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The Italian Americans in Los Angeles  
Representations of Identity and Community

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requirements for the degree Master of Art  
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by

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

### The Italian Americans in Los Angeles Representations of Identity and Community

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This thesis discusses the creation of an ethnic identity, as the tie that unites the Los Angeles Italian American community. Recent research on identity has proposed to look at it as enactment, through language, of a "repertoire of identities" among which the individual can choose. People are agents, presenting and representing their speaking "personae" through narratives of identity. Community is built of a net of relationship, and communicational sharing.

I videotaped communal events, such as feasts in honor of important Saints, dinner parties and dances, and conversations in the more private setting of the house. I used Narrative Analysis, to show the interplay of linguistic, prosemic, and metacommunicative levels in the representation of identity. I considered the numerous codes used (English, "ItalEnglish", Italian and its dialects), the code switching and mixing, the narrative style, the storytelling, and the descriptions of "self and other"

from unstable points of view, as elements of this construction, interplaying at different levels of the discourse.

Two are the key elements: the relationship between the speaker and his or her audience; and the polyphony of voices that are enacted and represented. In the first case, memories, symbols, and rhetoric art are deployed to imagine a common ground of reality, a history apart that connects Italy and America. In the second case, duality of cultural symbols and plurality of speaking personae bring in the rapport the complexity of the interaction between the human need of freedom and that of communality.

## INTRODUCTION

This research intends to furnish an analysis of the Italian American community in Los Angeles, through the image that they project, both to themselves and to others, in communication. As those of many other minority groups, this image is at times an oppositional one: opposed to the stereotypes of the media. Opposed also to other stereotypes, those created by modern “humanistic” studies, freezing and condemning the Italian Americans to the actions of the desperate immigrant of the beginning of the century. I see this image as constituting the Italian American construction of a sense of ethnic identity. I see this identity, in turn, as being at the base of the creation and upholding of a distinguishable community.

Throughout this thesis, an important goal has been to show the fluidity and the polyphonic construction of ethnic identity. Construction of identity is not something that has happened once and for all. It happens again and again. Here, there is a continuity between what I will call the “private” and the “public”. Passing from chapter to chapter, then, the reader should keep in mind that at both levels the important unit is the “encounter”. Both private and community events are formed through one, many, or a series, of encounters.

This research is also an attempt to bridge a gap in the already existing research on the Italian American community. While the Italian American ethnicity has been often discussed in scholarship, few are the studies that use fieldwork to address its formation. Those which do so indeed, usually focus on the macro-level, the rituals, and other religious or traditional community events.

Another area insufficiently explored, is the Italian American's language use. Here, many studies focus on the Ital-English code, and base themselves on literature, or on a series of examples gathered at the beginning of the century, instead of doing actual fieldwork in today's communities. A notable exception is the work of R. Di Pietro (1961; 1976; 1977). We must keep in mind that the Ital-English code is practically no more in use today. What kind of language(s) are the Italian Americans using? And how is their usage relevant for the maintenance of a distinguishable identity? The first question has been partially answered by a series of brilliant studies by Y. Correa-Zoli (1981). To the second question, I have tried to give a partial answer in the following chapters. In doing so, I had to find a way, to connect the public events with the private moments, the Italian American community to the Italian American individual, and the conversation to the chorus.

From its beginning in the last century, the cultural and natural environment of the Los Angeles Basin conjured to make the Italian American community a very particular one. The great availability of fertile land encouraged a dispersal of the urban area in general, with the development of a series of small, dispersed zones of habitation. The first immigrants to arrive from Italy fused with the Spanish population. They settled around Olvera Street, the Elisian park, in the central hills



where today is the business center of downtown Los Angeles, and in the coastal town of San Pedro. Even in those areas, they did not constitute ethnic enclaves, similar to those of the immigrant slums of the eastern cities. They lived in neighborhoods populated by several other groups, among which were Germans, Latinos, Chinese, and Anglos. From these, they spread out in the Basin moving at the pace of the developing metropolis. This singularity makes the Los Angeles community a very important area of research.

Today, the Italian American population in the Los Angeles area can be estimated to be around 500,000<sup>1</sup>, and it cannot be identified with any particular part of the city. The Italian American community, does not have a recognizable, limited spatial boundary, unless this can be seen as coinciding with the boundary of the city itself. It does, though, have *hearts*. These are those places where the “connected” community gets together to participate in significant events. They are often associated with religious institutions: churches and associations that, to various degrees, rotate around the churches. If there is something physical that connects the Italian Americans, it is the Los Angeles’ telephone lines of the GTE. A stronger boundary, but not a physical one, is that of a common identity, upheld in infinite forms: the church, the club, the decision of a third generation Italian American to start to study the Italian language.

I talk about “connected” community to distinguish it from what could be called an “ideal” one. The definition of the Italian American community is made complex by the fact that there are several Italian and Italian American groups intersecting in Los Angeles today. Even if many, or even most of them can refer to an Italian American community, of which they feel to be part, they may be thinking to different things.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a conservative figure. Officially, there are around 1 million Italian Americans in California. Unofficial estimates are higher. See A. Rolle, 1968.

The majority of the people of Italian origin define themselves to various degrees as being part of what can be seen as an expanded, conceptual or ideal community. This probably is perceived as referring to all the Italian Americans in California, or even in the United States, and it does not imply a recognition and participation to the material hearths of the Los Angeles' one<sup>2</sup>.

Gregory Bateson has shown that we acquire knowledge through perception of differences (1979). When I have observed an Italian American church or ritual, my attention has fallen on the differences between it and my previous experience of Italian Catholic churches and rituals. This is my point of view, from where I can see certain differences or similarities, but not others. Therefore I cannot give a "total" image of the Italian Americans, still less a "definitive" one. Though I think my work is important, because respect to the mainstream of American Anthropology, my view is a view from the "other" side. Lila Abu-Lughod has called it being a "Halfie": not a native, and not completely a stranger. Talking about feminist anthropologist and "halfies" she wrote that they share:

“a blocked ability to comfortably assume the self of anthropology. For both, although in different ways, the self is split, caught at the intersection of systems of difference. I am less concerned with the existential consequences of this split ... than with the awareness such

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<sup>2</sup> Briefly: 1st, 2nd, etc., generation Italian Americans, may or may not identify themselves as Italian Americans. If they do, they may or may not participate in the Los Angeles' community. Same applies to Italian born who have been living in the United States for many years. Regional affiliations can be very important in regard.

split generates about three crucial issues: positionality, audience, and the power inherent in distinctions of self and other. ....

Feminists and halfie anthropologists cannot easily avoid the issue of positionality. Standing on shifting ground makes it clear that every view is a view from somewhere and every act of speaking is a speaking from somewhere. Cultural anthropologists have never been fully convinced of the ideology of science and have long questioned the value, possibility, and definition of objectivity. But they still seem reluctant to examine the implications of the actual situatedness of their knowledge.” (1991:140-141).

For a long time objective research has been the official goal of Anthropology, the only one worth pursuing. The anthropologists have aimed at assuming a detached position of observer respect to the phenomena and people that they were studying. There are several problems with this position. Objectivity can never be reached because: 1) The "privileged" position of the anthropologist is always, at the same time, a (culturally) biased one. 2) Interpretation enters as part of the process of transcription (Ochs, 1979) and then again in the moment of analysis (Geertz, 1973). In the words of the French philosopher, "There is no more a *physis* isolated from men, namely, that can be isolated from his intellect, from his logic, from his culture, from his society. There is no more an object completely independent from the subject.” (Morin, 1987:183).

Anthropological statements of truth must therefore be seen in the context to which the anthropologist belongs and in the context of their production. Respect to it, the anthropologist creates narratives that, eventually, will become part of the general

discourse of ethnography. This is a discourse that defines power relationships between the society to which the anthropologist belongs and the "other" society. The anthropologist acts inside established relations of power. Therefore, in his/her work, there is always a political dimension.

Halfies or not, anthropologists cannot anymore consider themselves as "detached observers", but they must necessarily position themselves with respect to the subject of study. They should accept their inevitable involvement: "The Lone Ethnographer's mask of innocence (or, as he puts it, his detached "impartiality") barely concealed his ideological role in perpetuating the colonial control of "distant" peoples and places." (Rosaldo, 1989:30). In this study, my understanding of the Italian Americans has been mediated and pre-informed by my cultural background as Italian and Tuscan, and by my personal experience of living in the United States. This mediation was not my choice, but inevitable. It was my choice, instead, to remain constantly conscious of it and to use it in my interpretation.

As P. A. Metcalf notices (1978:326), anthropologists are at the research of the exotic, today as in the past. My position is ambiguous since I can be seen, or see myself, at different times, as part of the Italian American community, or as a stranger to it. The Italian Americans are my exotic self. From this position I hope I can give to you, the Readers, a hint, to look at yourselves "from a new angle" (Metcalf, 1978:325).

*Culture* is often seen as something stable and stabilizing, as an inert mass, continuously shaping the individuals in its image with an irresistible force. This is considered primarily as a conservative force, as a status quo that, through

socialization, continually perpetuates itself. In this vision there is no place for change<sup>3</sup>. It is no coincidence that culture was first seen as belonging to people "without history" -- the "primitive man" perpetually suspended in the fictional present of the anthropological account. Change in itself is usually equated to cultural death. The preceding culture disappears and a new one (or no one) is created. In case of cross-cultural encounters this is called *assimilation*, a force often invoked in discussing the Italian Americans.

I propose a different model. Culture, I think, is never stable. As a complex form of organization, it allows for the greater possible flexibility while maintaining an internal meaningful apparatus of reference. If we can accept and/or agree with this, then clearly every definition of culture should leave space for change. R. Rosaldo has suggested that "culture can arguably be conceived as a more porous array of intersections where distinct processes crisscross from within and beyond its borders." (1989:20). In this way culture can be the mean of expression of human variability and creativity.

To see culture as fixed is, again, a political choice. It allows for other peoples to become a reassuring mirror in which to see our own society. To it corresponds the vision, which we will examine soon, of ethnic identity as fixed and, consequently, of the "other" as stacked in some ("primitive") level. Once structured rigidly, the past is frozen. To the fixity of the object of study, it is reconnected the stable, privileged position of the observer, that we have already seen. Though R. Rosaldo warns us that,

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<sup>3</sup> If culture does not explain change, this has to be explained through an external force or principle (encounters with different cultures, changes in environment) or by random occurrence of error (failure in socialization).

"the myth of detachment gives ethnographers an appearance of innocence, which distances them from complicity with imperialist domination." (1989:169).

