Italo-Australians and after: recent expressions of Italian Australian ethnicity and the migration experience

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An Italian presence in Australia can be traced from the very early years of white settlement. The first New South Wales census of 1828 lists some 23 likely names of Italian immigrants. By 1891 the number of Italians in Australia totaled 3890, increasing to approximately 33000 at the outbreak of the second world war. However, the main migration wave occurred after the war with 360,000 Italians arriving in Australia between 1947 and 1976, although approximately 28 per cent were ultimately to return to Italy. Since the 1970s the number of Italian born migrants has been decreasing. The 1991 census registered a total of 272000 Italian born in the whole of Australia and these had decreased to 238216 in 1996 of which 99123 in the state of Victoria (88131 in Melbourne) and 68085 in the state of NSW (53435 in Sydney). The 1996 census also registered 333886 second generation Italians and 367290 persons (mainly Italian born migrants and their children) who stated that they spoke Italian at home. In general terms, first generation Italian migrants in Australia display a slightly lower socioeconomic profile than the total population although they have a lower unemployment rate (7.1 per cent compared with 9.2 per cent overall) and 92.3 per cent own or are purchasing their own home (Hugo 1999: 94) while the second generation displays a high level of upward mobility (Vasta 1992a: 286-89). The Italian born population is an aging one with 36.9 per cent aged between 50 and 64 years in 1996 (almost three times the proportion for the total Australian population) and 31.2 per cent aged 65 years and over (compared with 12.1 per cent of the total population) (Hugo 1999: 94).

Constituting the largest non-Anglo-Celtic migrant group in Australia since the 1930s (a record which in the next few years will most probably pass back to the Chinese and ethnic Chinese migrant groups who comprised the largest NESB group during the second half of the 19th century), Italian migrants in Australia have been the subject of a considerable number of government reports, historical, sociological, linguistic and demographic studies and have themselves produced numerous texts, both fictional and non-fictional, related to their experiences. Many of the works that have examined Italian Australian ethnicity and the Italian migrant experience have appeared in the last 20 years and comprise: the history of Italian arrival and settlement in Australia, demographic and sociological aspects of the Italian Australian community, language and language learning, biographies, memoirs, autobiographies and oral histories, a body of creative writing (fiction and poetry), film and television (mainly by second generation Italians). A key element in the production of this corpus is the Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli through its provision of funding for research and publication of Italo-australiani. La popolazione di origine italiana in Australia (Castles et al. 1992a) and the corresponding English language edition Australia's Italians. Culture and community in a changing society (Castles et al. 1992b) as well as through the continuing publication of papers, reports, reviews and interviews in Altreitalie which not only provides a forum for on-going debate on Italian Australian themes and issues but also links this debate to the study of the Italian migration experience on a global basis as well to wider theoretical issues related to migration and ethnicity.

Space constraints prohibit an exhaustive treatment of all items published between 1980 and 2000. This paper consequently proposes to examine the current state of the art in Italian Australian studies by focusing on material produced after the publication of Italo-australiani, examining the main themes and issues relating to Italian Australian studies in the 1990s and updating the substantial bibliographical material provided in Castles et al. (1992a:417-41).
Biographical material related to Italians of historical relevance can be found in Pesman Cooper’s (1992a) book about Italian migration to Australia, the emergence of an Italo-Australian community and the way Italians have helped shape Australian society. It takes a multidisciplinary approach, drawing together contributions from sociologists, historians, language experts and community figures, incorporating and analysing the main prior studies on Italian-Australians. It is primarily about the history of Italian migration to Australia but is, rather, a study of the dynamics of social interaction and cultural change and the ways these affect both Australia’s Italians and the wider Australian society. It examines six major aspects of Italian migration to Australia: the economic contribution that Italian workers and entrepreneurs have made in construction, manufacturing and farming, the development of Italo-Australian social, cultural, religious and political networks, the formation of Italian neighbourhoods and community spaces and their relationship to premigration cultural, political and regional affinities, the linguistic, literary and artistic expressions of the Italo-Australian community, the position of Italo-Australian women as cultural custodians and of the second generation as cultural brokers, the effects of Anglo-Australian racism on Italian migrants. Italo-australiani also explores the transformations in Italo-Australian and Anglo-Australian identities and discusses the consequences for both Australia and the links between them. The thesis presented in the book is that the Italian presence in Australia has not only helped to open Australia to a greater diversity of European cultures but that it also paved the way for Anglo-Australian awareness of new geopolitical realities at a time that has marked Australia’s transition from a distant anglo-centric outpost of Great Britain to seeking its identity as a nation within the Asia Pacific region. As such Italo-australiani breaks new ground in that it places the Italian migration experience and the question of Italo-Australian ethnicity in the wider context not only of an emerging awareness of Australian identity but in a perspective of a process of globalisation arising from the international communicative networks brought about through return migration and the maintenance of links with the area of origin.

