it was not just that Italians did not look white to certain social arbiters, but that they did not *act* white.” (Jacobson 1998, 57) In the post-war period (WW2), Canada initially hesitated to admit large numbers of Italians and several factors account for this policy. First, Italy’s role and alignment with Germany during WW2 rendered it an enemy state. Secondly, the Mackenzie King government was fearful that wartime prosperity would be followed by a recession and that the Canadian government would have to shoulder the burdens of caring for a foreign population. Third, nativist opposition to Italians based “on assumptions equating hot climates with darker populations and cultural backwardness, resurfaced.” (Iacovetta 2004, 21) The following sections will primarily focus on the perceived non-adaptability of Italians to Canada’s “northern latitudes” and how this made them unfit for citizenship.

Laval Fortier, Commissioner for Overseas Immigration stated, that the “Italian South peasant is not the type we are looking for in Canada. His standard of living, his way of life, even his civilization seems so different that I doubt if he could ever become an asset to our country.” (cited in Iacovetta 2004, 22) As previously discussed, the Italian school of anthropology and criminology, influenced the way Federal officials came to see Italian culture, one stereotypically framed to believe in centuries-old racialist assumptions concerning the “Germanic” and “industrious” north and the “Mediterranean” and “backward” south. (Wong 2006; Moe 2006; Iacovetta 2004) Correspondingly, Canada had maintained a list of preferred immigrants “which included American, French, Dutch, Swiss, German, and Scandinavian peoples . . . as it was rooted in the basic premise that northern Europeans had a greater proclivity to orderly society and free parliamentary institutions, or at least shared the same complexion, mores, and religion as English Canadians, and thus were the most easily assimilated.” (Iacovetta 2004, 24) While a racialized polarity continued to mark Southern Italians, and reinforce the stereotypes associated with them, the post-war economic boom in Canada forced the Federal government to expand their immigration laws, rendering possible the early post-war Italian settlement in Canada. (Iacovetta 2004, 26)¹⁹

¹⁹ Italy was also taken off the enemy alien list in January 1947.

In the Fall of 1949, Commissioner Laval Fortier toured Italy and believed that “quality” immigrants could be recruited, particularly the Italians “around Rome and in the North.” (Iacovetta 2004, 27) What must also be noted is that the Italian government was heavily concerned with assisting the Canadian government with the fulfillment of quotas as emigration during this period was seen as one of the few avenues to deal with the heavy burdens Italy faced during the post-war era. The 1950 immigration agreement authorized the Italian Ministry of Labour to carry out the preexamination of candidates for admission to contract labour. Under this agreement, immigrants would enter Canada under contract in order to fulfill a specific labour demand, and officials regularly referred to such cases as “bulk orders.” (Iacovetta 2004, 28) While Canada had reduced the prior restrictions on Italian emigrants, “the bias against southerners was reflected in the imposition of a quota on the composition of each order: 70 percent were to be northern Italians (including north-central Italians) and 30 percent from the south.” (Iacovetta 2004, 29)

While Iacovetta expands much more fully on the twists and turns of the bulk order system, Canada’s family sponsorship categories were expanded in 1947, which permitted Canadian relatives to act as sponsors. Canada’s post-war Italians were sponsored by relatives at a rate of more than 90 percent, compared to the 47 percent average for all other nations. (Iacovetta 2004, 48) Similarly, such a process, which later became known as “chain migration,” circumvented previous restrictions on Southern Italians. Chain migration is defined as “that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationship with previous migrants (Macdonald cited in Sturino, 64) Therefore, Italian emigrants already established in Canada were able to directly sponsor family members back home. Accordingly, chain migration had transformed certain provinces into major sources of immigrants for Canada. For example, “close to 60 percent of the more than 240,000 Italians who came during the period of 1946-61 were southerners. Together, the regions of Abruzzi, Molise, and Calabria accounted for 75 percent of this volume.” (Iacovetta 2004, 47)

The following section will analyze how Southern Italians circumventing of the “ethnic preference ladder” (i.e. preference for British and Northern European emigrants)

came to be regarded. How exactly were Italian-Canadians received and what was life generally like for these newly arrived emigrants? Italian emigrants were faced upon their arrival with persistent stereotypes concerning their character and ambivalence towards them on the part of the predominantly British-based Toronto population. Robert Allen, a writer for *Maclean's*, attempted to capture Torontonians' contradictory views of Italians in 1964. Describing College Street's "Little Italy," he wrote:

Here one finds people from Naples and Palermo looking at snails in grocery stores, listening to Italian records, and enjoying the novel life of a community of Italian movies, espresso bars, pizza parlours, pointed shoes, short jackets, Sicilian shawls and such vitality that going home to, say, North Toronto, is like entering a decadent suburb. . . Many welcome this exotic tidal wave that has given texture to the city and suddenly made Toronto as self-consciously cosmopolitan as a teenager who has just discovered beer. Others look on these changes dourly, still call Italians 'Eyetalians' and misuse the word 'ethnic' to mean exactly what they used to mean when the said 'foreigner.' A few think vaguely of Little Italy as a cluster of grocery stores in an old part of town but many think of it as a tough neighborhood of ward heelers, underground societies, and Tammany hall politics, where Italian youths pinch girls' behinds, and more mature citizens, when they aren't eating spaghetti, are stealing jobs from Canadians. (cited in Iacovetta 2004, 103)

The above quotation captures the ambivalence Torontonians had of their neighbours, ranging from their perceived "exoticism" to a nativistic reaction to the "theft" of "Canadian" jobs. As Italian-Canadians increasingly became Toronto's largest non-British ethnic group, their "Little Italies" (which will be analyzed in a later section), their darker skin colouring, and their religious adherence to the Catholic faith made Italians all the more visible to nativists. In 1954, a Toronto Orangeman wrote to the Ontario premier to complain about the "recent infestation of 'these ignorant, almost black people.'" (Iacovetta 2004, 106) This was not the first or last time that the explicit racial status of Italians as non-whites was forcefully expressed. As early as 1902, the Italians "Whiteness" was often denied. As explained by Constance Backhouse in *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950*, what came to be known as a "white women's labour law" was first enacted in 1912, an Act to Prevent the Employment of Female Labour in Certain Capacities. Essentially, the Act prohibited Asian employers or businesses to hire "in any capacity" a White woman. (1999, 136) Prior to its enactment, "one witness who testified

before the 1902 Canadian Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration announced: "I never call Italians white labour." (Backhouse 1999, 149) Equally prevalent during this period, were long-standing stereotypes that came to define this newly arrived group, as "hot blooded," and "culturally backward." Stereotypes borrowed from Italy itself also marked Italian emigrants as they were seen to be "dagos," "swarthy," they had "low foreheads," and exhibited "dangerous social tendencies, especially criminality." (Iacovetta, 2004; Guglielmo & Salerno 2003)

Conventional wisdom during this era would have us believe that Southern Italians were both racially and intellectual inferior and, therefore, were thought to be amongst the least capable people of assimilating into North America's industrial economies. (Iacovetta 2004, 105) Iacovetta describes the outward reaction of Anglo-Canadians to Italian immigrants, but how did these immigrants perceive their reception in Canada and what did life generally hold for them in the "northern latitudes"? Iacovetta explains that "one man captured the feeling of many when he said: 'For us, everything is for the family. You make sacrifices, get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and wait for the truck to take you to sometimes you don't know where. And for what? To clean out the mud and mix cement so the family can make a better life.'" (2004, 69-70)