The emergence of an Italian American identity offers us new perspectives and new questions. Creation of an identity implies selection among possible traits, some of which are now seen as "fundamental" or "irreducible"<sup>4</sup>. It has been my overall goal, in the end, to present this creation in all of its complexity, showing, together with multiple sides, also problems and contradictions. Unfortunately, in research works we rarely see any complex identity represented. The tendency is, instead, toward manageable simplifications, with those clean derived definitions that can easily earn agreement. Uses of theories of identity, as well as the phenomena they try to explain, must therefore remain under critical and political scrutiny (Butler, 1992:110).

In my research, I will consider identity as it is communicated. I will consider such a communication as a strategy, as the result of a constructive and re-constructive act. The expression/communication of a given ethnic identity will be seen as a *narrative* that the individual produces about the self. Narratives are continuously produced by people and cultures about themselves and their relationship with other individuals and cultures, and the outside world. These narratives have the characteristic of being continually revocable, transformable.

Those anthropologists who use the "static" definition of ethnic identity are not only describing a sad reality, but are contributing to create it. They are offering a supposedly objective base to racist and discriminatory claims. If a cultural group, to

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<sup>4</sup> Those are the characteristics that are deployed to form the boundaries).

obtain the most due of its rights, must present itself as a stable, well-defined ethnic group, it is in large part due to the deafness and ignorance of institutions that are unable to understand changing realities. This ignorance is also due to the silence of some anthropologists.

My study will also show identity as situated in a community. Shiftings among identities corresponds to nets of connections or social networks. A community may and may not have spatial boundaries. It may and may not be realized in a particular space or defined by particular attributes. Martin & Mohanty write:

"Community ... is the product of work, of struggle; it is inherently unstable, contextual; it has to be constantly reevaluated in relation to critical political priorities; and it is the product of interpretation, interpretation based on an attention to history." (1986: 210).

A positive image of itself is definitely important for a community (Neely, 1991:60-67). It is connected to a feeling of pride in one's identity. Psychologically, it brings to its members the reassurance of being in control of the situation, able to cope with possible problems.

The link between identity and community is not a real one, but an imaginary one. Identity does not belong to the world of objects, but to the subjects and to the relationships among them. Communities are "imagined" (Anderson, 1983:6). There is not an univocal relation between identities and the communities inside and outside which they are staged on.

An appropriate model of ethnicity must be flexible enough to explain the variety of actual occurrences. Ethnic identity has become an area of study highly debated in the last two decades. Various disciplines have given growing attention to it. The academic interest reflects the emergence on the political scene, in almost all countries, of ethnic groups, and their requests to the political establishments.

The many definitions of ethnic identity that have been proposed can be seen on a continuum that goes from highly 'fixed' or 'static' models to more 'dynamic' or 'flexible' ones. At the one end, ethnic identity is considered the expression of belonging to a particular ethnic group. This is then described as a unique and unchangeable unit. Something to which people belong since birth, or primary socialization. People in an ethnic group share a set of traits: language, blood, religion, traditions, or others. In this model, I think, the person is in some sense caught inside the definition.

This kind of definitions implies the discovery of a synthetic principle. This is exactly what has been tried: several lists of common features, traits, diacritica, etc. have been proposed; various criteria to decide who is in and who is out, internal, external or both have been taken into consideration. An example can be R. Naroll's six criteria: territorial contiguity, language, political organization, ecological adjustment, traits' distribution and local community structure (1964). Also, the classic definition given in the Random House College Dictionary: "a group of people of the same race or nationality who share a common and distinctive culture." (1988:454).

A problem is that a very large number of lists can be (and have been) proposed, each of them applicable only to specific cases. Indeed an ethnic group can be defined through different features in different occasions or by different people (Moerman, 1965). Each external categorization tells us more about the ethnic group of the



categorizer than about the categorized (Moerman, 1965). F. Barth has suggested that we should consider ethnic groups as "categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves," (1969:10), and focus our attention on the maintenance of the boundaries (*diacritica*) between one group and another. It is through symbols and signs of ethnic identity that the ethnic groups come to be constituted. The way they are maintained is "not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment but by continual expression and validation." (Barth, 1969:15).

These lists of traits have been used as the base for another series of theories, which look at the *functions* of ethnic identity for the groups that express them. They often share a functionalist approach to the questions 'to who' and 'for what' ethnicity is useful. J. J. Gumperz, for example, affirms that "The new ethnicity ... is defined more as a need for political and social support in the pursuit of common interest than as regional similarity or sharedness of occupational ties." (1982:5). Ethnicity is seen as an 'interest group', a tool to obtain some kind of personal advantage (Roosens, 1989:14). These studies are useful to understand how ethnic groups can be mobilized to obtain particular rights. They also take in consideration that institutions and governments have the power, if not the right, to define ethnic groups and decide who is in and who is out of them.

Many of the studies in the Italian Americans that I have reviewed use, more or less, this last kind of paradigm. The majority of these studies were conducted outside Anthropology by Sociologists, Historians, Political Scientists, and even Psychologists. In this respect, we can recognize here, in the almost total absence of anthropological studies on the subject<sup>5</sup>, the long lasting past tendency of Anthropology to study only

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<sup>5</sup> Again with the notable exception of M. Di Leonardo (1993) and, to a certain degree, W. Labov. (1966 and 1972).

the “exotic”. I found very useful, some more recent studies, as the recollection of essays edited by L. Del Giudice (1993). New paradigms developed inside Anthropology and the Ethnography of Speaking can and should be applied, with good results, to this field.

Moving toward the *dynamic* end of the *continuum*, we find models that underline changes in ethnic identity. The individual is now seen as shifting among different ethnic identities, according to the context. He or she can express them in different ways, choosing different symbols or characteristics. He or she can express his/her belonging to more than one ethnic group at the same time. These theories leave “ethnic group” a quite undefined notion, while concentrating on the construction of ethnic identity.

P. Kroskrity's (1993) and J. A. Nagata's (1974) theories propose to consider ethnic groups as particular kinds of *reference groups*. These groups may be selected "according to factors of immediate relevance." (Nagata, 1974:337). J. A. Nagata affirms that:

"Some individuals may therefore oscillate rather freely from one ethnic group to another, without, however, becoming involved in role conflict or marginality, and ... this may prove to be adaptive at both the social and personal levels;" (1974:337).

Also, "such easy switching of ethnic identity seems to be of positive value in enabling the individual to avoid tensions due to inconsistencies of role expectations in any given set of circumstances." (1974:343).

Concepts like *reference group* originated first inside Social Psychology, as part of the Symbolic-Interactionist model. According to this, human beings live in a symbolic environment, produced by themselves and others. Symbols represent meanings and meanings are shared inside a group (Rose, 1962). A person can belong to more than one group, and have different roles in each. An important distinction is done between the *reference group*, to whose norms the individual looks in choosing a behavior, and the group to which the person belongs. The two may or may not be the same in a given occasion. This means that the person will enact and communicate the particular identity of the ethnic group that is taken as referential in a given moment or context. In E. M. Bruner's words, "the occupant of a role devises a performance in reference to all the significant others in the particular context." (1973:225).

P. Kroskrity (1993) has proposed to look at ethnic identity as one of a *repertoire of identities* among which the individual can choose. Identities are situational, positional and performed. To see ethnicity as performance leads to see the individual as agent, who chooses and enacts them, thereby presenting and representing his/her speaking *persona* (1993:156). This perspective "emphasizes the communicated and negotiated aspects of ethnic and other social identities." (1993:178).

These theories give a larger space of free decisionality to the individual, who is seen as an agent strategically using particular identities and actively redefining them and the roles associated with them. The notion of *strategy*, as it is used by M. Foucault (1978: 92-93 & 96), is a method to acquire power through the imposition of one's own "discourse" and, consequently, definition of truth. "Discourse" can be defined as, "a cultural complex of signs and practices that regulates how we live socially." (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992:30).

The communication of a particular ethnic identity can be seen as a strategy available to the individual in a given context. The choice to present a certain ethnic identity is dependent from the context, and contributes to its definition. Identity is not only built in interaction, but also contributes meaning to the interaction. The context limits the number of possible identities among which the person can choose, in the sense that it makes some of them irrelevant or inapplicable, and others salient<sup>6</sup>. Thus, I am interested in the negotiation of social identity in context, since "the status of the participant is recognized and partly constituted for the occasion." (Duranti, 1992:682).

I found useful, in my analysis, to integrate the concept of "*repertoire of Identities*" (Kroskrity, 1993) with a personal re-elaboration of the concept of "Double Boundary" proposed by A. Peterson Royce. She defines it as "the boundary maintained from within, and the boundary imposed from outside" (1982:29). In her model, 'objective definitions' correspond to ascription of traits from outside; 'subjective definitions' refer to the internal, individual awareness of belonging to a group. The 'outside' boundary can be created by the anthropologist, but more often will be created by other ethnic groups. It can take the form of the stereotype. It can even be ratified by the law.

This, I think, is a sophisticated analysis of the emic/etic dichotomy, and an attempt to clarify the relations between the "internal" and "external" view of ethnic groups: an internal boundary is distinguished from an external one. While we may be more interested in the meaning of ethnicity for the individuals, or emic view, we should not forget that very static ethnic views of ethnicity inform the actions of our

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<sup>6</sup> These can be both adaptive or dis-adaptive, but anyway salient.

governments toward those same individuals. Because of their large political resonance, external definitions, even when biased, cannot remain unanalyzed.

By analyzing the Italian American communication of ethnic identity, I hope to show how a strong, imposed external boundary, created by the mainstream society around one of its ethnic minorities, can trigger the creation of an equally strong internal boundary. This, therefore, has a partially defensive nature. The creation of the boundaries relates to the concept of “repertoire of identities” because it affects, in a sense, the variability and the availability of the repertoire itself. The creation of the boundaries, limits the power of agency of the individual, and makes the shifting between the identities of the repertoire more difficult. While the boundaries can be strategically used and manipulated, they reduce the power of the individual to cross the boundaries themselves as a personal strategy.

The data on which I base my analysis, were gathered between September 1994 and May 1995. The research was also made possible by a grant received from the Department of Anthropology at the University of California Los Angeles. I collected data in four main ways: 1) Through participation in community events; 2) Receiving the newspaper *L'Italo-Americano*; 3) Through videotapes of actual conversations involving linguistic consultants<sup>7</sup>; 4) Through interviews with linguistic consultants.

I recorded the community events with video and/or audio tapes, and I took field notes of them. The field notes were not taken during the event, but immediately after.

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<sup>7</sup> All the names of the linguistic consultants, and others that could have made them identifiable, have been changed.

In the following analysis, I have used a generally ethnographic method, focusing in particular on display of symbols and their interpretation.