Although Italo-australiani was not intended as a history of Italian migration to Australia, it nonetheless provides a critical analysis of early Italian migration to Australia within the wider context of European settlement of the continent (Alcorso 1992), a chronology of the history of Italian migration to Australia between 1788 and 1940 (Cecilia 1992) and an analysis of postwar Italian migration patterns (Castles and Vasta 1992). This section of the book can be seen as an integral part of substantial activity of research and publication on the historical aspects of the Italian presence in Australia that, in the 1980s, has seen the production of general works such as Cecilia’s (1985) account of the history of Italian migration to the 1940s and Cresciani’s (1985) expression of the migration and settlement of Italians based on his collaboration with the documentary series produced by ABC TV as well as Gentili’s (1983) study of Italians in Western Australia between 1829 and 1946, Volpato’s (1983) account of the 19th century New Italian settlement in Northern New South Wales and Bossi’s (1989) history of Italian missionaries in Australia. Bosi’s account is a particularly singular one since, unlike the generic studies on migration and settlement or the ones that deal with more or less specific localised areas both in terms of origin and destination, it traces, albeit in a journalistic mode, the contours of Catholicism as practiced by Italian priests in Australia from the first missionaries who came out in the 1840s to assist in the conversion of the Aborigines through to the 20th century when Italian priests, especially the Capuchin and Scalabrinian orders from the late 1940s on, played a role more specifically targeted to Italian migrants.

Work on the history of Italian migration and settlement in Australia has continued to be substantial in the 1990s with slightly less than 20 per cent of the items in the following bibliography being historically related and has tended to be less generic, somewhat more focused and, to some extent, more varied. The books edited by Ugolini (1991) and Rando and Arrighi (1993) — both containing the proceedings of conferences held on the occasion of Australia’s bicentenary — present various aspects of Italian migration to Australia and the relations between the two countries between 1788 and 1988 while Bosworth and Ugolini (1992) focus on aspects of post world war II history and sociology. A particular feature is the history of Italians in specific localities. D’Aprano (1995) has produced a richly documented and detailed monograph on Italians in Victoria in the 19th century. More attention with O’Connor (1996), concentrating on the period between 1839 and 1940, Chessell (1999a and 1999b) providing a detailed exposition of the Italian contribution to the area of Norwood from the late 1800s to the present and Corrieri (1992) examining the social story of Italians in Port Pirie. A popularised pictorial history of Italians in Western Australia is to be found in Miller (1995) while the Italian presence in Fremantle (Western Australia) is the subject of a scholarly and finely researched study by Bosworth and Bosworth (1993). Little has been done in relation to NSW though Jenkins’ (1993) account of Italians in Lismore is an interesting link to the 19th century New Italy episode as many of the descendants of that group ultimately settled in the Lismore area and a substantial part of Marinato’s (1996) biography is dedicated to recollections of three generations of Eoliani in Watson Bay during the first seven decades of the twentieth century. Likewise Dalmatino’s (1994) memoirs present a detailed picture of Italians in the North Queensland sugar belt in the 1920s and the 1930s. Studies of groups from specific areas in Italy are found in Jannow’s (1996) account of the Piemontesi in Australia and, Cresciani’s (1999) work on the Giuliano-Dalmati although, strangely enough, nothing has been produced on the «large» regional groups (Scilianis, Calabresi and Venet). An expansion of work on Italian Australian media published in Alcorso et al (1992) is found in Rando (1993) which provides a historical analysis of the Italian language press in Australia from 1885 to 1985 while Montagnana (1993) gives a detailed account of the foundations and fortunes of the Italo-Australian newspaper sponsored by the Italian Libera movement, Il Risveglio, first published after the closure of the Italian-Australian press by the Australian authorities in 1940. Cultural history is represented with Mayne’s (1997) account of the Melbourne Dante Alighieri Society from its foundation at the end of the 1800s to the present while the salient aspects of Italian Australian literary history are contained in Arnighi (1991:1-71). Biographical material related to Italians of historical relevance can be found in Pesman Cooper’s (1990) edited proceedings of a conference on Alessandro Malaspina, Giorgi’s (1998) biography of...
Stombo, the architect who gave a considerable contribution to the building of Brisbane and Rando’s (2000) work on Raffaello Carboni and the Eureka Stockade. A peripheral but nevertheless interesting document is Andreoni’s (1995) novel based on the Italo-Australian environment of the North Queensland cane fields of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the discussion of historical perspectives the role of Altreitalie has been particularly relevant by providing a forum for debating issues linking migration and national history (Bosworth 1990) as well as aspects of the Italian global diaspora (Pesman Cooper et al. 1997). Altreitalie has also been a key articulation of Pesman Cooper’s (1993 and 1996) work on images of Italian Australian women over time. Boncompagni’s (1999) account of the hostile treatment of Tuscan migrants in rural Western Australia in the 1920s and the 1930s and Simini’s (1996) study of Pietro Munari, a textile worker from Schio who emigrated to Australia in the 1890s and took an active interest in Australian politics participating in the debates which gave birth to the Labour Party and contributing to the foundation of an International Socialist Club in Sydney.