Italian-Canadians, particularly from the south, provided Canada with unskilled and semi-skilled workers, particularly in the construction of roads, tramway rails, sewers, and buildings, to build the infrastructure for Canada's growing cities. In 1961, the number of working Italian men was 42,971, a figure representing 8 percent of Metro Toronto's total male labour force. (Iacovetta 2004, 57) Similarly, they also earned the lowest incomes in the city and were all but excluded from the ranks of the managerial and professional class. In 1961, the average male income stood at \$5080, the average income earned by Italian men was \$3016. (Iacovetta 2004, 59) Toronto's Italian women were also represented in Toronto's post-war workforce. Their employment consisted mostly of low-paid unskilled labour within either the garment or manufacturing industries. In 1961, Italian women earned an annual of \$1456, about 60 percent of the average female income. (Iacovetta 2004, 93)

Another important factor beyond the stories of sacrifice was that for many Italian immigrants, they witnessed the deceptiveness between the official portrayal of Canada as a land of opportunity and their own experiences of working-class employment, which were often grueling and back-breaking. Oral testimonies during the 1950s and 1960s not only witnessed the nativistic slandering towards Italians, but also reflected their visible presence as Toronto's working-class labourers. An Italian worker recalled:

It was a hard time for us. In a strange country with a different language. We were the working people. Even riding the street car was not that simple. They would humiliate you with remarks and insults – you know, 'dirty wop' [or] 'go back to Italy.' (Iacovetta 2004, 107)

As we have seen in the previous sections, the importation of Italy's prejudices against the south influenced Canada's response to Italian immigration. As well, the following section includes the importation of the hatreds of home when discussing how both Canadians and Italians (particularly the elite), came to regard the rise of "Little Italies." Little Italies were initial settlement areas that provided Italian-Canadians with lodging, access to cultural foods, and language-based services. Harney Jr. explains that the genesis of Little Italies began near Kensington Market, followed by Dundas, College, and Grace Streets in the 1950s. By the early 1960s, Little Italies could be found on St. Clair Avenue and Dufferin Street, while Lawrence Ave, Keele and Finch Streets marked the 1970s and 1980s. Only beginning in the 1990s, did Italians begin to undergo a process of suburbanization. (Harney Jr. 1998, 25)

While Southern Italians set the trend for the future mass immigration of Italians to Canada, the Italian elite began to shun Italian cultural particularities and their residential locations. In essence, the *prominenti* or the elite, were mostly from Northern Italy and were either successful merchants or were from professional occupations (lawyers, doctors, bankers). Too often, Southern Italian immigrants were perceived both as too peripheral and localized in relation to the "real" Italian essence. According to the Italian cultural elite:

Little Italies were parochial, backward, superstitious and mirrored not the high culture of the home country, but that of the remotest backwaters. Once again, the immigrant became an outcast: he was seen as too Italian by Canadian and too much

of a peasant, and therefore un-Italian, by Old World commentators. As a result, both elites set about to provide the benighted immigrant with a culture cast in their own image. (Perin 1992, 15)

As previously explained in Chapter 2, the elite, be it in Canada or Italy, were concerned with the expansion of *civilta italiana*. To feel “Italian,” according to the elites, was to identify culturally with *civilta italiana* – a tremendously influential culture that had developed and spread from Italy to Europe between 1000 and 1600. Italy’s elites came to believe that a nation of Italians had created *civilta italiana*, and that Italy needed to revive the presumed civilizing mission of *civilta italiana*. Rather, the immigrant who resided in such neighbourhood enclaves as “Little Italies” were regarded by the *prominenti* as “*cafoni*”²⁰ and as Harney states the elites felt that the *cafoni* were part of the Italian culture that needed to be suppressed and:

from whom one had to distance oneself was shared by almost all those political intelligentsia, consuls, clergy and, then later, fuorusciti (political exiles), who made opinion and shaped the image by which immigrants measured their worth. Distance from the ‘mean history’ of the Little Italy could be maintained by emphasizing blood ties to the glories that were Italian culture or by claiming to be from among the earlier immigrants, or well-born, or skilled, or simply northern. (1992, 44)

Essentially, the Italian elite attempted to inoculate themselves, and in turn safeguard their perceptions of Italian culture, from any form of “unsalient” behaviour. Rather than perceive boarding houses or Little Italies as a transient economic strategy, the Italian elite chose to see it as a fundamental cultural characteristic of Southern Italians: backward and un-Canadian and reflecting an enduring division between the south and the north.

The external reaction to “Little Italies” was also plagued by the stereotypes associated with them. Historian Robert Harney again asks an important question on the creation and perception of “ethnic spaces”:

Were the immigrant quarters simply stepping-stones towards acculturation, breathing spaces for immigrants and their children until they could become Canadians? Were they working-class neighbourhoods, or were they, as they were believed to be by much of their own ethnic intelligentsia, self-appointed elites and

²⁰ Generally the term refers to an individual working and living in the countryside and not belonging in a city.

officials from the lands of emigration, stratified sub-societies and colonies within a larger diaspora? Were they new communities created by people in need of creating local ascriptive worlds within the larger, colder space of a Canadian industrial city? Did the European and Asian immigrants who gathered in ethnic enclaves do so willingly in order to preserve their old-world cultural baggage intact, or would they have been willing to embrace Anglo-Canadian ways if made welcome? Were such neighbourhoods fossils of the old world, or places of regeneration where a new ethnicity and new set of emblems, new networks or acquaintanceship and new eclectic North American ideas and values could grow up? (1991b, 96)

According to Donna Gabaccia in "*Global Geography of 'Little Italy: Italian Neighbourhoods in Comparative Perspective*" the formation of "Little Italies" were largely the product of "Italo-phobia." Similarly, her work details that "Italo-phobia" was largely a 'malady' of English-speaking countries, as "Little Italies – as many neighbourhoods of immigrant Italians and their descendants are known in North America, and to a lesser extent in Australia, and in the UK – simply do not exist in quite the same way in other parts of the world." (Gabaccia 2006, 9-10) In other words, segregated "ethnic quarters" did not exist for the Italian community in European or Latin American countries. Gabaccia believes that these "immigrant quarters" were primarily the attempt of English-speakers to further differentiate themselves (presumably as both the "original people" and hence "civilized" members) from the arrival of other European descent immigrants in order to maintain the racialized structures their very presence had engendered.

Access to space, dwellings, and the management of land are closely linked to ideas about the legitimate ownership and entitlement to the North American lands and its resources. (Fortier 1998; Harney 1992; Di-Scosiasti-Andrews 2008; Razack 2002; Harris 1993) Cheryl Harris in "*Whiteness as property*" discusses both the historical relationship concepts of property has had with race, and also traces how such concepts run parallel to systems of domination. She states:

Through this entangled relationship between race and property, historical forms of domination have evolved to reproduce subordination in the present. . . . as a progression historically rooted in the white supremacy and economic hegemony over Black and Native American peoples. The origins of whiteness as property lie in the parallel systems of domination of Black and Native American peoples out of which were created racially contingent forms of property and property rights. . . . Whiteness shares the critical characteristics of property even as the meaning of

property has changed over time. In particular, whiteness and property share a common premise - a conceptual nucleus - of a right to exclude.” (1993, 1714)

The unification of Italy in 1861, particularly the failed or abandoned promised land reforms created conditions in which Southerners did not own their land, and thus were excluded from governing their resources. Rather, their lands were owned by Northerners in which Southerners cultivated for a small percentage. Therefore, “home-ownership was a goal that Italian immigrant families throughout the post-war era pursued with dogged determination.” (Iacovetta 2004, 110) Italian immigrants in Toronto, enjoyed a 91 percent homeownership rate in 1986 (compared to only 59 percent for people born in Canada). (Darden and Kamel 2000, 56-57) The cultural imperative of home ownership among Italian immigrants has received relatively little attention, especially the underlying colonial discourse and pursuits these forms of behaviour engender. Possession, as defined by Harris, highlights how land was not only spatially reconfigured (in this case, new territorial borders), but also how space came to mark the reconstruction of the identity of Canada, as distinctively White and European-based. Similarly, as we will later see in Chapter 4, possession came to be further understood as the natural outcome of hard-work, dedication, and sacrifice, a factor which further negotiated Italian-Canadians way into Whiteness and served as a stepping stone into upward class mobility.