For what regards the newspaper, L'Italo-Americano is the only weekly Italian American one in Los Angeles. I collected the issues from October 27, 1994, to May 11, 1995. In numbers, these are 29 issues. In the analysis, I browsed through all of them and selected a series of articles which I thought more indicative and useful examples for my account.

For the third kind of data, the conversations, I received the kind collaboration of several people. My linguistic consultants included two Italian American families, one Italian American individual, and an Italian couple. Other people who were with them during filming, became participants of my research too. I think this is my best occasion to describe them. The major part of my analysis of spontaneously occurring conversations comes from two occasions: 1) a dinner in the home of an Italian American family (see Chapter 1 and 3)<sup>8</sup>; I used a transcription method based on the one used by D. Tedlock, modified to my goals, and including some elements of the Conversation Analysis' classic notation; 2) a dinner in the home of an Italian American individual (see chapter 4); I used a simplified Conversation Analysis' transcription. In both cases I gave much attention to non-verbal communication.

In the first case the participants were: Ada, an old Italian American woman; Renzo, her son; Eni, her niece; Robert, her niece's husband; and I. The dinner was held at Eni and Robert's home, in November 1994. Ada is a person full of life. She was born in the Lucchesia<sup>9</sup>, Tuscany, Italy. As a young girl, she went to work in

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<sup>8</sup> Transcripts in Appendix C.

<sup>9</sup> The province around the city of Lucca, In Central-Northern Tuscany. It includes a mountainous part called Garfagnana, a very economically depressed part of Italy. It was the origin of the largest part of Tuscan immigrants. In Los Angeles, there is a large group of Lucchesi, of which Eni's family is a part.

Rome as a maid for a rich family. There she married and her son Renzo was born. After World War II they emigrated to America, reaching her brothers and sisters who were already there. She talks Tuscan-Italian with some Roman suggestions. She uses some Ital-English, and understands English but I have seen her using this last one only in few words throughout the dinner.

Renzo is fifty-three. He came to America as a boy and married an American woman. After remaining a widower, his children were brought up by Ada. Renzo seem to prefer to talk English. He defines himself as Roman<sup>10</sup> and talks Italian with a Roman accent, mixed with a little Tuscan. Eni was born in Los Angeles from Tuscan-American parents. She talks English as a first language, and Tuscan-Italian with an American accent. Robert was born in Chicago of Piedmontese Italian-American parents. He talks English and Piedmontese, but little Italian. Finally, I am Tuscan and Tuscan-Italian is my first language.

In the second case, the participants were: Paolo (Tuscan/Sardinian Italian), Luca (Friulano Italian), Tony (Italian American, Neapolitan/Calabrese parents), Jennifer (Irish American), Matteo (Apulian Italian), Roberta (Lombard Italian), Daniel (Anglo American), Valentina (me, Tuscan Italian), Boris (Russian). Italians, Americans and one Italian American were present. The Italians outnumbered the others, but the conversation was held mainly in English, because the two Americans were the only not-Italian-speakers. There were, anyway, many switches to Italian and to Italian dialects. The setting was Tony and Daniel's apartment, in October 1994<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> In Italy people usually identify a lot with the place in which they are born, and in which they often pass their whole lives.

<sup>11</sup> See also the transcripts in Appendix B.

Since the conversation on which I focus happens between Tony, Luca and Paolo, I will talk a little more about them. Tony is a first generation Italian American from San Francisco, Ph.D. student at UCLA. His parents are Southern Italians. He has been interested for many years in recovering or solidifying a relationship with Italy. He learned Italian and studied the Italian American community's history as an undergraduate. After graduation he lived in Italy for six months. More recently, he obtained the Italian citizenship. He is interested and conscious of Italian politics and talks Italian fluently. He is planning to go to live in Italy for some years and possibly remain there. Luca and Paolo are both Italians, Ph.D. students at the California Institute of Technology. They graduated in Italy from the University of Bologna and have been friends for a long time.

Finally, I analyzed four of the interviews I conducted. In the transcription, I use a simplified Conversation Analysis' notation. In reporting speech in the main text, I usually eliminated the complex notation to make the pieces more easily readable.<sup>12</sup> The first two interviews were done at Richard's home. On November 1994, only Richard was present. On February 1995, his parents, Karen and Martin, were present too. Richard is a third-fourth generation Italian American. He was born in Fresno, California. He is an undergraduate student at UCLA. Last academic year Richard was in Italy, as an exchange student, at the University of Bologna. He had learned Italian before, and today he talks it very fluently. The parents are second and third generation Italian Americans. Martin was born in Albany, New York, and came to live in California after marrying Karen. Karen was born in San Francisco. They have four

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix D.



sons. Richard is the younger. Karen and Martin do not talk any Italian. In both cases I let them talk about their life histories, trying not to direct them.

The third interview was done at my home in November 1994. Tony and I were present. We saw the video of the dinner at Tony and Daniel's home (10/15/94) and used this as a base for comments and discussion of what had been going on that time. Tony is often referring to Luca and Paolo, who were present at the dinner, and to the "dialogue" Tony had with them at that time.

The last interview was done with Lisa and Alessandro, a married couple of Emilian Italians living in Pasadena, in December 1994. Lisa is doing her Ph.D. at UCLA. Alessandro is doing his Ph.D. at CalTech. They have been in the United States for almost three years, and they enjoy living here. I explicitly asked them to talk about images of Italians and their perception of Italian Americans.

The partition of the following chapters is an attempt to clarify a very complex subject, without falling into an oversimplification, that would not make justice to that complexity. I have divided into four chapters what in everyday experience cannot in any way be divided: the process of doing ethnicity. After the present Introduction, I will give a brief history of the causes that brought to the migration from Italy toward the United States in Chapter 1. The development of a group consciousness as Italian American is then linked to the stereotype created by the mainstream American society against them. Finally, the linguistic codes used are described and their meaning is discussed. In general, this chapter is destined to give general information that can help to understand the main bulk of data of the research, which are exposed later.

In Chapter 2, I will present the Los Angeles' community in two of its most important annual occurrences: The ceremonies of *San Trifone* and of the *Madonna di Costantinopoli*. I will see these events as the macro-level of representation of the Italian American identity. These are also the public events, in which relations between nationality, the Church, and identity become available through their symbols and show how they are intertwined in polyphonic display. In Chapter 3, I will shift to the more private environment of an Italian American home to analyze the narrative style used in some conversations around the dinner table. Again, the communal construction of ethnic identity is what constitutes the focus of my analysis. In this case, though, the importance of evocation of memories, and the creation of shared reality come to the forefront.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I will draw my conclusion. Returning to my initial use of the double boundary theory, and of the "repertoire of identities" theory, I will analyze a short conversation involving an Italian American and two Italians. Through it, and by presenting a series of "voices" from Italians and Italian Americans in the form of excerpts from interviews, I hope to be able to demonstrate the fluidity of identity, and the problem posed to it by external definitions and other enforced boundaries. It is also my goal in all chapters, to give as much space as possible to the voices of the participants.

## CHAPTER 1

### UNDERSTANDING THE ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

To understand the formation of an Italian American ethnic identity, we have to consider various factors. We can, first of all, take a look at the history of the Italian settlement in the United States. Such a history has been signed, unfortunately, by processes of stereotypization implied in the creation of external and internal boundaries to the Italian American identity. Through a brief analysis of the stereotypes that have been deployed often as construction blocks of those boundaries, I hope I can start to define for the reader what could be seen as the emic side of history. Joan Scott writes:

“To historicize the question of identity - is to introduce an analysis of its production and thus an analysis of constructions of and conflicts about power; it is also, of course, to call into question the autonomy and stability of any particular identity as it claims to define and interpret a subject's existence.” (1992:16).

To say that ethnic identity is historically constructed does not mean that it is less felt, but that it is learned, not biologically acquired, and thus not unidirectional, exclusive and monodic. The group differences on which it is based are to be understood relationally, not ontologically.

Before closing this chapter, I will also concisely describe the linguistic codes used in the Italian American community. The language of Italian Americans reflects historical events and can be seen as the result of a series of historically situated choices. At the same time, boundaries of identity are created through history and expressed in language, or they are created through linguistic choices and come to be reflected into historic events.

### **I. Italian History, Migration, and the Formation of the Italian American Group.**

Immigrants from Italy at the turn of the century did not bring with themselves a strong sense of national identity. A few decades before, the nationalist M. D'Azeglio had stated that Italy had been "made" in 1860 (unified or conquered, depending on the point of view), but the Italians did not exist yet<sup>13</sup>. The felt reality was instead the presence of the various regional cultures and their individuated identities and languages.

Two competing parties had been behind the unification of Italy: the *monarchists*, championed by the Count of Cavour, were loyal to the house of Savoia, reigning on Piedmont and Sardinia; the *republicans*, represented by Mazzini, counted among them

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<sup>13</sup> His is the following famous maxim: "Italy is made. Now we have to make Italians."

Giuseppe Garibaldi, who is honored today as the Italian national hero. The three "wars of independence" fought to unify Italy were characterized by dissent and even hostility between these two groups. This is well represented by the fact that Garibaldi, the maker of the nation, died in confinement on the island of Caprera, rejected as dangerous from the new Italian kingdom. Neither the *monarchists* nor the *republicans* were representatives of the people, but only of a very restricted minority of nobles and wealthy intellectuals (for a general discussion see D. M. Smith, 1969; King, 1967; Clough & Saladino, 1968).

The official unification marked the beginning of a period of civil war. While Northern Italy had already entered a period of industrialization, the Southern regions were still massively rural. While in the Northern regions property of the land was subdivided more equally, in Southern Italy it belonged to a few powerful families. It was the system of the "latifondo", in which large landholders, usually belonging to the nobility, and their administrators made the law (Bodnar, 1985:27).

The new Piedmontese administration reinforced, instead of changing, this situation. The peasants rebelled, and the King of Savoia sent the army, to suffocate everything in what became a real massacre (see D. M. Smith, 1969). This "pacification", and the fight against those that even today, in some history books, are called "bandits", lasted for decades, and left the Southern regions poorer and hopeless (Fichera, 1981). Nothing was left to the people of Southern Italy besides emigration, which started *en masse* at the end of the last century (Bodnar, 1985:32-33).

If, for the Southern peasants, Italy was only a distant and oppressive government, the peasant masses of Northern Italy did not have a stronger national identity. Italy was the government in Rome, and they were reminded of it only when they had to pay taxes, or worse, when it would steal their children to send them in some new war.

Why should it have meant something else? They did not have any schooling (De Mauro, 1970:95), they could not read newspapers or study history, and the Roman empire was no more real than a fairy tale to them.