Substantial information on documentary sources is found in Cresciani (1992) while articles dealing with Italian Australian literary history are Rando (1991) and Rando (1994).

The post world war II settlement experience with the subsequent construction of community networks and institutions, the establishment of a sense of space, ritual and identity, the situation of Italo-Australian women and the second generation constitute major themes in Italo-australiaini as well as the main contribution of the book to Italian Australian studies in that it brings together a number of interlinked aspects that had hitherto been treated in a disparate and sometimes piecemeal manner. Although a study as consistent and coherent as that presented in Italo-australiaini has not hitherto been published, further treatment of these topics is found in the volume edited by Pascoe and Ronayne (1998) which deals with a number of issues and themes relating to Italian Australian sociology and history. In Italo-australiaini Pascoe (1992) had provided an extremely interesting analysis of how the different phases of Italian migration to Australia has led to the formation of communities, the development of neighbourhodships and the constitution of spaces and rituals. Pittarello (1993) describes how Italian Australians have transported and adapted their religious practices and how their experiences can be compared and contrasted to the dominant Irish-Australian Catholicism while expressions of Italian popular religion in South Australia are the subject of the study by Paganoni and O’Connor (1999). A brief exposition of Italo-Australian women’s identity and roles is found in Gucciardo-Masci and Romanin (1988) while Boulet et al (1994) provide a literature review of Italian Australian women’s health issues. Aspects of Italian Australian women’s role and identity have also been expressed through theater (Calabrese 1994) for both first and second generations and film (Aquila 1999) for second generation women. There is some reference to racism and Italian Australians in Vasta and Castles (1996) and to citizenship issues in Vasta (2000). A group that has attracted particular attention both because of its numbers and because of its presence since the late 1800s are migrants from the Isole Eolie. Giuffré (1999) provides a detailed study of the postwar migration and settlement experience of the Sydney Eolian community with some general details of the history of migration to Australia from the Isola Eolie. Her work covers aspects related both to the first generation (including permanent / temporary return and rites of passage) as well as second generation (questions of identity, language, relationship to the parents’ place of origin). These later issues in relation to the community in Salisbury (SA) are treated Carew’s (1997) biography.