Conclusion

As observed by Wong, “The arrival of emigrants changed not only the nature of the population, but the very character of the dream.” (Wong 2006, 134) Italians came to a country invested in White supremacy in the form of Anglo-Saxon British subjectivity, and their immigration to Canada complicated Canada’s notions of citizenship and ideas of the “original” people. In this chapter, we have seen how Canada’s immigration policy was premised on race. The chapter also highlighted the ambiguous racial status of Italians, due primarily to southern stereotypes that Italian emigrants faced during their mass migration to Canada. The next chapter will highlight how Italian-Canadian immigrants negotiated their way into Whiteness.

CHAPTER 4 THE MAKING OF ITALIAN-CANADIANS AS RACIALLY WHITE

Italian-Canadians, for a variety of reasons, be it their Southern culture, the ambiguity of their skin tone, or their relatively contemporary and foreign status as “other” in Canada, were rendered visible and therefore non-white. The following chapter will analyze and critique the formation of Italian immigrants as White Canadian subjects by examining the racialized narratives used by Italian-Canadian scholarship in order to secure and stabilize this identity. As previously explained by Gardaphe, Italian-Canadians were judged by two identities which were both new to them “white and American” [in this case Canadian]. (1999, x) The chapter then will address how the politics of history and history-making (specifically the Giovanni Caboto campaign) sought to reframe Italian immigrants as bearers of a “glorious past” in Canada. I will stress how supporting the founding nation paradigm (who “arrived” here first) reinforces and legitimizes current racialized power structures. Similarly, the emphasis on the standard European mobility model will also highlight the role of meritocracy in laying claims to Whiteness by endorsing an ongoing perception of racelessness in Canadian thought and history. This chapter will address the making of Italians as racially White in Canada.

How and by what process did emigrants come to understand both their “Italianess” and “Canadianess?” How was it defined? And what was it in opposition to? Both Robert F. Harney in *Italian Immigration and the Frontiers of Western Civilization* and Pasquale Verdicchio in *Italian Canadian Cultural Politics: The Contradiction of Representation* encourages us to come to terms first, with Italian history as explored in Chapter 2 and second, with how that history impacted and influenced their identity constructs upon their arrival. Essentially, “we must face the fact that the terms by which Italians throughout their history in North America have been judged are ones that were established in Italy itself.” (Verdicchio 1998, 44) Italy’s unification as a modern state, and the values associated with modernity, led to the creation of the “Southern Problem,” which

contributed to Italian emigration. Chapter 3 illustrated how Canada's nationalization produced an ideologically White community, and how a largely Anglo-Saxon ethnic preference shaped Canadian identity formation. The following chapter will highlight that even within discussions of "who may be considered White and why?" that there remains "degrees or shades of Whiteness." (Chambers 1997, 190) White privilege continues to be stratified in Canada even among individuals who are considered White. Anglo-Canadian "culture" persists in serving as the primary definition of "Canadianess," and hence "Whiteness."²¹ (Mackey 2002; Day 2000) Consequently, Italian-Canadians have embarked on a business of selling images of themselves in order to secure both a sense of belonging in a foreign land and to dispel previously held notions as contested others. The following sections will analyze and discuss the consequences these pursuits had upon Italian-Canadian discourse, especially regarding their expressed intentions to fit into previously constructed terms of membership in Canadian society.

Settlers and immigrants must accord each other legitimacy, as each group must believe the other has a legitimate right to be in Canada. A migrant's quest for "legitimacy," and the discursive concepts employed to achieve that aim, parallels my wish to answer why certain groups assert their Whiteness as an identity, and how and why groups become accepted as White. Or, as explained by Fortier "how the project of an Italian identity is signified and formulated in particular institutional sites, with particular forms of representation and enunciative strategies." (Fortier 2000, 1) In order to achieve a sense of belonging, the following "institutional sites" and "enunciative strategies" will be explored: 1) the creation of an Italian "heroic past" vis-à-vis a "founding father"

²¹ Some might contend that Canadian "Whiteness" has equally been identified with and defined by French-Canadian culture. While I do not disagree that Francophone culture has come to represent a form of "Canadianess," I will simply state that it has not secured the same advantages as Anglo-Canadian culture as an "unproblematic" entity within Canada (and one that has provided a standard against to judge and compare). French-Canadian culture has historically been "problematized" and therefore, I would state that Francophone culture falls squarely within Chambers "degrees or shades of Whiteness." Pierre Vallières acknowledged this position in his autobiographical work "Nègres blancs d'Amérique" (1968), and Michèle Lalonde's "Speak White" poem reappropriated a term that was often directed at French-Canadians for their supposedly stubborn refusal to learn the English language and emulate a "Canadian way of life." Lastly, one can simply look towards the Quiet Revolution, Bill 101 (the Charter of the French Language), the 1995 Sovereignty Referendum, the Parti Québécois and Richard Day (2000) and Eva Mackey's (2002) recent scholarly work for a less confident perspective on contemporary issues of bilingualism and biculturalism. In other words, French-Canadians have historically been "problematized" within Canadian society.

paradigm, 2) the role of blood lines, 3) the ongoing importance of narratives such as the discourse of “such hardworking people,” and 4) the need for both an analysis of and critique towards Italian-Canadian scholarship.

"People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them." - James Baldwin

Identities we create and imagine for others and ourselves are shaped by the social and historical narratives to which we are exposed. Identification with a national history, such as the “Story of Canada,” helps to construct cultural identity for the present. The retelling of history and selection of historical evidence informs national ideology in specific ways as “history continues to determine both the institutional conditions of knowledge as well as the terms of contemporary institutional practices.” (Young 1990, vii) In other words, historical narratives are never inseparable from the cultural conditions that created them. Rather, the analytical tools historians used to produce knowledge of the past mirror the assumptions and values of a specific belief system and is told in the voice of the winners. (Mackey 2002, 17)

The emergence of the “Story of Canada” amalgamated Eurocentric concepts of time, progress, and civilization and the subsequent practices of material and cultural genocide that they engendered. National cultures are composed of grand narratives or what Hall would define as *a foundational myth*. (Hall 1996) For Italy, the *Risorgimento* movement served as a grand narrative since it allowed Italy to “acquire its ‘founding fathers’ (Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi) and its political ideals (liberalism, nationalism, republicanism.” (Riall 1994, 1) Similarly, North American history equally focuses on the beginnings of its present nationhood and, in the case of Canada, assumes only the French and English as founding nations. For Edward Said, beginnings are meaning-making processes: “A beginning, then, is the first step in the intentional production of meaning.” (Said 1975, 5) For that reason, “grand narratives” are the “the stuff of the most widely circulated, ‘commonsense’ representations. . . . [Which in turn], supplies historical accounts that make it seem both normal and natural that certain things are associated with Canada” (Stanley 2006, 34) Not only are grand narratives maintained through symbols and practices such as, statues, historiography, commemorations, place names, films,

advertisement and formal education, but they also serve as essential links between public memory and citizenship. (Seixas 2006, 11)

Robert Harney's "*Caboto and Other Parentela*," Pasquale Verdicchio's "*Italian Canadian Cultural Politics: The Contradiction of Representation*," and Anne-Marie Fortier's "*Calling on Giovanni: Interrogating the Nation Through Diasporic Imaginations*" will guide our examination on the origins of the presumably Italian North American "heroic / golden age," and how Italians' attempt to usurp a Canadian grand narrative fostered the integration of Italian-Canadians into a White racialized construct. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Italian-Canadian presence is a relatively recent phenomenon in Canada - a history marked mostly by how a Southern agriculturally based population secured working-class employment in Canada's urban cities. History, as an institutional and discursive site, played a fundamental role in the eventual inclusion of Italian-Canadians into Canadian Whiteness. Although the thesis mostly adheres to an Italian-Canadian historical timeline dating after WW2, the promulgation of the "heroic" Italian past within Canada was adopted during both the first (1880s) and second (1940s) waves of Italian-Canadian settlement.