In the meantime, it took the intellectuals some decades to choose a language for the new nation. The writer A. Manzoni and his followers, thought that the Florentine dialect of Tuscan had to become the national language (De Mauro, 1970:88). A second group, among which was the poet Carducci, proposed that the literary Italian, developed from Tuscan but never spoken, had to be used (De Mauro, 1970:327). A third current wanted to take elements from the various regional languages and create a new language from their fusion. They finally agreed, toward the end of the century, for a middle way between the first two solutions (De Mauro, 1970:330). Today, thirty-two different languages are spoken in Italy (for a list of them, see Grimes, 1988:464-468). Historically, culturally, and even religiously, the "Italians" are utterly fractionated.

The Southern cultures are Mediterranean. They were, and to some extent still are, influenced by Greece and by the Arab world. The Catholic Church in this area has taken a distinctively polytheistic character, with the Virgin Mary being raised in importance to become, unofficially, a Goddess Mother. In Northern Italy, especially in the western part, in Piedmont, Catholicism has been instead deeply influenced by the *Valdese* heresy. Culturally, Northern Italy has more elements in common with the *Mittel-Europa's* world than with the South.

Emigrants from Italy not only came from different cultures, but also from different economic and historical realities. This is also shown by the fact that the emigrants tended to migrate along lines of kinship, in a way that tended to reconstruct a whole village in a place of the United States. The immigrants tended to reunite with

people of the same region, who spoke the same language and thus could understand each other. Those agencies who procured immigrants' labor, often facilitated this tendency.

While for the immigrants from Italy was difficult to recognize themselves as one people (Sensi-Isolani & Martinelli, 1993:61-62), for the mainstream American society that was receiving them, they were a compact unity with distinguishable characteristics and maybe even a national character. Sensi-Isolani & Martinelli affirm that immigrants coming to Los Angeles did not have an Italian identity. While the Anglo-Saxons were creating an image of Italians based on history, the peasant masses arriving in the city had no knowledge of that history (1993:50). The fact that these immigrants could not even speak Italian or understand each other -- while speaking their regional languages -- was rarely considered an important variable.

Historical works have demonstrated that the immigrants from Italy and their descendants did not always like to be lumped together. On the contrary, hostility existed between Italian American groups during the first decades of this century. After 1900, for example, "In the face of a public increasingly hostile to 'undesirable immigrants,' San Francisco's North Beach -- the largest Italian colony on the West Coast -- grew perceptibly defensive, and became internally polarized between northern and southern Italians as it sought to locate the source of its woes." (Sensi-Isolani & Martinelli, 1993:21).

The immigrants from Northern Italy often blamed that their Southern counterparts were Mafiosi, illiterate and even pagan (Sensi-Isolani & Martinelli, 1993:35). The emerging of the use of terms like "Southern" and "Northern" Italians, at the same time, witness of the passage from an initial regional grouping, to a larger division in these two main groups. It also witnesses of a difficult, painful transition.

The immigrants projected onto each other those stereotypes such as dirty and Mafioso, that the American society was imposing on them.

This already tells us the importance that the external pressure from the mainstream American society has had on the formation of a unified ethnic identity. This was due to both economic and ideological factors. Among the first ones, we can indicate less “return migration” after 1910, immigration restriction laws in 1920s in the United States, which stabilized the population of Italian origin in the United States, and the economic crisis of the 30s. For the second ones, talking about San Francisco's Italian immigrants’ communities, Fichera gives us an interesting insight:

"What to make, for instances, of the commonly held scorn for their group in this country? Of course, they reacted against it and defended the good name of Italians, but, in the absence of a national experience, how could they be sure of the wrongness of the stereotype? Confused as Italians, anxious as to what course of action would make them Americans, North Beach residents fell prey to some of the worst maladies of society, first supporting racism, then applauding fascism. No little element of doubt was plain here, a more than passing insecurity about their worth as both Italians and Americans." (1981:184).

This insecurity about their identity is one of the causes that brought many Italian Americans, during the 20s and 30s, to uncritically accept and support Mussolini's delirious dreams of reconstituting the Roman empire. Mussolini brought to the extreme something that had already been attempted by his predecessors (at the



government of Italy): to use the history of the Roman empire as a source of symbols (and memories) for the new nation-state of Italy (Fichera, 1981).

While the new nationalist identity was being imposed in Italy with violence by the "Black Shirts", many Italian Americans seemed all too eager to make it their own. Mussolini's dreams finished in massacres, and many California Italian Americans had to wake up to forced relocation, internment, and curfew laws at the outset of World War II<sup>14</sup>. After the end of it, the "melting pot" ideals gave a new push toward assimilation. A "cultural revival" began in the past few decades, facilitated by the failure of the "melting pot" ideals, by official policies against racism and discrimination, the general search for "roots" and resurgence of ethnic movements (Correa-Zoli, 1981: 252).

## **II. Stereotypes and Formation of the Double Boundary.**

The immigrants from various Italian cultures arriving to America, we can say, had no knowledge of each other's existence. Shortly after their arrival, however, this consciousness of belonging to the same people started to develop. This happened, also, because the immigrants found themselves defined as one people by the American society. After all, as R. Cohen has observed, "ethnicity has no existence apart from interethnic relations." (Cohen, 1978:389).

The notion of "Double Boundary" (Peterson Royce, 1982) can be deployed here to understand the emerging of this awareness. The outer boundary that defines the

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<sup>14</sup> Lecture of Prof. G. Ricci-Lothrup, "Una Storia Segreta" (A Hidden History), Italian Cultural center, L.A., 2/5/95.

Italian American identity, is established by the mainstream American society, and it consists of a series of stereotypical images. To it comes to correspond the formation of an inner boundary that has several bases: first, there is the shared history and culture of the Italian Americans themselves, formed in the course of a century; second, there are images borrowed from the stereotype -- created by the larger society -- of what an Italian American is; third, there is the Italian Americans attempt to re-establish a net of political and cultural connections with Italy, as well as to recover lost parts of Italian (popular) culture. For example, elements of Italian cultures (like religious rituals) can be re-used, re-interpreted or re-contextualized.

Much has been written already on Italian American history. For a general treatment regarding the whole of the United States, a good reference could be La Sorte (1985) and Tomasi (1977). For the immigrant experience, see Bodnar (1985), Higham (1988) and Revelli (1977)<sup>15</sup>. for a more detailed analysis of the Italian American settlement in California, see Fichera (1981), Sensi-Isolani & Martinelli (1993), Rolle (1968). See also the booklet "Una Storia Segreta"<sup>16</sup> (1994). For the development of the Italian American community in Los Angeles, see Crosby (1983), D'Amico (1986) and Placidi (1979). For what regards the rituals, I will discuss them in the next chapter. Here, I will discuss the use of the stereotypes.

The partially defensive nature of the inner boundary of ethnic identity is best seen in the use done of some stereotypes. Studies done in Social Psychology show that the victims of stereotypization often tend to behave according lines formed by the

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<sup>15</sup> See also Alberghini-Gallerani (1993), Tamburri, Giordano & Gadaphé (1991), and La Gumina (1979).

<sup>16</sup> Translated "A Secret History" or "A Secret Tale".

stereotypes themselves (Arcuri, 1985:183)<sup>17</sup>. In the process of formation of social identity, writes Tajfel, a group with an inferior status inside a society can reinterpret perceived characteristics, seen as marks of inferiority by the mainstream society, in a way that gives them positive value (1985:425). This goes together with the downplay or negation of other characteristics. The stereotypical traits, thus, assume a different meaning. A positive stereotype, though, is still a stereotype, therefore fixed, minimalist, oversimplified, and categorizing. When it is used in a definition of Italian American identity, such an identity becomes constrained, stiff, limiting to the individual themselves<sup>18</sup>.

Before going on in this analysis, here is a list of stereotypes that have been held in the past (some are still used today), in the United States, about Italian Americans: 1) Dirty (Higham, 1988:65); 2) stupid (low I.Q.) and uneducated (Krase & DeSena, 1994: 124 & 143). 3) Violent, always getting into fights (Higham, 1988:66); 4) Backward, unwilling to assimilate (Krase & DeSena, 1994:143); 5) Extremely religious, superstitious (Crosby, 1983); 6) Latin lovers (Krase & DeSena, 1994:67). 7) Macho culture (women are kept prisoners at home and have to follow a series of sexual taboos) (Krase & DeSena, 1994:72-73, 119); 8) Prolific, with large extended families (Krase & DeSena, 1994:119-122); 9) Mafiosi, criminals (Higham, 1988:66); 10) Poor and lazy (Higham, 1988:65-66); 11) Fat, eating too much, and especially eating pizza, pasta, garlic, and tomato sauce (Arcuri, 1985); 12) always singing (lyric music) and possibly even dancing (tarantella) (Cordasco, 1974:V). In the end, writes Cordasco, many Americans:

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<sup>17</sup> In this sense, the stereotypes seem to have an effect of guide on the interaction between two different social groups (Arcuri, 1985:183). The preconception canalizes the interaction (Arcuri, 1985:185).

<sup>18</sup> Stereotypes, like all categorization, always impose order over the disorder of life (Tajfel, 1985:212).

“retain an extraordinary image of the Italian immigrant and his descendants as cultural aberrations who sing tenor, and peddle fish, and who are romantic, oily, prudish, devious, faithful, sexy, clannish, open-minded, tolerant, intolerant, brilliant, anti-intellectual, unambitious and industrious, all at the same time.” (1974: V)<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, when we come to talk about Italian Americans, we have to realize that the construction (or reconstruction) of identity is also, at the same time a deconstruction. Deconstruction of images, or stereotypes, that have sedimented in the American minds (from both sides). For example the Hollywood's image, full of Italian criminals and Mafiosi. Commenting on the stereotype of the Mafioso, Richard says:

“I think it’s funny how every time you see- whenever the word Sicilian comes up, it’s always immediately associated with the Mafia, and that’s (this) huge rapr- exaggeration because- I mean I don’t know the statistics but I would imagine that ninety, the ninety-five percent of the people that are Sicilian, I would assume that a huge group are not associated with the Mafia, it’s just a small percentage of (them). And I think it’s funny how it’s almost .. romanticized in the movies, how if- if there is a Sicilian who’s the Ma- who is in the Mafia and is- he loves opera, he loves fast cars, and .. he got this great mansion and it’s just kind of a silly thing.” (See Appendix D).

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Correa-Zoli, 1981: 244.

Richard's father adds:

"Fifteen years ago 'The Godfather'. That was a big, big movie in the United States, really big, successful. And look at what they portrayed ((laughing)), you know, and there were, I guess, three versions of it." (See Appendix D).