Altreitalie has provided an important forum both for the discussion of ethnicity and culture in Australian society (Smolicz 1992) and of Italian Australian identity and a sense of place within Australian society (Rando 1990b) while aspects of Italian ethnic identity in Western Australia are dealt with in Bosworth (1995). Cultural and social change in relation to Italian Australian women and the second generation is presented in Vasta (1993) continuing her work published in Italo-australiaini (Vasta 1992b and 1992a) while Rando (1990c) reviews first and second generation Italian Australian women’s memoirs and Pesman Cooper (1993) discusses Italian Australian women’s role and identity.

One of the chapters in Italo-australiaini (Rando and Leoni 1992) provided an overview of the Italian language in Australia and its dynamic interaction with the dominant English-speaking environment, topics that have inspired the production of a considerable number of journal articles, book chapters and edited books but relatively few monographs. Kinder (1990) provides a critical review of research and publication in this area from 1967 to 1988 while Baldassari (1994) and Baldassari (1999: 19-44) present a detailed analysis of work done from 1988 to 1999, noting that most studies have concentrated on language change and language shift in first generation migrants with relatively little being done for the second generation. One comprehensive study of lexicological usage in a sample of 222 first generation speakers is Leoni (1995) whose thesis is that the Australian variety of Italian is based on «popolare» Italian (italiano popolare), a thesis already anticipated in Italo-australiaini (Rando and Leoni 1992:311) which in this later work is elaborated and richly documented. Equally rich and detailed documentation is found in Baldassari (1999) who examines the variety of Italian used by a sample of 90 adult second generation speakers in the Illawarra, the circumstances and domains in which they speak Italian and their attitudes to the language, and the switch in personality that accompanies the switch from English to Italian for some of the sample. She reaches the conclusion that Italian Australian is the variety commonly used by the second generation, that its use and maintenance is an important issue for those subjects who do not wish to lose the language and culture of their parents and that is through this variety «che la seconda generazione mantiene e fa avanzare la lingua italiana in Australia, perché è il linguaggio meglio conosciuto e quello che viene usato quotidianamente» (Baldassari 1999:214).

Bettoni and Rubino (1996) have studied a sample of 202 subjects, half first and half second generation, from Sicily and the Veneto regions finding that there is a tendency to language shift towards monolingualism in English for both generations caused principally by the «distanza geografica dall'Italia, l'invecchiamento della prima generazione e la mancanza di nuovi arrivi» (Bettoni and Rubino 1996: 175) but that there are also factors promoting first language maintenance such as «la relativa consistenza del gruppo e l'iniziale concentrazione nelle zone urbane e... la coesione familiare relativamente forte» (Bettoni and Rubino 1996: 175). Altreitalie has provided a very recent contribution to the debate with the publication of Chiyo and Smolczis’s (1998) study based on students of Italian ancestry.
Luigi Strano, born in Castelluccio (province of Reggio Calabria) in 1913, emigrated to Sydney in 1929 and his account provides a continuity of experiences over a time span stretching across seventy years. He made only three brief trips to Italy in 1971, 1977 and 1992. Strano’s many business activities (market gardener, travel agent, Real Estate agent, translator and interpreter recognised by the NSW courts) as well as his considerable cultural interests (as a poet and through his friendship with Jan Gray, Australian writers such as John Taylor and artists such as John Henshaw) have brought him into contact with many facets of Australian as well as Italian Australian life, (Justice of the Peace) and academic recognition (Master of Arts, honoris causa, University of Wollongong in 1985). Strano is currently enjoying an active retirement in the Blue Mountains some two hour’s drive from Sydney, a place for him of poetic inspiration and philosophic contemplation where «giunto all’età di ottantasei anni, abbastanza noto, in buona salute e senza preoccupazioni finanziarie, dovrei essere lieto di vivere in un luogo come Mount Wilson, i miei ultimi anni che mi rimangono; e lieto lo sono, perché abbastanza filosofo; riconosco che non ci sono rose senza spine» (Strano 1999: 94).