Canada's first Italian settlement began in Montréal. The Italian-Canadian population in Montréal rose from 2,000 in 1900 to 7,000 in 1911, and further increased to 14,000 in 1921 and 21,000 in 1931. (Painchaud 1988, 69) The expansion of Italian fascism, instigated by Benito Mussolini's rise as Prime Minister of Italy in 1922, contributed to ongoing notions of "*Italianita*."²² For Italian-Canadians, the fascist formula of *valorizzazione Italiani* gave them a basis of credibility from which to assert their historical presence, as discoverer of Canada. The sudden rise of "nostalgic nationalism" was both in line and in response to Canada's immigration quotas and restrictions directly targeted at Southern Italians in the 1920s. (Harney 1991b, 49) Further, *valorizzazione Italiani* also reflected Fascist ideals of being both revolutionary and traditionalist, especially in the quest of reviving Italy to its stupendous Roman past. (Ben-Ghiat 2004)

²² While no equivalent English term exists, *Italianita* generally seeks the promotion of an Italian national character by the Italian intelligentsia.

Beginning in the mid-1920s, the Montréal Italian-Canadian population sought to erect a statue of Venetian born Giovanni Caboto (John Cabot) recognizing him, as opposed to Jacques Cartier, as the discoverer of Canada.²³ While 1934 marked the fourth centenary of Jacques Cartier, this occasion also marked the culmination of the Giovanni Caboto campaign. For the Italian Consular²⁴ Giuseppe Brigidi, Caboto was regarded as a means of increasing Italian-Canadians sense of belonging - albeit artificial - in Canada, by attempting to catalogue an Italian cultural legacy to North American settlement, and to “advocate [for] an ethnic collectivity and community which was not a reality” due in part, to Italy’s historical balkanized past. (Harney 1991b, 50) The Italian-Canadian fascist press, *Il Cittadino*, began to define the Caboto campaign as “glorious”, “sacred” and “pure” and such a campaign led to a “union véritable entre eux, et avec leurs illustres ancêtres.” (Ramirez 1992, 89)

The campaign succeeded to the extent that an estimated \$10,000 was raised for the erection of a bronze sculpture with a stone pedestal in Caboto’s image. The “Caboto campaign” did not go unnoticed or unchallenged by the Francophone population, and the Montréal municipal council refused in 1933 to inscribe the words “Discoverer of Canada” on the pedestal stone. (Salvatore 1998, 23) While the Italian elite were at the forefront of the Caboto campaign, the Toronto-based Protestant newspaper, *La Favilla*, sought to encourage a sense of historical significance by stressing the importance of both Giovanni Caboto and Christopher Columbus. (Gualtieri 1991, 62)

The second most recent manifestation of the “Caboto Campaign” occurred in 1997, year of the quincentenary anniversary of Caboto’s voyage to Cape Breton Island and Newfoundland. As earlier addressed in my introduction, a commemorative stamp was issued simultaneously in Canada and Italy. Further, and again in Montréal, the Italian

²³ The Caboto statue continues to exist at the corner of Atwater and Sainte Catherine. (Salvatore 1998, 23)

²⁴ The scope of the Italian prominenti took on new meaning during the fascist period. As explained by Harney, “The Italian consular officials, immigrant bankers and colony intelligentsia had a virtual monopoly of contact with the homeland and further “so through the consular service, Fascist Italy intended to “guide the lives, co-ordinate and encourage the activities, encourage initiation of our people in foreign lands.” The immigrant would no longer be abandoned to his new proprietors; the regime hopes to keep him as much an Italian – with the rights and duties of the citizen – as it could.” (1991, 52-53) For further information on Italy’s attempt to foster a fascist *colonia* (colony) in North America and elsewhere, please see Filippo Salvatore’s “Facism and the Italian’s of Montréal: An Oral History, 1822-1945”

parish Madonna della Difesa commemorated Caboto as "*scopritore del Canada*" (discoverer of Canada) in the booklet printed for its annual procession.

The search for the North American Adam

By supporting the Caboto campaign, both the pan-nationalist and religious movements effectively shunned the historical role of sojourning and the presence of a largely Southern-based agriculturalist population, and further entrenched a Western hegemony in regards to Canadian history. While the 1920s marked the attempts of the Italian-Canadian community to situate itself as a fifteenth century historical player, Italian-Canadian settlement in Canada, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, only really began in the late nineteenth century. Similarly, it was Italian sojourners and not Giovanni Caboto or Christopher Columbus, who effectively set the framework for the future mass immigration of Italians to Canada, which enabled the transplant of the culture. Likewise, it was also during the post-WW2 era that Italian-Canadians began to establish the connections and terrains such as boarding houses, padroni systems and the "ambiente," which would lead to the "Little Italies" for new migrants. Lastly, Italy did not exist as either an ideological or geopolitical entity during the fifteenth century; therefore, how can Italians claim a Venetian explorer as an authentic member or player within their cultural legacy? Where did Giovanni Caboto's own loyalties lie? Did he regard himself as Italian or Venetian or British? (Harney 1992, 47)

The attempt to supersede the historical role of sojourners with a "founding nation" paradigm did not address the fundamental realities, issues, or goals of Italian settlement. Rather, such a process and pursuit reflects how the "terms of membership in the Canadian national body (such as colonization, or blood lines)" are to be negotiated in order to secure Whiteness, and hence privilege within Canada. (Fortier 1998, 31) To be accepted into the White hegemony, one needed to denote a particularly important or conflated past. Therefore, Italians engaged in what historian Robert Harney described as *scopritorismo*, the "hunt for the Italianita of warriors, priests, and explorers of Italian descent." (1992, 41) He goes on to critique this particular identity project by stating:

There is a risk in using claims of a 'glorious past' as a tactic to combat bigotry. Such usage implies that contemporaneous un glossed reality somehow provides the

bigoted with a legitimate case and assumes that when a people's 'glorious past' is made known, bigotry withers away. (1992, 40)

We know that a motivation for these historical claims was to counter Canadian immigration policy, which had become increasingly restrictive towards Italians during the 1920s, especially due to the racialized, nativistic, and stereotypical discourses associated to them. Or, as explained by Gualtieri, "It was necessary to encourage English Canadians to see past the humble material circumstances of most of their new immigrant neighbours to the glorious land of their provenance, and thus gain respect for them." (1991, 63) With the quincentenary celebrations in 1997, Italian-Canadians made another attempt, as astutely observed by Fortier, for a "neutralization of foreignness, as stated in the passage from the church booklet cited above: "we do not feel strangers in this beautiful country." (1998, 36) This settlement in part reflects the difficulties that Italian-Canadians have faced by being, even today, predominantly first and second-generation and the struggles of belonging and adapting to a new country. By presenting a more historical presence in Canada, Italian-Canadians "newness" (and hence foreignness) on Canadian soil may be relegated as a thing of the past.