Here are the comments on other common stereotypes furnished by Richard, Alessandro and Lisa (in the order) (see Appendix D):

"another image that I see a lot in the movie is this ... sort of a: New York type Italian, who is not very- like I have seen comedies like the- Eddy Murphy and he'll do exaggerations of what an Italian American is like, and is .. some uneducated ( ). Kind of:, I don't know,"

"And a lot of times, they don't show a lot of- ... a lot of aspects about it that are there. For example you always see Italians in films and they are sort of showing us carefree, .. non concerned people. They are never worried about business or: serious things, always this kind of- hum:: Just, not serious"

"Yes the stereotype of the- ... what's it, the man that eats only pasta with tomato sauce, never seen (from the film) (I haven't) never eat it. hhh he'."

“Well I- I mean this stereotype that comes from the films I mean the one that, I don’t know, makes himself pizza, that burps at the table and walks around in vest., I mean, ((laughing)) do you know what I mean? This kind of things, very uneducated, m::: who talks with that accent that, I mean, I don’t think to have that accent, you know, in addition. And:: low class, very low class.”

The presence of the image is the absence of the real. As Vizenor has noticed, the representation and the image constructed by the media or by the mainstream society, may be perceived and become more real than reality. They can be “posed as the verities of certain cultural traditions." (1994:17). Stereotypes are just a form of categorization and classification, the building blocks of the boundary. This always entails an absence, the absence of the voice of the people who find themselves to be defined. We can feel this in Lisa’s words:

“I had the feeling .. as soon as they see you they say ho:! Mafia, I mean they have the- this- if you think about it, as soon as you say- ho:! Italian! ho:! Mafia, immediately! ... So, this immediately bothers me because I come from a region in which there is absolutely no Mafia, there has never been, it never penetrated in Modena at all. And in Emilia. Thus this really annoys me.” (See Appendix D)

Stereotypes of *Otherness* are common everywhere. They are made more powerful in the production of mass information. Those images more than everything else, have defined reality and written History, a History in which minorities are

negated. "In very real ways," writes D. Kondo, talking about the Asian American representations,

"we do not exist. Either we are absent entirely, or what is often worse, when we are depicted it is only in the most stereotyped way, thus subjecting us to psychological violence rather than offering affirmation or recognition." (In Press).

Against this negation, Italian Americans have used all of their creativity. If we look at how these stereotypes have been changed and redirected to become elements of an Italian American identity, we discover some very interesting points. Some of the stereotypes are rejected. Some others are accepted, and more or less reinterpreted in a positive sense. These seconds have become defining traits of a pan-Italian American identity. I will discuss a few of them, which I believe to be particularly important. I will use as examples excerpts from articles that were published on "*L'Italo-Americano*", the main newspaper of the Los Angeles Italian American community.

The idea of the strong, cohesive family is very important<sup>20</sup>. Italian Americans define themselves as caring deeply about kinship networks. This, to them, means keeping in contact with relatives, even in distant Italy, visiting them, and getting together for the celebration of important festivities:

From, NATALE 1994: "Family is always important to Italians and Italian Americans but never more so than at Christmas. ... In Italy and Italian-American country we

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<sup>20</sup> See stereotype 8.

come together as family in a special way during the holidays -- not just immediate kin but *nonni*, *zii*, *cugini* and close *amici*.”<sup>21</sup>

From, ETHNICITY, HEALTH REFORM AND ITALY’S SPAS ON AGENDA AT D.C. CONFERENCE: ... “Your family is your heritage. Your family is history on the hoof. And as your family changes, history changes, too. Heritage changes too.”<sup>22</sup>

From, LOGO CHOSEN FOR O.C.F.I.L.: ... “Across the two flags [Italian and American] a modernistic representation of the traditional family, the core of Italian Culture, is strongly accentuated.”<sup>23</sup>

In the first piece, the familiar institution is connected to religiousness. The person’s family is the mirror of the divine one. Notice also the code-switching to Italian in the terms of kinship: kinship is presented as an Italian quality. In the second piece, the family is connected to identity, seen as the depository of heritage. In the third, the family is connected to the nation (the flags). Notice how this is then identified with Italian culture (not “cultures”).

The food is another extremely important element of definition of the self for Italian Americans<sup>24</sup>. To the pizza, pasta, tomato trinity, they oppose or integrate a large array of traditional dishes, including Northern ones like *polenta* and

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<sup>21</sup> Issue of December 22.

<sup>22</sup> Issue of November 10.

<sup>23</sup> Issue of December 8.

<sup>24</sup> See stereotype 12.



*bagnacauda*. The following announcements are found in the penultimate page of *L'Italo-Americano*:

**Nov. 15, Tues.: ICF Br. 67** Polenta Dinner & Fashion show w/  
beautiful garments from around the world 6:30 p.m., Casa  
Italiana (818) 792-6487

**Jan. 24, Tue.: ICF Br. 67** Polenta dinner for Children's  
Hospital of L.A. Casa Italiana, 7 p.m. & 10.. (213)225-8119  
or Pres. Cav. Gianni Lucarelli (818)445-5398

Tiramisu - 2 variations of this elegant Italian dessert recipe. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope and \$1 to: Recipe Queen, P.O. Box 1704, Sun Valley, CA 91353.

Notice how the eating is connected to other activities who may have an interest for the community. Also, the stress is put on healthiness of good traditional cooking as opposed to American junk food. Notable are the next two excerpts from articles, in which there is a very positive (and scientific) re-evaluation of a habit often attributed to Italian: eating large amounts of garlic. The message seems to be: we were right to eat so much garlic! The fact that this has never existed as a habit, is not considered anywhere on the newspapers I reviewed.

From, GARLIC SAID TO SHRINK CANCER TUMORS:

For decades, researchers have theorized that garlic can help prevent cancer. A new study indicates that the smelly herb may also help patients who already have the disease. ...<sup>25</sup>

From, RESEARCHERS SEEK NEW GARLIC VARIETIES:

WASHINGTON -- Good news for garlic lovers: Plant geneticists are on the brink of developing lots of new varieties of the strong-smelling, bulbous herb. ...<sup>26</sup>

From, ITALY, THE LAND OF MULTIPLE CUISINES:

... “There is an enormous diversity in the viewing of Italy by different countries, however everyone seems to agree that for centuries, Italy has been (and still is) the cradle of great cooking.”<sup>27</sup>

From, FOOD AS ART. THE FLAVORS OF ITALY FOOD CONVENTION:

... “The 1995 Flavors of Italy Convention will present a fabulous and exquisite array of Italian foods, including cheeses, oils and wines, menu never before shown in the U.S. ...”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Issue of May 4.

<sup>26</sup> Issue of February 26.

<sup>27</sup> Issue of March 30.

<sup>28</sup> Issue of March 30.

We can see that when we come to food, the Italian Americans do not sin in excessive modesty. On the contrary, they show themselves particularly proud. The Italian Americans I met would joke of the tendency of older Italian Americans to press children and visitors to eat more than is humanly tolerable. This is subsumed in the exclamation: "Mangia! Mangia!" (Eat! Eat!). This is not associated, however, with being fat, but with a natural emphasis on hospitality and a culturally dictated care for the others (children or visitors)<sup>29</sup>.

Finally, Italian Americans see music as one of the major contributions that Italians have given to the world<sup>30</sup>. Lyric music is called upon, and the natural beauty of traditional Italian songs<sup>31</sup>.

From, 'CANTIAMO' A VILLA SCALABRINI:

"The Italian Village and Cultural Center Folk singing group "Cantiamo" will be a Villa Scalabrini ... . "Cantiamo" wants to share with the residents , their families and friends, the memories of the beautiful and timeless folk songs of Italy. ..."

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<sup>29</sup> During my interview with Richard's family, the theme of hospitality emerged many times (often entailing the idea of food sharing). As part of his identification as Sicilian American, Martin felt to have hospitality as sacred. Personally, I have to say, I never met a Sicilian who wouldn't do everything and even more for a visitor.

<sup>30</sup> See stereotype 13.

<sup>31</sup> Those which are considered traditional songs are for the largest part not traditional at all. They are instead mainly *romanze*, a style of songs that was common in Italy at the beginning of this century. Many of them belong to the Neapolitan repertoire. Some of them are notably beautiful, but they do not reflect in any way what the average Italian would listen (not to say about younger generations).

Even in this case, the stereotype has been corrected, but not dismissed. The image imposed on them by the larger society has been reappropriated, changed, re-evaluate, so to create a new, positive image of themselves. Tajfel affirms:

“In substance, there are two principal forms of social creativity available to minorities. ... The first is the attempt to re-evaluate the *existing* traits of the group, which are often connected to an unfavorable connotation both inside and outside the group itself. ... The second consists of the research, in the past of the group, of some of its ancient traditions or distinct attributes, with the goal of giving them a new and positive meaning.”<sup>32</sup> (1985: 506).

Unfortunately, categorization seems to call for other categorizations. Fixation can at any moment be a result of (or the price to pay for) the balance between an internal and external boundary. To protect their sense of self extime from external stereotypes, the Italian American could end up prisoners of auto-created, rigid definitions. How to escape from this paradox? I will try to answer this question in the next two chapters.

### **III. Italian, English, and Ital-English.**

Some time must be spent in an attempt to define the complexity of Italian-American speech. Given the various regional origins of the Italian-Americans, a large

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<sup>32</sup> My translation from the Italian edition.

number of codes are available to them. No one can master all of them, but they could be seen as a series of overlapping categories. The immigrants came from their home country speaking their regional languages or dialects. At the unification of Italy in 1860, less than 0.8% of the population had had any schooling, and therefore could talk some Italian<sup>33</sup> (De Mauro, 1970:42). Standard Italian did not become the language used by the majority until after World War II. In 1950 only 19% of the population spoke Italian (Corbett, 1994:45). This means that the large majority of the more than four million immigrants from Italy who moved to the United States before 1930 did not know it, and the others mainly could only speak a few words of it.

Apart from Italian, thirty-two independent languages are spoken in Italy (Grimes, 1988:464-468), including: 1) languages that are national languages elsewhere, like German and Greek (Corbett, 1994:48-49)<sup>34</sup>; 2) languages such as Piedmontese, Sicilian and Neapolitan, which are spoken over large territories and have their own internal dialects or varieties (Correa-Zoli, 1981:239-241); 3) languages with a limited number of speakers, like Bergamasco and some Slavic languages (Corbett, 1994:53-54; Grimes, 1988:464-468). There are also various dialects of Italian, like the Tuscan or Roman one.

Today, of the approximately 20 million Italian-Americans, 3.9 million has claimed to talk Italian as their first language (Correa-Zoli, 1981:243)<sup>35</sup>. Though it

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<sup>33</sup> 2.5% if we include the Tuscan and people in Rome, whose language was fairly similar to literary Italian. Also, in 1911, the Southern regions had still more than 50% of the population completely illiterate (De Mauro, 1970:95).