Carmelo Caruso (1998 and 1999), who was born in Licodia Eubea (province of Catania) in 1929, relates how he qualified as a master tailor in Italy before emigrating to Ayr (North Queensland) in 1951, later settling in Brisbane in 1953 where he became a noted businessman as well as Italian community radio announcer and newspaper correspondent for the Sydney based La Fiamma. His many welfare, cultural and social activities on behalf of the Brisbane Italian community (particularly as President of ANPE) have earned him recognition from both Italian (Commissariato dell’Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana) and Australian (Medal of the Order of Australia) governments while his interests and activities involve frequent travel between Australia and Italy, places which are both sentimentally rewarding and where he is equally at home given that «[la] stima di cui oggi godo è frutto di un diuturno lavoro nel Paese che mi ospita e che non mi ha mai impedito di rimanere legato all’Italia, la patria che porto nel cuore» (Caruso 1998: 354). Similar positive attitudes towards her native Salina, land of capers and South Australia, where the quandong grows wild, are expressed in the memoirs of Zita Carew (1997) who came to Australia with her family in 1920 as a small child and for whom the place of origin becomes an important symbolic referent in the perception of her cultural identity.

Claudio Alcorso, born in Rome in 1913, arrived in Sydney (changing his surname from Piperno in the process) at the beginning of 1958 as a refugee from Fascist Italy’s impending antisemitic laws. He established a screen-printing factory for dress materials at a time when Australia showed the highest per capita consumption of printed dress fabrics and no local production only to be interned for three and a half years during the war despite his offer to volunteer for service with the RAAF. As an entrepreneur, Alcorso gave a considerable contribution to the Australian textile industry and has established the Moorilla winery in Tasmania. A passionate participant in political and cultural life with a keen interest in environmental issues, he has been actively involved with the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and the Australian Opera and has participated in the Franklin river dispute. Now in retirement, he lives at Moorilla where his «search for a haven, a search that all migrants pursue and not many find, has ended» (Alcorso 1993: 165) in the hope that the vineyard may «endure for thousands of years, as did the vineyards in my native country, at Moorilla’s antipodes, planted by Greek colonists 25 centuries ago» (Alcorso 1993: 166).

Sugar, Tears and Eyeties (Dalseno 1994) are the memoirs of Pierino (later renamed Peter) Dalseno who arrived in Australia from Venice when only a few months old. It presents a second generation perspective about growing up Italian in the North Queensland cane fields in the 1930s, an area heavily influenced by the Italian presence but where, despite attempts to «fit in,» ethnicity proved to be an eternal marker of difference leaving the second generation as not quite Italian and not quite Australian. As well as his story and that of his family, Dalseno provides a background of relations between Australians and Italians in the area, accounts of the Italian families with whom he came in contact and stories which emphasise differences between Northern and Southern Italians as well as some of the common customs and rituals practiced by the Sicilian migrants such as proxy marriages and vendette, aspects that to some extent parallel themes in Andreoni (1995). The memoir ends with the outbreak of the second world war and Peter's experience of internment as an enemy alien in the bitter realization that the «Naturalization Certificate that attested to his allegiance to the Crown and that influenced his pride in citizenship . . . [was] valueless in a moral and civic sense» (Dalseno 1994: 200). Additional generational perspectives are presented in Marinato (1996) in his account of the Watson Bay shop in the Sydney area run by three generations of his family from 1904 to 1968.