However, I will argue in accordance with Pasquale Verdicchio that these claims and patterns of Canadian membership represent a form of "misguided nostalgia," (1998, 5) and hence are "measured in terms of the 'glories' of imperialism" (Fortier 1998, 36), which further entrenches a Eurocentric and colonialistic mind-frame in Canada. Essentially, by promulgating historical nostalgia (and the pursuit of Whiteness), Italian-Canadians, during both the fascist period and the quincentenary commemoration of Caboto's arrival on Canadian shores, failed to address the actual meaning of Caboto or reflect the realities of Italian emigration. Rather, the terms of membership to Canadian Whiteness connote, in particular, specific ways the concepts of "civility," and "Indigeneity." Daniel Coleman in *White Civility: the Literary Project of English Canada* goes on to explain:

the concept of civility, therefore, as it evolved under the contradictory impulses of Enlightenment modernity, could rationalize, first, the production of Aboriginal status and, then, its exclusion from the civil sphere, where equality and liberty were 'universally' enjoyed by means of the time-space image of progress, which represented Indigenous people as delayed in the process of civilization, as children

or primitives who must be educated before they could be welcomed into the advanced company of the civil. (2006, 14)

As previously discussed, the development of the Canadian state depended on Western diffusionism. This orientation towards and belief in “many new worlds” of different evolutionary stages can be interpreted according to Dutch anthropologist Johannes Fabian, as a “denial of coevalness.” In other words, Fabian does not believe in the ongoing assumptions or hypothesized stages of evolutionary development. Rather, Fabian uses the term “coeval to describe how colonized and colonizer share both geographic space (land); and temporal space (time).” (Calhune 1998, 43) It is this ongoing and persistent denial of coevalness that further fosters, according to Coleman, a “feeling of belatedness” (especially in regards to the contemporary presence of Italian-Canadians) and consequently:

the settler must construct, by a double process of speedy indigenization and accelerated self-civilization, his priority and superiority to latecomers: that is, by representing himself as already indigenous, the settler claims priority over newer immigrants and, by representing himself as already civilized, he claims superiority to Aborigines and other non-whites. (2006, 16)

In other words, the Caboto campaign enables Italian-Canadian to downplay their contemporary presence, by accelerating and accentuating their presumably “civilizing” mission that their “historical “ presence engenders. Like Coleman, Fortier also sees how political claims of national membership raises questions of “who is indigenous and what are the terms of definitions of indigenusness? How long does it take to become indigenous?” (Fortier 1998, 35) Yet, none of the settlers or their ongoing historical claims will ever secure Indigenous status.

Living in the past tense

While Italian-Canadians were significantly engaged after settlement in mirroring Canada's emphasis on legitimization, by claiming official status as one of the “founding nations,” this behaviour has not dissipated over time. Now some scholars, like Carafelli in “*The Making of Tradition*,” have argued that no one seems to question the settlement myths of either the Anglophone (or Francophone) North American past; specifically, how these two groups continue to deny their own immigrant status. (1999, 31) Similarly,

Harney is correct when he states “the manipulation of the past to create a pedigree in the present is not unique to any one ethnic group.” (1992, 37) Accordingly, it should not be surprising that when a nation denies its own complicity in projects of national racial formations, that migrant groups who have benefited from these practices, will more or less avert, deny, or overlook discussions involving their participation in racism in Canada. Yet, how groups go about creating or reinvigorating cultural heritage, particularly via the politics of history, is not without consequence. The making of Italian-Canadian traditions and claims to a historically elevated “pedigree” do not operate outside the role race has played in the creation of North America; rather, they reflect, and in turn, support racialized projects on a society-wide level.

If these “typical expressions” concerning the genesis of a Canadian identity project, particularly discourses of citizenship, do not go unchallenged they will continue to mask “the legacies of a not-so-new-nationalism.” (Fortier 2000, 71) As earlier addressed, Joyce Green defines the binding power of such beginnings as a process that “legitimizes a certain power structure” (1995) and further assists in the promulgation of what Green refers to as “Project Canada,” since history serves as a “collective construction of significant events that form a unifying mythology – unifying for those who are included; alienating for those who are excluded.” (1995, 2) “Project Canada,” argues Green, is the endorsement of a historical creation that solely sustains the imagination and interpretation of a colonist vision, imagined over the context of, or defined against, Aboriginality. Certainly, when society fails to write Aboriginal history, there is an unspoken message that the history is not worth telling. What ought to be central when examining the creation of Canada or Italy is how has history been imagined and who has the privilege of imagining it?

Being Italian is in one’s blood

As we have seen, one way that Italians asserted membership in the Canadian national body and hence Whiteness, was to complicate the discourse of who is “Indigenous” and for whom does Canada exist. The second term of membership rest in the discourse of “blood lines.” In other words, “narratives of the ‘right of blood’ are woven through a quest for the patriarchal pioneer who will secure claims of ethnic distinction and national belonging at once. The underlying assumption is that the past accomplishments of

'great men' somehow testify to the inherent qualities of the Italian culture, of which all Italians are the natural bearers." (Fortier 1998, 35) Similarly, Harney argues, "The noun, blood, despite its allegorical charm, refers to a genetic pool. Its unsophisticated use in our search for the "Adams" of each ethnic group in Canada is not harmless; it accustoms us to think in biological, somatic and racial terms about ethnic history and contemporary ethnicity." (1992, 49-50) Essentially, these pronouncements present not only a unified and united Italian ethnic front, but also presuppose a physiognomist's argument that "identity was formed on the basis of biology and heredity" (Wong 2006, 55) and therefore, culture and capacity were inseparable. Yet, Fortier reminds us to question how "cultural practices are reified and naturalized as 'typical expressions' of an ethnic identity; they are seen as resulting from that identity, rather than performing that identity." (2000, 5) In other words, culture is a performance, and habitual expressions of ethnicity are learnt as opposed to being innate (in this case, biological).

Like Harney and Fortier, Verdicchio has been critical of not only *italianita*, but also of Italian-Canadian scholar's ongoing ethnocentric perceptions of Italian-Canadians. To expect a million Italian-Canadians to express and identify the same values, the same historical narratives, the same patterns of national membership despite a diversity of class, education, and paesi (home towns) is unrealistic. As we have seen, the concept of *civilta italiana* or *italianita* attempts to erase paesi-centred migration. Chain migration, as introduced in Chapter 3, enabled Italian emigrants in Canada to sponsor family members, which often translated into entire villages or cities migrating to Canada. An essentialized portrayal of an Italian-Canadian culture is an effect a search for belonging, and a construct of the imagination. In other words, Verdicchio calls for Italian-Canadian scholars to question such static conceptions:

the majority of the work of Italian Canadians is rooted in a misguided nostalgia. Not a re-envisioning or re-telling of the immigrant experience as lived mostly by our parents and grandparents, which would indeed be a valuable point of reference if historicized and related to the root causes and effects of emigration. . . . We must recognize and emphasize the lives of those who came before us, document and preserve their stories, but we must also delve into the realities that created those individuals and the ones that resulted from their experiences, which, in turn, have gone to create the basis for our own existence as non-immigrants. (1998, 5)

Therefore, Italian-Canadian history ought to be seen in terms of a new counter-ideological position, which presupposes that ethnic group experience and claims to national membership ought not to be pursued via the romanticization of imperialism (especially in light of how Western modern societies have come to be conceptualized and defined vis-à-vis the larger world). Similarly, we also must refrain from relegating ethnic group experiences to a peripheral treatment in Canadian historiography, since such historiography has conditioned how future generations have come to exist.

The myth of meritocracy

Discussions on Italian-Canadian employment and “work ethic” – based largely on a capitalistic worldview – will illustrate the role of meritocracy in laying claims to Whiteness, and hence achieve the third condition to securing membership in the Canadian national White body. Essentially, Italian-Canadians claim to Whiteness has been further consolidated by emphasis on the standard European mobility model (Jacobson 1998; Roediger 1991; Ignatiev 1998; Iacovetta 2004; Caouette and Taylor 2007) in their works and scholarly portrayals. (Ramirez 1989; Iacovetta 2004; Perin 2000; Harney 1991b; Di-Scosiasti-Andrews 2008) In other words, how has the standard narrative that portrays European groups as “hard-working” people who arrived here with “nothing” offered as proof to the “openness” of Canada to which all other groups are judged against? Similarly, there is an underlying world view that propels these assertions, one based on the idea of capitalism.