<sup>34</sup> These belong to recognized and protected ethnic minorities inside Italy. All the others are not considered to be languages, but *dialetti* (dialects) of Italian and, up to recent times, they were considered to be lower, degenerated forms of Italian. To Tuscan it is accorded a different status, been considered a *vernacolo* (variant) of Italian. Thus it is in some way recognized a strict association with Italian.

<sup>35</sup> For other informative statistics, see Fishman (1978).

seems that many of them consider as Italian the speaking of particular Italian languages. Between the Italian languages and English, a language "of passage" has been used especially in the past, which I have called Ital-English, because of its derivation from these two languages. This is formed by the following:

1) English loan-words adapted phonologically and morphologically. Here are some examples that I found in my fieldwork: *busse*, from the English *bus* (Italian: *Autobus*); *carro*, English *car*, Italian *auto* or *macchina*; *farma*, English *farm*, Italian *fattoria*; *iarda*, English *yard*, Italian *giardino*; *Tenkesgivi*, English *Thanksgiving*, Italian *Ringraziamento*.

2) Loan shifts from English. From my fieldwork: *stoppe di luce* (litt. stop of light), English *street light* (but it could have been suggested by the word stop-light), Italian *semaforo*; *clino*, English *I clean*, Italian *pulisco*. Of particular interest are Italian words whose meaning has been changed, like *carro*, which in Italian would mean *wagon*; *passo* (pass) which in Italian would mean *step*; *turco* (turkey), Italian meaning *Turkish*.

3) Code-switches are so frequently used in the Ital-English code to have been considered as part of it (Correa-Zoli, 1981:247). There seem to be some words that are constantly rendered in English. Many of them are interjections, like *ainó*, English *I know*. Here I report one: *free* for the Italian *gratis*. In my fieldwork, I found every conversation to be characterized by series of code-switches.

4) Use of a mixed grammar (Di Pietro, 1961; La Sorte, 1985:166-167). The only example I found is: *bossa* (Italian *direttrice* or *padrona*) from the English boss+a, "a" is the Italian particle that indicates female-singular. La Sorte mentions the tendency to attach the definite article to abstract nouns (1985:166). I found the following: *con il*

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*vegetable* (which includes also a code-switch), English translation *with the vegetable*, instead of *with vegetable*. Other examples are found in older studies, like Menarini (1939), and Prezzolini (1939).

Since its beginning, Ital-English had a practical purpose. It was shaped to meet the needs of particular groups of speakers. It was not a unitary code. It varied especially in relation to the Italian language(s) and to the regional variety of English, from which it was formed. Moreover it depended on the social context of use, in particular the kind of work the immigrants were doing<sup>36</sup>. Ital-English was not only used by the immigrants to communicate with Americans, but to talk to each other, thus overcoming the barrier constituted by having different languages (La Sorte, 1985:162). Having given an image of the complexity of the Italian American speech, I would like to discuss shortly the meaning that each of these codes has for its speakers.

A more limited version of Ital-English is still in use today. Some of these terms, while being now useless as substitutes of English, may have assumed a symbolic value especially for their capacity to segment a coherent Italian-American identity both from an Italian and an American one. Even one Ital-English word, in the right place, can be enough to reposition yourself inside the Italian American identity. A way of saying which has become proverbial, like "mangia! mangia!" (eat! eat!) could be an example. The word reminds Italian Americans of a specific character of their identity: the food choices and eating habits. In *L'Italo-Americano*, "*Mangia! Mangia!*" is the title of the page dedicated to recipes and reviews of restaurants. A very interesting article was featured there on May 4. Here are some excerpts:

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<sup>36</sup> Example of this could have been the railroad jargon. Examples of the formers could be the fact that the Italglish spoken in New York was different from the one spoken in new Orleans, and inside, for example, New York, the Italglish spoken by a Piedmontese was different from the one spoken by a Neapolitan.

From, WHAT'S IN A NAME?: ... “recently it has been brought to our attention that the term, “*Mangia, Mangia*” is stereotypical ... . What’s your opinion? Do you like the name, “*Mangia, Mangia*”? Does it bring back fond memories of your grandmother who demanded you have just one more serving of lasagna, even if your waistband was splitting? Or does it conjure up some negative stereotype? Do you have a better name for this page of *L’Italo-Americano*?

Still connected to the food is the word "pizza pie". La Sorte writes about it: “Pizza was combined with “pie” to form *pizzapaia*. Literally, the term is redundant because it means pizza pizza -- or pie pie.” (1985:168). The word is by every mean redundant. "Pizza", in the language of its Neapolitan and Roman creators, means exactly "pie". Moreover, any American or Italian understands exactly what a *pizza* is, making the specification "pie" useless for the Americans, while the Italians would not understand it. Here, I think, we find the key.

The "pizza pie" is no longer the Italian pizza, and it is no longer just a kind of food. It is the food that, more than any other, could be taken to symbolize the immigrant's influence on American society. And it is an influence for which they have paid bitterly, since it is connected to offensive stereotyping. It is also something that has changed, that has become different from its original, and this change is perceived as a positive one: the "pizza pie" is much better than the Italian pizza. The "pizza pie" was created in New York and Chicago, together with the Italian American as a distinctive culture, from the coming together of many cultural groups and their encounter with America<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> We will meet this term again in Chapter 3.



The absence of Ital-English has a meaning too. During the dinner at Eni and Robert's home, when Ada talks about her present life in Los Angeles, she uses many Ital-English words in her Italian. All the terms I gave before, as example of Ital-English from my fieldwork, were taken from these narratives of the present. When, though, she tells about her past in Italy, very few are found. In the narrative that I have called *Pizza and Pizza Pie*, Ada represses a slip of the tongue in which she was saying "donut" instead of the Italian "pasta" (which means *pastries* in this context). This seems to indicate that she finds them inappropriate in this context. In this case, it is the Italian identity that is represented. In the first case, Ada is giving breath to the Italian American voice.

ADA: then we bought her two don<sup>38</sup>- two pastries because they were a cake-shop too  
and she ate those

The Italian language, I think, represents the past, the identity in the sense of the heritage. If in the past it had to remain hidden, today it can give prestige (Correa-Zoli, 1981). For the Italian American parents, having been able to teach Italian to their children is a reason for pride. It equals having kept the Italian traditions intact inside the family. For many young third and fourth generation Italian Americans, to re-learn the language in school can be part of the search for their "roots". For the majority of Italian Americans, English today is the first language. For those individuals who are

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<sup>38</sup> Here she may have started to say the English word "donut", then correct herself. In this case she may have meant to indicate a particular kind of Italian pastry called "ciambella" who looks like a big donut.

bilingual in English and Italian, the choice of the English code in conversation may carry particular meanings, like a shift toward an identification as American<sup>39</sup>.

The immigrants arriving at the turn of the century, as I already said, spoke their regional languages. They would learn Ital-English first, then they would come to master English too (Di Pietro, 1976). In general, the Italian Americans growing up in the 20's and 30's learned Italian both from their family and by living inside the community. First and second generation Italian Americans growing up in the 40's and 50's, on the contrary, often do not know any Italian. This may reflect the assimilationist policies of those years in the U.S., and the attempt to avoid to the children the humiliation of discrimination. Italian Americans growing up today, tend to manifest a renewed interest toward their original culture and heritage, and may decide to study the language in school (Correa-Zoli, 1981). In this case, Italian is spoken with an English accent and no dialectal influences.

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<sup>39</sup> We will go back to this in Chapter 4, talking about Tony's code choices.

## CHAPTER 2

### REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY AS COMMUNITY EVENT

The events that will be taken into consideration here are two feasts at Saint Peter's Church and in the adjacent *Casa Italiana*, in Los Angeles. The feasts are those of *San Trifone* and of the *Madonna Di Costantinopoli*. I consider these community events to be the “macro” level of the construction of ethnic identity. At the micro-level of conversation, it may be enough to look at the verbal (and non-verbal) code used, code-switching, and style. At the macro-level, in the social event, though, we also have to look at uses of symbols, structure of the event, choices in it (such as choice of music) and we have to use interpretation to recover meaning. Again, the basic assumption here is that ethnic identity is created in context in everyday encounters and contributes to its definition, and thus to the definition of the meaning of the encounter.

For the immigrants from Italy arriving in successive waves to America, starting from the end of the last century, unity and the capacity to build a community, based on a shared identity, could constitute an advantage. For them, though, such a unified identity was not readily available. As we have already seen in Chapter 1, they were coming from a recently formed nation where several cultures, with different languages, had been brought together under one king. These immigrants often had in common only the poverty and despair that had forced them out of their villages.

Building an identity, then, has not been a natural, for some time not even a wanted process. Still in the resistance against an oppressive society, which tended to relegate them to the margins and mark them with offensive stereotypes, unity could make the difference. In this key we have to look at the ritual, as an enactment of this process, as a place where the display of symbols becomes an arena of confrontation of those values, ideas, meaning that are shared. These, in turn, cannot be understood without looking at history, without going back and forth from the present to the past, and from America to Italy.

During the 20s and 30s, many Italian Americans believed they could find an identity in the nationalist rhetoric of the fascist regime in Italy<sup>40</sup>. After all, Mussolini, at least for his first decade of government, was seen favorably by many international audiences, including the American one<sup>41</sup>. To quote the words of an Italian American woman, at the *Open Forum "Una Storia Segreta"*, "What did we know of fascism? At that time, we were all fascists."

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<sup>40</sup> And the fascists did a lot to keep the Italian Americans on their side. See Noyes, 1993.

<sup>41</sup> See Fichera, 1981:201.

With World War II, and with the shock of being considered disloyal, of being seen as "Enemy Aliens", the Italian Americans -- whose ethnic identity, we have to remember, was still forming, still quite uncertain -- had to deal with a self that had been slashed into two pieces, an Italian and an American one, which, in a forced schizophrenia, had had to make war on each other. This wound or cut had to be healed, and the two parts had to be sewn together again. This is one of the important goals of the ritual. The symbols of "Italianess" and "Americaness" in it are also symbols of the two halves of the self that are symbolically re-conjunct time and again.

### **I. The Feasts.**

The feast of *San Trifone* is held every year in Saint Peter's Church, on the Sunday of November 10. It commemorates the martyrdom of the Saint, protector of the little village of Montrone in Apulia, South-East Italy. The "*San Trifone Society*" was formed in 1933 by immigrants from Montrone.