Perspectives on the migration experience and the question of ethnic identity are also found in creative literature, theater and film (Rando 1992: 329-34) with, once again, Albreitatie providing an opportunity for discussing specific themes in Italian Australian literature (Rando 1997a) as well as particular authors (Rando 1998b) and the expression of Italian Australian ethnic identity through Italian Australian cinema (Rando 1997b). Recent literary production by Italian Australian first generation authors includes the autobiographically based novel by Enoe Di Stefano (1996), a sensitively told and sometimes moving story about the arrival experiences of a primary school teacher (Nica) and her lawyer husband (Enzo) who migrate to Sydney in the early 1950s only to find a society that recognizes neither their qualifications nor their aspirations. Nica and Enzo, who had left Italy partly because of the threat of conscription to secure a better future for their yet unborn children, never quite lose their initial optimism despite initial problems posed by hard manual labour and the struggle to purchase their own house. However, this is at the price of subjugating their intellectual and artistic aspirations to the achievement of material goals. Nica is somewhat reluctant to fully accept the new country and its values because her materialistic aspirations are less intense than Enzo's and it is only with the birth of their first child that she feels a definite commitment to the new
country, a commitment reinforced at the conclusion of the novel when Nica, finally settled into her own home (thus having quickly achieved one of the goals of the great Australian dream) and with her brother about to arrive from Italy, finds that she is pregnant again. The existentialist dilemmas resulting from long-term settlement is one of the main themes of Antonio Casella’s (1991) novel that relates the story of the Amedeo family narrated by Joyce and Nick Amedeo and by Nick’s employee Steven Lambert. From his beginnings as a poorly educated child migrant who arrived in Fremantle in 1938, Nick Amedeo has achieved substantial material success in the construction business during his forty or so years in Australia. He has, a mansion, a Mercedes, a retinue of dependents, a devoted Australian wife and a Greek Australian mistress. However, events conspire to unravel the solid world he has created and a succession of developments forces both Joyce and Nick to confront themselves and their personal histories. The past invades the present as they embark on separate journeys into the world of their early childhood and adolescence. Joyce’s journey through dream and memory takes her to the north-west of Western Australia, a vast alien world feared by its white inhabitants, while Nick returns in spirit to the myths and rituals of the mountains of Sicily, a «country of eagle’s nest villages hanging precariously from white clay ridges in the sun» (Casella 1991: 4) that he has never revisited since his migration to Australia.

Strikingly vibrant is the novel by Australian born Melina Marchetta (1992) which, although written primarily for a teenage audience, has enjoyed considerable success, having been turned into a theatrical production in 1995, into a film in 1999 as well as being adopted as a textbook for literature subjects in some Australian schools with an accompanying study guide (Tudball et al. 1999). Josephine Alibrandi is seventeen, illegitimate, and in her final year at an exclusive Sydney Catholic girls’ school where she is an extremely bright and talented student but somewhat rebellious and continually troubled by taunts from some of her angloceltic peers (who belong to much wealthier families) about her ethnic and socioeconomic background. This is the year her father, a successful barrister, comes back into her life, the year she falls in love (making choices seemingly dictated in part by not altogether unambiguous ethnocultural considerations), the year she discovers the secrets of her family's past and the year she sets herself free by resolving the problems surrounding her identity and her place in the order of things. A central theme is the story of the three generations of Italian Australian women: the strong-willed grandmother who insists on maintaining traditional language and cultural mores, the Australian-born mother who has never been able to live down the shame imposed by the Italo-Australian community of having had an illegitimate child and Josephine who is caught between the rigid expectations imposed by the community and the need to share the life-style and aspirations of her angloceltic peers. It is only by persuading both her grandmother and mother to share and to accept closely held secrets of past life experiences (involving the grandmother’s secret love affair with an Australian cane cutter and the resulting birth of her mother) that she is able to achieve self-determination and the ability to live freely both in the Italo-Australian community and the wider Australian society.

The first substantial study on Italian Australian poetry (Niscoli 1996) examines the poetry of four major Italian-Australian poets (Luigi Strano, Enzo Di Stefano, Lino Concas and Mariano Coreno) within the context of a discourse based on the concepts of multiculturalism, ethnic minority writing and literary merit together with an exhaustive analysis of the themes presented in their poetry as well as a very comprehensive bibliographical and bibliographical documentation. The production of poetry has led to the publication of an anthology (Genovesi 1991) as well as collections by several authors with Luigi Strano as the most representative first generation poet and Gary Catalano as the chief representative of the second generation. While not all their poetry is tied to migrant themes or questions of ethnocultural identity, some of Catalano’s work provides reminiscences and reflections on his Italian roots and on his family’s place of origin on the slopes of Etna and some of Strano’s poetry explores themes tied to the existentialist condition of the migrant experience, the poet’s identification with the Australian bush and its spiritual values as well as the relationship between the migrant and the host society. An example of this later theme is found in a short poem written in English, Australian alien (Strano 1992: 6):

It all depends
on what happened yesterday;
it all depends
on what the papers say;
whether today
you are a wog,
a New Australian
or an alien.