Italian-Canadians often portray themselves or are portrayed by others as the “model immigrant group”; contending that their ethnic cultural traits, and hence “racialized” traits, predispose them to hard-work and success. Franca Iacovetta’s “*Such Hard-working People: Italian Immigrants in Post-war Toronto*” (2004) will provide the basis for my analysis. Iacovetta states that “*siamo lavoratori forte*” (“we are such hardworking people”) is a refrain that:

the Canadian-born children of the post-war immigrants who left the rural towns and villages of southern Italy for a better future here – have heard their parents describe themselves as hardworking people. . . . The late 1940s, the 1950s, and early 1960s were a time when, as this book documents, our parents, as newcomers to this land,

performed the dangerous or low-paying jobs that others shunned, spoke little English, and sometimes found themselves the victims of abuse. At the same time, they proved immensely resourceful, exhibiting a tremendous capacity for hard work and a talent for enjoying life, and each other's company, even in adversity. (2004, x)

I do not believe that Italian-Canadians can be represented as one single experience. However, the hard working people metaphor refrain within Italian-Canadian discourse reflects how the "terms of membership in the Canadian national body (such as through colonization, or blood lines)" are to be negotiated. (Fortier 1998, 31) I believe one such additional term of membership to the Canadian national body has been secured via the standard European mobility model. What this mobility model provides is a frame of reference – an image and a performance – of an honest, hardworking Italian immigrant worker. Equally, as proposed by Iacovetta, the hardworking immigrant narrative elicits both defence and sympathy for the often back-breaking work Italian workers had to endure within the city's lower rungs of the occupational ladder, and this model further fosters the status of "nationbuilders" among Italian-Canadians. (2004, 76)

Let us now examine the question of why did Italian-Canada discourse assume the forms and structures it did? The European mobility model attempts to present an ethnocentric understanding of Italian culture, while also claiming status within a pan-European ideal, and ongoing investments in the family and its relation to migration as an institutional site. Di Sciascio-Andrews perfectly reflects this paradigm when she states that "they brought with them a hard-work ethic and family values that were essential to their survival in Italy, and because of this, many of them achieved their dreams [in Canada]." (Di Sciascio-Andrews 2008, 15) As previously discussed, Southern Italian culture was purported to be and to have a particular cultural and physical characteristics. Yet, as Italian-Canadians began to settle in post-war Canada, patterns of allegiance and affiliation began to emerge. W.E.B DuBois has argued that, "It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage." (1999, 700) Although certain immigrants were leaving localized cultures, they were entering a highly industrial and urban centre. Harney states that "the new Italian immigrant workforce was intimately and complexly bound up

with the city's growth." (1991a, 44) Yet, what is missing from this quote is an analysis of how labour ideals and race relations are parallel systems of domination as we will further see below.

Reorienting Italian-Canadian scholarship and discourse

Fortier elucidates this point when she states "the reterritorialization of Italians . . . follows a path of capitalism and colonization. . . . and the legitimacy of the Italian presence is secured, through a narrative of historical achievements measured in terms of the 'glories' of capitalism and imperialism." (2000, 47-48) Subsequently, tales about suffering and sacrifice followed by integration and financial security do not operate outside of these paradigms. Rather, capitalism and imperialism have served as interconnected threads in stories of the burgeoning success Italian-Canadians have been able to achieve in such a relatively short time in Canada. Perhaps, it is time for Italian-Canadian scholars to make connections to these pre-existing systems of domination, and they ought to acknowledge what systems and via what terms of membership enabled the "making it in Canada" narratives to take form. I fear if we don't render visible the binary constructions within our historical and ideological narratives and locations, we will continue to foster structural and uneven boundaries between European-Canadians and other non-white Canadians. Individuals statements like that of Joseph Loguidice, "the immigrants in those days didn't have. . . the things today. . . or the help that they have today. Today is a cake walk. Everybody gets help. They didn't have no aid. . . like you have today. . . those people were too proud" or, as Al Riccardi told an interviewee in the early 1990s, "My people had a rough time, too. But nobody gave us something, so why do we owe them [be it African-Americans in United States or Aborigines in Canada] something? Let them pull their share like the rest of us had to." (Guglielmo and Salerno 2003, 9) go beyond the simple conception of hard work to racialized constructs. Meaning only exists in relation to its opposite. Therefore, to suggest that Italian-Canadians are "hard-working" is to suggest that someone or some group is not.

What I wish to emphasize in my study is, just as history is a racialized project, so too is the standard European mobility model. Such a concept relies almost exclusively on the concept of meritocracy, and reinforces a belief in the cherished ideals of Canada as

both free and egalitarian. Such an ideology serves White Canadians in three ways: first, it reinforces a belief that one's success is due solely to individual capacity, dedication, and hard-work; second, it denies that there exist both systematic barriers and racially subordinate communities in Canada; and third, it regards racism as an "anomaly" performed by "bad Whites" (such as members of fringe extremist race groups or by Nazi soldiers) as opposed to regarding racism as everyday practices performed by everyday people. (Caouette and Taylor 2007; Montgomery 2005; Schick & St. Denis 2005) The dependence on meritocracy, as a primary reason for Italian-Canadian success and integration, reinforces an ideology that their eventual privileged status is rightly deserved. Yet, Italians access to work (even back-breaking work) highlights privilege of opportunity that was above all restrictive in distribution.

Lastly, I wish to also point out a further contradictory behaviour within Italian-Canadian narratives. One could presumably claim, and one often hears in social settings, that Italian-Canadians due, to their relatively contemporary presence had "nothing to do" with Canada's displacement of and genocide towards First Nation communities. I have often heard the argument that "my mother" or my "grandfather" was not born in Canada and therefore the speaker is "absolved" from any racist behaviours and innocent of colonialism, imperialism, and genocide. Yet, I would argue that the Italian-Canadian community secured Whiteness vis-à-vis these practices by supporting and promulgating a racialized understanding of Canada as White and European.

The interplay of race and ethnicity

One of the challenges and potential criticisms of this thesis is to balance the notions of race, culture, migration, and identity/citizenship. Many scholars could argue that I have presented a limited reading of Italian-Canadian scholarship by not examining the role that ethnicity and ethno-cultural membership plays in our lives. The realm of ethnicity or the constructs of an individual culture are generally thought to be comprised of "ethnic distinctions [which] are socially maintained by such boundary markers as language, speech mannerisms, food, culture more broadly, and physical appearance, all of which can serve to identify group member to each other and to outsiders." (Alba 1985, 135) In light of critical cultural studies, two forms generally measure the role of acculturation: individual

and group assimilation. Assimilation of the individual occurs when one chooses or is forced to affiliate with a new group, thereby abandoning the constructs of their original ethnic boundary. The group assimilative approach is different where by as the individual moves across an ethnic boundary, the group's salient features are diminished, weakened and reduced as a whole.²⁵ Essentially, their group "distinctiveness" lessens with time, such as differences in occupational strata and residential locations.²⁶ Nonetheless, both elements of assimilation have been largely criticized for either being too individualistic and static in nature or having a too parochial and quintessential perception of a cultural perspective. I agree that ethnicity or ethnic boundaries are never static, nor can they be summarized from an essentialized or culturally deterministic perspective. Yet, I argue that, using only ethnic language to define and draw attention to the Italian-Canadian community denies a critical race reading of these narratives, and in many cases race trumps ethnicity. Italian-Canadian narratives, and hence attempts at a "collective vision" are premised on race.