The feast of the *Madonna Di Costantinopoli*, patron of the Apulian town of Bitritto, has been celebrated since 1935, when the immigrants formed a Society under her name. A women's division of it was created in 1938. The feast is celebrated at the beginning of March. Each Society is active in the preparation of its feast, and take a large role in it.

Both feasts start at 11:00am, on Sunday, with the mass in Saint Peter's Church. This is followed by the *processione* (procession), during which the Saint's or the Madonna's statue is brought around in the streets of surrounding Chinatown. After, the people slowly gather for a dinner in the *Casa Italiana*. Following this, there are dances that go on until the evening.

On the Sunday of the feast, St. Peter's Church is full of people, during the Mass in Italian<sup>42</sup>. I had gone there accompanied by Tony, my consultant and by then a friend. I have seen other Italian Masses in St. Peter<sup>43</sup>, and always there is some element in them, that remembers the meaning of the day. In the sermon, the priest talks briefly about it, and remembers us that we are Italians. He talks with a strong Veneto accent. I realize later, that the people in the church, by contrast, are mainly from South Italy, from Apulia, Naples, Calabria, Sicily.

Even if most of the hymns are in Italian, some of them are in English, and during the sermon, the priest usually alternates speeches in Italian with their translation in English. This fact is particularly insightful, since on Sunday, there are two other Masses that are done in English. To go to the Mass in Italian, then, is not just a linguistic choice, but an affirmation of belonging and of the willingness to abide to the Italian tradition.

Outside the church, the marching band is waiting. As people come out of the church, the procession forms. At the head there is the deacon and/or some altar boy, with the Cross. Behind comes the standard with the symbol of the Saint, yellow for St. Trifone or light blue for the Madonna. Near it come the Italian and the American flags, then the queen and the princess of the Society. The people driving by, turn to look, surprised, at this piece of Italy transplanted in Los Angeles.

To represent St. Trifone, there is a group of children dressed like Roman soldiers; for the Madonna, there is a child dressed like the Virgin, and the women of the Society are all dressed in white. The members of the Society that follow are also

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<sup>42</sup> Before that, there is the English Mass.

<sup>43</sup> I have attended two other Masses at St. Peter, one for Saint Lucia and one for the feast of the *Ex-Combattenti* (war veterans).

recognizable by a collar they have, golden for St. Trifone and light blue for the Virgin. The priest comes next, preceding the statue, which is brought by the men of the Society, and sided by four men bringing poles with flowers (St. Trifone) or lamps (Virgin). Other men follow bringing a canopy. Then comes the marching band, and finally the rest of the people.

I have seen processions and Saints' festivals in Italy. Small ones, those of towns and villages off the main routes, and the spectacular ones, like those of Palermo and Padua, with thousands of people, like a river of souls, invading the streets to the point, that the walls of the ancient houses seem to retreat themselves like a hit animal, trying to yield them space.

The processions at Saint Peter, remind me more of the modest processions of the little fishing villages<sup>44</sup>. The basic scheme is the same. In front of the church of Saint Peter, the desert of the railroad lines, like a subtle boundary that visually contrasts with the American city, this manifestation of another history and another culture. Like in those small towns, the emptiness of the new neighborhoods exploded with building speculation, after World War II. Though in Italy, there would have been the lines of the houses in front, maybe someone looking from the windows. In the absence of that scenario, I feel alone. Then as we move slowly West along Broadway St., with the cross and the priest in front, the statue brought by the men, the people and the marching band, as we enter Chinatown, we start to see faces, looking at us from the windows, those of Asian Americans. Chinatown too, is a place on our side of the border, and these spectators of the Italian feast, are themselves "*Others*".

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<sup>44</sup> In particular, the procession for *San Gaetano* in Portopalo, Sicily.

The procession reaches the "Chinese Catholic Center", goes around it and walks for a while along the Harbor freeway. If we look at the calendar of the activities at St. Peter's Church, we discover that at least twice a month there is some kind of important happening or feast. The immigrants brought to the parish their protector Saints from their towns of origin in Italy. Each year at the due date, these people have maintained the tradition to honor their patrons. From decade to decade, this has contributed to shape the community as a whole. Most of these feasts have been brought from Southern Italy, though today all Italian Americans participate in them. For this to happen, the feast must be provincialized, unbounded from the original context of formation and be recontextualized as one among other feasts that revolve around St. Peter's Church. In this way, what was first the tradition of a village, is shared and becomes a tradition to which the entire community can refer.

In this change, we can see that there are, in some sense, several speakers and an audience. The audience is the community itself. The speakers, at each occasion, are those to which the ceremony originally belonged. They are usually reunited into a club. They organize the feast and, even more important, during the procession they perform, by displaying their tradition to the audience, so that the public can participate in it. They carry the statue and they march on the front, with the flags and the standard. The statue of the patron, that they bring out of the church, can be seen as symbolizing the tradition, which is brought to the public sphere, the street, the community.

Then the procession continues its display in Chinatown, where was before the original immigrant neighborhood. At an ideal level of memory, Chinatown is the place of the original heart of the community. In this way the tradition is shared not only with those members that are physically present, but also with those who are



ideally so. Those members of the community, that a few days later will read, on *L'ItaloAmericano*, that the ceremony has been happily carried on, as every other year.

After making a square the procession returned to St. Peter's Church from the East. As I started toward the "Casa Italiana", I met an old man, an Italian American of Calabrese origins, to whom I had talked other times. He recognized and greeted me, then started to talk about Italy. In his words, it becomes a heavenly place, blessed by natural beauty and social perfection, where life is easy and the food does not make you sick, where the bread is real bread and a friend a real friend: in sum, the land of plenty.

After the end of the procession, the participants slowly gather inside the *Casa Italiana* for dinner<sup>45</sup>. In the great salon, the noises of the voices seem to multiply at every moment. I can hear words of their languages, shouted to each other in warm greetings. Looking at the people moving among the table, giving a word, a smile, a hand shaking or a kiss to friends, and probably distant relatives, the net of connections that keep together the community becomes almost tangible. I remember the dinner for Columbus Day, when I was brought around, from table to table, to know every person that my companions of table deemed relevant.

Various speakers alternate at the microphone, situated in the central dancing space, to ask, in English or Italian, that people sit down. All of them go unheard. From the first time, I could not but notice how the code-switching could be considered an institution in the Los Angeles Italian American community. A mixture of languages can be heard whenever Italian Americans meet. Problems of purism seem to be out of

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<sup>45</sup> I did not participate in the dinner for the Madonna di Costantinopoli. Thus I will base my analysis on the dinner for San Trifone, and I will use for comparison the dinner for the "Ex-Combattenti" (War Veterans) and that for Columbus Day.

question. In this all Italian American occasions, each person makes of language an art. During the dinner, laughs often follow a particularly ironic switch. In one case, a speaker starts to say, that a car has to be moved, a Mitsubishi. He mispronounces the name of the brand in *Misibusi*, he looks serious. Some people shout the correct pronunciation, and he, after a few other attempts, concludes with a *Mister Bush*, to which the audience answer with roaring laughing.

Finally everybody has arrived and is seated, and the queen is called to the microphone, to read the “Pledge of Allegiance” to the United States. Everybody is standing, including Tony and me, and they repeat the Pledge in unison. This is followed by the singing of the American and Italian national anthems, led by a lyric singer on the central stage. Some of the audience sing along, others just hum. I had never heard the Italian anthem in full before. In Italy it is quite unusual<sup>46</sup>. Finally, Father Bordignon says a prayer.

Now it was time for the dinner to start, and everybody recovered their seats. The tables were perfectly organized, and the food was served perfectly in the Italian way and order, plate after plate, without mixings of flavors (religiously avoided in the Italian cuisine). The food was also in Italian cooking style. When we were served spaghetti with tomato sauce, I had the definite impression that something was wrong. Thinking back now, I think that by comparison to an Italian festive dinner, certain elements were out of proportion. It is exactly this that led me in the analysis. A dinner like that, in Italy, would not have been the right place for a “Pledge of Allegiance” or the national anthem. First, it was not a national festivity, but a religious one, and the

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<sup>46</sup> There has been much discussion in Italy, in recent years, on the possibility to change the national anthem, abandoning the “Inno di Mameli” (Hymn of Mameli, from the name of his writer), which many people feel is outdate, with the “Vá Pensiero” (Go my Thoughts) by Verdi, from the Opera “Nabucco”.

two in Italy are separated. Second, they are appropriate for military decorations or funerals of presidents, not for a patron's day. The pasta with tomato sauce, on the contrary, in Italy would have been considered too humble, too much of a household plate, for the richly decorated tables and the festive occasion. Some special recipe, something unusual would have been more appropriate. Though, of course, something unusual would not have re-instated the meaning of the event with the same symbolic force.

While everybody has already started to eat, the priest goes back to the microphone to invite the people, with his Veneto accent, to keep going to the Mass. then the music band starts to play some old Italian ballroom song, of the kind that used to be the style two generations ago. The music that was the style, probably, when many of them or of their parents and grandparents left Italy. After a waltz on *San Trifone*, the show gathers momentum when an imitator of Frank Sinatra comes out to sing some of his famous pieces, like "New York, New York". He is followed by an imitator of Elvis Presley, with brilliant dress and a deep voice. The children run to see him from nearer. Finally the two sing together "I Did It My Way". After they have finished, the speaker announces that they will be back for the *Feast of St. Lucia*.

The dinner goes on, with pauses, for more than two hours, while the band alternates American with Italian modern popular and traditional songs, and even an Italian American song (talking about immigration and describing Italy as the land of Saints and Poets). People dance, filling the central arena. They continue dancing after the end of dinner. During one of the pauses in the music, a speaker updates, with various code-switching, the audience on some new happenings: new members just arrived in Los Angeles, the oncoming birthday of the older man in the community, a new lottery for an airplane fair to Italy. The dances went on until the evening.

## **II. Symbols and Representations of Identity.**

I will analyze the use, in Italian American rituals, of symbols of nationhood and symbols of ethnicity. On the basis of the preceding description, I intend to look at two things. How the event is build as a community one, and how the Italian American identity is displayed inside it. It can appear immediately to the reader that these two themes are deeply interrelated.

Symbols of nationhood: Immigrant groups tend to be more patriotic, and have more nationalistic feelings, than the people in their countries of origin. I think, however, that there is something peculiar and unique in the way each of these groups "lives" the idea of nationhood. For Italian Americans the two fundamental themes are, I think, loyalty and co-presence.

Historical events can mark the lives of an entire people. Those events can remain sculpted in their memories and shape their actions and decisions after many years. For Italians, such an event was the nazi's occupation of Italy during the World War II<sup>47</sup>. For the Italian Americans, such an event was the entrance of the United States in the Second World War, the "day that the land of their fathers made war on that of their children," (Fichera, 1981:277-78).