An aspect of Italian Australian theater is researched in Calabrese (1994) which examines the theatrical production of Adelaide-based Doppio Teatro in relation to its cultural and social context, its interaction with both the Italian Australian and the Anglo Australian communities and the reasons for its appeal to «anglo» Australians and second rather than first generation Italo-Australians. Her conclusion that Doppio Teatro’s work is not a critique of the hegemonic system is a debatable one since it could be argued that the exposition of aspects of the migrant condition (including stereotypes) in some of Doppio Teatro’s productions is in itself a statement of a subordinate position with respect to the hegemonic system and hence an implicit if not an explicit form of denunciation. In fact, Doppio Teatro is the longest-surviving theater group that has consistently explored issues of Italian Australian ethnicity and identity, offering a mix of entertainment-oriented and «serious» productions that present commitment and notions of empowerment. Tinto di Rosso (produced in 1991) is based on the historical context of internment experienced by thousands of Italo-Australian men during the second world war who were treated as «enemy aliens» irrespective of their status or political ideas and depicts the tragic death of anti-Fascist activist Francesco Fantin at Loveday internment camp. Breaking the Silence (produced in various Australian locations in 1993) deals with the symbolic journey of first generation migrant women from rural origins to an alienating industrially-based host society and the quest for identity of the second generation.

Doppio Teatro’s activity is matched in occasional productions by local groups, one of the latest examples being Italian Stories. True tales of the Illawarra (produced in Wollongong in...
Since the 1980s and the 1990s, Altreitalie has consistently supported the continuing debate on the Italian Australian migration experience, ethnicity and cultural identity by giving a voice to a wide variety of theoretical approaches and methodologies as well as to both experts in their particular fields and to generalists. It has also enabled links between Italian Australian studies and studies relating to the Italian diaspora throughout the world as well as a forum for the debate of wider questions on migration and ethnicity. As Italian communities throughout the world change over time through the dynamic interaction with their respective host societies and in response to new geopolitical realities as well as the continuing trends to globalisation that mark the beginning of the 21st century, it is to be hoped that Altreitalie will continue to provide a voice for the documentation and discussion of this process.

Endnotes

1 Munari also acted as correspondent for the socialist press in Italy, reporting especially on the Australian Labour movement, the Federation debate and generally presenting a view of Australian society as one moving towards a sort of Fabian-style socialism. His experiences in Australia are incorporated in a book he subsequently published in Italy (Munari 1897).

2 Prior to the 1990s the Eoliani had been the subject of studies by Charles Price (statistics and demographics), John Stuart MacDonald (chain migration), Triaca Santospirito (literary aspects), Celeste Russo (Società Mutuo Soccorso Isola Eolie of Melbourne), Charles Gamba (Italian fishermen in Fremantle) and Joseph Raffa (biography / generational identity / Fremantle community).

3 Antonio Casella is an interesting exception among first generation Italian Australian novelists in that he writes exclusively in English. He migrated to Western Australia with his family from a small mountain village in Sicily in 1959 at the age of 15, with no knowledge of English working in an ironfoundry, as a painter, and briefly at the Wittenoom asbestos mine while attending night classes. At the age of 25 he enroled at University and in 1974 became a secondary school teacher.
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Perceptions of Italian migrants in Australia have been driven by the insecurities and anxieties of post-colonial Australia and by prejudices and stereotypes inherited from English views of Mediterranean cultures. The multiple identities more. Perceptions of Italian migrants in Australia have been driven by the insecurities and anxieties of post-colonial Australia and by prejudices and stereotypes inherited from English views of Mediterranean cultures. The multiple identities of the Italians – regional, cultural, political – provoked varied and contradictory responses. Rapporti Italo-Australiani.

Total population. Italian Australians comprise the sixth largest ethnic group in Australia, with the 2016 census finding 4.6% of the population (1,000,013 people) claiming ancestry from Italy be they migrants to Australia or their descendants born in Australia of Italian heritage. The 2016 census counted 174,044 people (2.8% of the foreign born population) who were born in Italy, down from 199,124 in the 2006 census. In 2011, 916,100 persons identified themselves as having Italian ancestry, either alone or in combination with another ancestry (4.6%). By 2016, Italian was identified as the fifth...