Too often, immigrant groups are measured by what they do not have: linguistic fluency, mainstream values and beliefs, and societal roots. Immigrants are often perceived as peripheral to the larger culture. We ask for a finality to their "settlement," be it through the abandonment of their mother tongues, their customs and systems of belief, and alignment with North American concepts of familialism, before they are able to be the bearers of a true "Canadian" identity. Nevertheless, and like all immigrant groups, living outside the periphery often leads to creative sources of being. Perin has labeled such continuance/persistence as "*arrangiarsi*" ("making do or getting by"): "the term implies not the passivity as inherent in the image of the immigrant as outcast, but inventiveness,

²⁵ For further clarity on "straight-line" assimilation theorist of the 1970s, please see the work of Herbert Gans, especially his notions of "symbolic ethnicity."

²⁶ As theorist Higham (quoted in Patricia Boscia-Mule) explains: "assimilationism falsely assumes that ethnic ties dissolve fairly easily in an open society. . . [But] no ethnic group, once established in the United States [or Canada], has ever entirely disappeared; none seems about to do so. People are not as pliant as assimilationists have supposed. Pluralism makes the opposite mistake. It assumes a rigidity of ethnic boundaries and a fixity of group commitment which American life does not permit. . . . All American ethnic groups perpetuate themselves, but none survives intact. Their boundaries are more or less porous and elastic. . . . Pluralism encourages the further illusion that ethnic groups typically have high degree of internal solidarity. (1999, 235-236)

quick-wittedness, forethought; in other words, activity.” (1992, 11) Although, he is right to present a more realistic portrayal of Italian-Canadians as active conscious thinking members as opposed to passive, often infantile, static, and unassuming “new” citizens of both Italy and Canada, I question what this form of thinking implicitly denies. The very use of *arrangiarsi* and *italianita* enabled Italian Canadians to inflate or denote a particular presence, and hence viability in mainstream White culture.

In Canada, citizenship and identity formation have not only been managed by racial theories, but also influenced by multicultural policy. The 1971 national policy on multiculturalism enables a view noted by John Ralston Saul that “Canadians still see themselves as a society of minorities” -- a society without either an oppressor or the oppressed. (2001, A13) Yet, such an imagined perception attempts to remedy historical power structures in problematic ways since it allows Canadian “diversity” to appear as a “natural-historical phenomenon that has always existed,” (Day 2000, 20) and subsequently denies Green’s “Project Canada.” Eva Mackey argues that the Canadian “mosaic,” and the ideologies that multiculturalism engender, serve to maintain the myth of a tolerant nation by denying that a core cultural component continues to operate within the project of nation-building. She goes on to state “multiculturalism implicitly constructs the idea of a core English-Canadian culture, and that other cultures become ‘multicultural’ in relation to that unmarked, yet dominant, Anglo-Canadian core culture.” (2002, 2) The suggestion here is that Anglo-Canadian power and domination are then subsumed into static cultural conceptions of folklore and heritage as multiculturalism “came to function as the content of Canadian identity.” (Légaré 1995, 348) In other words, multiculturalism attempts to “prescribe” and “describe” an imagined social ideal. (Day 2000, 6) In the same way that multiculturalism fails to address systematic processes of oppression, it “placates its proponents with the idea that something is being done, thereby eliminating the need for any real interrogation of the role of systems of domination or of whiteness and its attendant systems of power.” (Sumara, Davis, and Laidlaw 2001, 165) In large part, multiculturalism endorses an ongoing perception of racelessness in Canadian thought and history, and this in turn denies that there exist racially subordinate communities in Canada.

By analyzing how Whiteness is produced in citizenship and formed in specific ways, we can begin to address how it in turn serves as a normalizing system in the construction of human and political affairs. Fortier has argued that “definitions of national belonging . . . are still grounded in the conflation of genealogy and geography.” (Fortier 1998, 35) The obsession with who traveled here first “secures claims of ethnic distinctions and national belonging at once.” (Fortier 1998, 35) The history of place served as a crucial site for the development of a national “body” as it neutralized the foreignness of pioneers (Fortier 1998, 36) while also dispossessing Aboriginal nations who were predetermined to be at odds with the ideals of a new nation, at least as those ideals came to be defined by the colonists. What needs to be highlighted and further documented, is how White settler myths – the “we were here first discourse” – are closely linked to ideas about the legitimate ownership and entitlement to the land and its resources. (Razack 2002) Secondly, we must also question the presumed “blood lines” this type of talk produces, and we must also question how key constituents (cultures who claim founding nation status) became synonymous with the image as Canada’s “nation-builders.”

Now, the Italian-Canadian quest to establish mythological roots on Canadian land has neither waned, nor responded to Verdicchio’s call for an end to “misguided nostalgia.” Contemporary stories of present day Italian-Canadians have not attained a central place. Rather, Italian-Canadian scholars continue to adopt a revisionist history by exploiting an ethnocentric and nationalistic use of history, which denies both the realities of Canada’s colonial past and that of Italian-Canadian contemporary history. Therefore the end result of “*scopritorismo*” was not to lessen Anglo-Canadian bigotry, but rather the hunt for a “glorious and heroic” Italian past in North America simply solidified Italian-Canadian as members of the White race.

The importance and need for new scholarship

Yet, I am encouraged by the work of a few Italian-American scholars, such as Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno in “*Are Italians White: How Race is Made in America*,” (2003) Rudolph J. Vecoli’s “*Are Italian Americans Just White Folks?*” and Australian scholars, such as Catherine Dewhirst’s “*Collaborating on Whiteness: Representing Italians in Early White Australia*” (2008) and Helen Andreoni’s “*Olive or*

White? The Colour of Italians in Australia” (2003) who have attempted to provide a serious investigation into their national histories, and how race is produced and used in concepts of nationhood. Italian-Canadian scholars ought to familiarize themselves with these works, and try to excavate the lives and histories of our culture, by, first and foremost, attempting to understand how first and second-generation Italian-Canadians have implicated themselves in Canadian racial systems; and secondly, by connecting both the cultural and material practices that perpetuate racism.

Conclusion

The chapter has analyzed and critiqued the formation of Italian immigrants as White Canadian subjects by examining the problematic, essentialized, and racialized narratives that were used to secure and stabilize this identity. I have shown that the new identity that Italian immigrants sought to acquire, reflected pre-existing racialized constructs within Canadian society. Lastly, I called for a need for a critical race analysis of and critique towards Italian-Canadian scholarship.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Riding Up the Escalator

in a hurry / ahead of me / were some Black teenagers / laughing & talking / My very first thought was / *Please live / Don't get shot or die from drugs / Same thing I pray / when I am near young Indians / though I see them less often / When I watch white kids / my mind goes blank / with deadtired fear / Try to get away from them / without being noticed / This is the garbage that racism / makes of me / Can't even look at children / sing clear to their Spirits / Though this isn't the worst / of what's been done to us / In the late afternoon blessing of brief sunlight / it hung me out to rot on a barbed wire fence / I could hear my bones weep.* (Chrystos 1995, 34)

From the opening chapter, I posed the question how certain groups assert their Whiteness as an identity and how and why groups become accepted as White. Throughout the thesis, I examined the process of racialization for Italians and how Italian-Canadian narratives rely on the concept of “Whiteness,” “nation-building,” and “belonging” to frame this encounter. As we have seen, Italians, particularly those from Southern Italy, have not always been acknowledged as White in Canada, but rather their Whiteness has resulted from choices made by both the immigrant group and those receiving them. I have argued that racial subjugation and unilateral political power cannot and does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, sources of domination must be given a voice and a methodology in which to indoctrinate new members. In other words, we have come to know the Italian-Canadian community through a myopic understanding of their past and contemporary presence; one that presumably presents a simple narrative of initial sacrifice and hardship culminating into tales of economic success and integration. Yet, these are not simple, disinterested stories operating outside of race, class, and gender. Rather, the discursive narratives created by Italian-Canadians are products of and located within pre-existing systems of domination inside Canada.

The creation of White subjects ought to be localized as an ongoing practice and project, especially since so little scholarship has attempted to do so in Canada. (Levine-Rasky, 2006) By analyzing how Whiteness is produced in citizenship and formed in specific ways, we can begin to address how it in turn serves as a normalizing system in the construction of human and political affairs. Further, anti-racist studies must also begin to attach critical race scholarship to identifiable groups within Canada, thereby lessening our dependence on American critical race theories and observations. By not pursuing our own stories, by not analyzing how we have constructed our own concepts of citizenry and terms of membership to a Canadian national “body,” we simply produce bad history that denies that Canada has had an equally violent and racialized past found in other colonial states. (Cook-Lynn 1996, 37)

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Italy’s place (or lack thereof) in the construction of modern Europe had an impact on how the Mediterranean peninsula came to be unified. As Italy became politically subaltern and presumably without the necessary tenets of a modern nation, the pressure to conform to an idea of the “West” resulted in the geographical division of Italy into two parts, a “European north” (hence White) and a “Non-European south” (hence non-white), and contributed to Italy’s Diaspora. As Chapters 3 and 4 illustrated, Italians came to a country invested in White supremacy in the form of Anglo-Saxon British subjectivity, and pre-existing ideas of the “original” people whereby displacing the true original inhabitants. Therefore, it was imperative to analyze both the politics of exit and entry, and hence how Whiteness eventually came to serve as a regulatory ideal for how Italian-Canadian scholars came to conceive both an Italian-Canadian “collective vision” and Canada as home.

Canadian race theories, particularly studies emphasizing Whiteness, remain far too abstract and essentialized. This thesis challenged the kind of thinking that reproduces the “West” and therefore “White citizens” as a stable, ahistorical, and homogenous political and discursive entity. In the Canadian context, we are often told “Europeanness” equals “Whiteness.” Yet, the markers of Whiteness migrate and to assume that all “Europeans” are or have been considered “White” is incorrect. Like Ruth Frankenberg, I believe that Whiteness has content as it “generates” ways of understanding history, self and others,

normativity, and notions of culture itself. (1993, 231) As we have seen throughout the thesis, Whiteness is negotiated and that Italian-Canadians negotiated their way into Whiteness. My primary aim was to situate Whiteness within its larger transnational and historical relations and processes, and to move Whiteness beyond Anglocentricity. Such a transition has not only conditioned the lives of Italian-Canadians, but will continue to mark the ways successive generations may come to exist as non-immigrants, as non-racially ambiguous, and as bearers of privilege based solely on the value their membership to a thing called “Whiteness” engenders.

Although beyond the scope of this thesis, there are many stories that need to be told. I believe these narratives may, if done properly, be able to impact in positive ways the relations and coalitions we are able to foster with each other. Anti-racist curriculum ought to begin to see and catalogue existing and ongoing emerging patterns of Canadian Whiteness, and hence domination. For example, one such pattern to analyze is the role of residence and “White flight.” Suburbanization is not an isolated phenomenon, but runs parallel with systems of domination and class mobility, especially when urban centres are perceived as “ethnic enclaves” (i.e. non-white). Similarly, anti-racist scholars ought to connect Whiteness with North American consumer habits. For all intent and purposes, Italy emerged in the twentieth century as a “high brow” culture in relation to its history, culture, and language. The Italian culture has become fully commodified and exported, and hence serves as an accepted and acceptable “normalizing” agent within definitions of Whiteness. When Italian words and products proliferate the Canadian consciousness, it is a direct sign of that culture’s expansion and acceptance into Canadian society. Similarly, the commercialization of Italian culture directly reflects the role of Whiteness, since one of its patterns is fundamentally an economic exchange - where bodies, ideas, and cultures are commodified for the consumption of the non-other. Although it is beyond the focus of this thesis, it would be interesting to analyze why and by what marketing tools did Bell Canada, a telecommunications giant in Canada, choose Italian words such as “*sympatico*” and “*solo*” to promote their products? Or how Italian food and terminologies, has become so ingrained in non-Italian settings (i.e. Starbucks, Second Cup), and how Italy has become

an important travel destination in which Italy is perceived as a “high culture” destination within Europe – a place that presumably embodies the very definitions of “civilization.”

For the purpose of this thesis, I have questioned the representation of race, history, migration, and identity/citizenship formation as a normalized, objective, static, and simple reality. Rather, identity formation particularly within the experiences of White racial formation are interconnected and interrelated and must be located within the processes of historically situated projects. (Omi and Winant 2002, 14) This means challenging the notion that racism is a cultural element and attribute of the non-white world. Whites must be challenged to rethink the very notion that race has in their lives. While Whiteness is a central defining metaphor in the images of peoplehood, and hence Canadian nationhood, the basis of its concepts are not formed through White skin; rather, its meaning is informed and measured by the boundaries of nonwhiteness. Therefore, it is paramount that we begin to have discussions on what it means to be a colonist in Canada. I believe these discussions matter since the social construction of race, and the privileging of Whiteness, has resulted in extreme forms of deprivation and long-term catastrophe. Further, we ought to question a myopic understanding of what it is, first and foremost, to be human.

A paper like this, with the cluster of themes it tackles and explores, gives me hope as opposed to despair concerning how Italian-Canadians, my culture, have allowed themselves via their anthologies and discursive practices, to become complicit and entangled in colonialistic and racialized discourses and dogmas. I wish that the thesis, with its underlying aims and pursuits, also provides the reader with a shared hope for having provided a historical and detailed account on the ways that race is socially constructed and negotiated in Canada. If this work allows others to see the genesis of this way of thinking -- how race is socially constructed and negotiated in Canada, via terms of membership to the Canadian national body or how themes of modernity presented a limited understanding of human nature -- it proves, at least in my mind, that this behaviour and the values they produce are not inevitable, or innate, but rather are learnt. As a result, if there is a genesis to this way of thinking and being, there is also implicitly a way out, and perhaps ways to unlearn.

Unless we address these binaries (i.e. civilized vs. barbaric, White vs. non-White) and how they have come to be constructed, located and historicized, we will continue to imprison each other into segregated camps of who to love and who to loathe, who to enrich and who to impoverish, who we want as neighbours and who we wish to remain as strangers, and finally, who's voices of the past are heard, who delegates the future, and who is written out. Perhaps, a key feature to any attempt at nationhood is to question if we, as a society, are contributing and promoting a process of social betterment or rather contributing to a process of social deterioration. This involves addressing the legacy of modernity, the legacy of colonialism, the legacy of White supremacy, the legacy of emigration, and the legacy of complicity and denial. Only then can we begin to invent and reinvent new modes of living one's life, new methods of relating to the various individuals with whom one comes in contact.

On a final note, and as we have seen, Canadian and Italian national discourse is not innocent or benevolent, nor are its discursive claims, especially historical, disinterested. Rather Canadian and Italian nationhood presupposes assumptions about ourselves, beliefs, and value choices of which we must be aware and about which it is possible and desirable to contest. As we have read in the introductory pages, 1997 marked the quincentenary anniversary of Giovanni Caboto's voyage to Cape Breton Island and Newfoundland; I will end by stating that 2008 saw the publication of Josie Di Sciascio-Andrews' book entitled *How the Italians Created Canada: From Giovanni Caboto to the Cultural Renaissance*, which leaves me to further believe in the urgency and timeliness of this discussion.

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