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<sup>47</sup> Nuto Revelli writes: "L'ho rincorso per vent'anni il tema della guerra, l'avevo nel cervello la guerra, non riuscivo a dimenticare. Bastava un niente perché il mio tarlo della guerra ricominciasse a scavare. Un tozzo di pane buttato mi ricordava la fame antica, la fame delle patate gelate." (1977:15) "For twenty years I ran after the theme of the war, I had it in the brain, the war, I could not forget. Anything was enough for the woodworm of war to gnaw inside me. A piece of bread thrown away reminded me of the ancient hunger, the hunger of the cold potatoes."

At that time, thousands of Italian Americans demonstrated their loyalty by voluntarily enlisting in the United States' Army. Today, the community repeats that act symbolically, again and again, in the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the American flag. While this establishes the primacy of their citizenship in the United States, the co-presence of flags and national anthems show that Italy cannot be forgotten. While they are American citizens, they were originally citizens of another nation<sup>48</sup>.

A metaphor that I have heard used in this regard is: "to love Italy like a mother, and America like a wife or husband." The image of the mother recalls the duty to recognize the land that gave them origin. The image of marriage implies a free choice. The sense of pride in Italy is at the base of the feeling of worth and respectability of themselves as American citizens. The suggestion of freedom of choice, implies also a positive re-evaluation of the meaning of immigration. Immigration is seen not as a result of despair, but almost as an answer to the need of America to have them. The motto of the "Patrons of Italian Culture" association in Los Angeles is "to enrich American life with Italian culture" (Placidi, 1979:163).

Co-presence is not limited to the symbols of nationhood, but applies also to symbols of ethnicity. I have decided to look at particular forms of displaying ethnic identity: songs, food, and use of symbolic *personae*. In the process of creating a unified Italian American identity, shared characteristics, like the love for food and music, can be seen as the result of an effort toward minimalism, namely toward the reduction of a complex identity to a few defined traits. As I showed in the past

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<sup>48</sup> This is well expressed in the following excerpt from *L'Italo-Americano*: From, LOGO CHOSEN FOR O.C.F.I.L.: "Recently the Orange County Families of Italian Lineage sponsored a contest ... to establish a logo ... [The winner] explained that the two flags (United States and Italy) overlap each other with the red of each flag touching to signify the blood lineage, Italy to the United States. The American flag is slightly over the Italian flag to signify that we are now in the United States." ...

chapter, the mainstream American stereotype of what Italian Americans "are" has influenced the Italian American vision of themselves.

This might explain certain choices during the feasts, but there is more. It is true that each group needs to create an identity for themselves, but it also must avoid "getting stuck" in it. People must be able to leave room for change. Definitions of self and identity are necessarily ambiguous. People in their everyday encounters master many identities, switch them, and often enact more than one at a time. Representations of identity, that become part of a collective event, reflect that same ambiguity.

For Italian Americans, a flexible identity means being able to live happily in and between the Italian and the American worlds. Co-presence then assumes the form of a continuously oscillating balance among them. In the choice of songs, for example, there is an almost perfect alternation of American, Italian American, Italian, and regional songs. During the *St. Trifone's* dinner, those musical voices become embodied in the *personae* of Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley.

Frank Sinatra is an Italian American cultural hero. A man who through his own capacity has acquired an international renown, he is particularly near to the Los Angeles community, to which he has contributed a lot in the past<sup>49</sup>. Elvis, instead, is an American hero. The Italian Americans can identify with both of them: with Sinatra as Italian Americans and with Presley as Americans. Both of them are part of their history. At the end, the two impersonators sing a song together. Symbolically, there is no discord between multiple identities, but harmony, which is represented by the ability to sing together<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> He subsidized the construction of Villa Scalabrini Senior Citizens Center.

<sup>50</sup> To those who think that this could have been a coincidence, I remember that this event had been carefully prepared and orchestrated. This does not mean, anyway, that the decision to represent these double identities has been done consciously.

To analyze the last cultural *persona*, we must take a step back and return to the church. From the first time I entered it, the most interesting element, to me, has been the altar, in the shape of a man paddling a boat, a navigator. This man represents Saint Peter, who was a fisherman before being called by Jesus. I have never seen a religious altar so "sculpted", and it contrasts with the general conservatism of the rest of the church.

Apart from Saint Peter, the altar represents at least three other navigator's *personae*. Cristoforo Colombo, which has been reinvented as the first Italian American and a symbol for all of them, is their cultural hero and founding father. The second *persona* is the concretized image of all the immigrants who followed him crossing the ocean, each of them full of hope. Finally, the sculpture represents a fisherman, image of the Italian Americans themselves, whose main occupation, in the coastal areas of California, has been in the fishing industry. Many of them had been fisherpeople in Italy as well.

In every case, the image is one of passage and journey, of uncertainty and change, of acquired freedom and loss of important connections. The figure is in movement, not stable. In sum, these are images

"through which communities repair their fractured ethnic identity.

...The *festa* contains certain elements (food) that evoke cultural

"authenticity" and other elements that represent cultural "otherness".

(DiCarlo, 1994:111).

Cultural authenticity is presented, for example, from the choice of food. In another festive occasion, the one for Columbus Day, the menu was rewritten in terms of “discovery”. It included: Liguria salad, pasta with sauce “Colombian” style, roasted beef “Genoese” style, roasted potatoes “Saint Mary” style, green beans with almonds “Pinta” style, coffee “Nina” style<sup>51</sup>. Notice how each plate is strictly “Italian” and at the same time recalls Columbus. The elements of cultural “otherness” (like Elvis), though, are not the opposite of the authenticity ones. On the contrary, they may represent the position of the Italian American themselves in front of those authentic traditions, as “other”. Elements of “otherness” then are part of the identification of these people as Americans.

Columbus and Frank Sinatra are also example of that series of “great figures” that, from Columbus itself to the “son who has become layer”, create the foundation of the Italian Americans’ identity and their right to be considered “good” American citizens<sup>52</sup>. The following words of Martin, are a nice statement:

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<sup>51</sup> From the booklet distributed in that occasion. Notice that Columbus was from Genoa, in Liguria, and that Nina, Pinta and Saint Mary were the names of his ships.

<sup>52</sup> Here are some examples from *L’Italo-Americano*: From, WHAT IF... : ... “What name would have been given to our continent if Amerigo Vespucci had not followed in Columbus’ wake? Without them, there’d be no Venezuela (it means “Little Venice”) no Colombia, or even Columbia University, for that matter. ...” Issue of January 26..

From, THE ITALIAN CONNECTION: “Clearly, in inspiration, courage, *seamanship*, and financing, the world should be indebted to the Italic people. Names such as Seneca, Toscanelli, Polo, and Bernardi should be forever linked to Columbus. ...” Issue of March 30. Italics mine. Personally, I do not know who Bernardi and Toscanelli are, and I do not see how Seneca, Roman moralist philosopher, could be associated with Columbus.

From, ITALIAN AMERICANS ... A LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS: ... “In June, Leon Panetta became the first Italian American in U.S. History to be named White House Chief of Staff. ... Panetta tops a list of over 125 Americans of Italian heritage currently serving in the Clinton administration. [list follows] ... The November elections brought six more Italian Americans to Congress ... [names follow] ...” The article goes on for a while in the style.

From: “ITALIAN GENIUS “ FOCUS OF UCLA COURSE: “From the storied Emperor Julius Caesar to rock singer Madonna, Italians (and those of Italian ancestry) have made an impressive mark on art, film, food, fashion, music, comedy, folklore and politics.” Issue of May 5.



“Most Americans, are completely hu: un hu: aware of the- all the contributions that Italian Americans have done, into this country. In the schools, in sciences, in art, in hu:: Marconi: and, I mean, just thousands of them, and in every different field, I mean not just- I mean, in music, you know, ( ) and all these-”<sup>53</sup>

A few words must be said about the food. Symbolic anthropologists think that eating together is an affirmation of belonging. Eating and sharing the same food means to be the same -- to be made out of the same substance. Dinners are an important way of getting together in the Italian American community. Its members have developed a strong association between certain kinds of food and "Italianess". In the *L'Italo-Americano*, maybe half of the newspaper is dedicated to descriptions of dinners, food, recipes, and commercials about them<sup>54</sup>. Chairidakis, talking about the Calabrese group in New York, writes:

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<sup>53</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>54</sup> Here are some examples: From, COME, ENJOY ITALIAN DESSERTS: ... “Coffee and dessert wines will accompany tiramisù, zuppa inglese and other confections provided by local bakeries, restaurants and the Museo’s [Italo Americano] authentic pastry chefs.”

From, CALABRIA CLUB: ... “The tables were replenished of traditional foods, delicacies, as it happens for festivities and especially for Christmas; starting from an abundant appetizer complete with even prosciutto, several varieties of pasta: baked lasagna, tortellini, mustaccioli, fish, beef, wine, and a dessert of tiramisù and coffee. Everything prepared perfectly ...” Issue of December 29.

From, ORANGE COUNTY FAMILIES OF ITALIAN LINEAGE: ...” There will be a special “gourmet dinner” with Cutlet *a la Milanese*, *Gnocchi con rapine*, *Antipasto*, Salad, *Focaccia*, St.Honore’ cake, coffee or tea, wine or soda available for nominal fee.” ... Issue of January 19. Italics in the original.

After the article on “Mangia, Mangia” of April 20, publicizing a new Italian cookbook (with the same name), an angry reader sent a letter,, published on May 4, declaring “food fight”: From, LETTERS/LETTERE: ... “I was disgusted ... Who in this millennium uses three cans of tomato paste and then breaks spaghetti into little pieces and cooks them in the same mess? Tomato paste is the scourge of Italian world in America. ... Where in all of Italy did you ever go and eat a stuffed round tomato? The only tomatoes in Italy are the wonderful pear-shaped San Marzano. ... Next time you decide to print “authentic” Italian recipes, make sure they really are.”

"In the immigrant community, not only the fertility and the regeneration of the family, but that of the cultural community, are sanctioned in the commensal setting. Eating in this context becomes an act that reinforces being Calabrian and regenerates a common Calabrian identity at its very source." (1993:18).

### **III. Conclusions.**

What does it mean to do a *processione* in Downtown L.A.? The ceremony is similar to the ones in Italy. The same is the Roman Catholic Church that legitimizes it. There are also some notable differences. For example, the presence of the queen and princess, who are a reminder of a typically American preoccupation with dreams of *noblesse*.

The Los Angeles community has its own ways of organizing itself. The ceremonies of *Saint Trifone* and of the *Madonna Di Costantinopoli* are almost identical. The differences (color of the collar and standard, dress of the child/children) appear as variations on a theme. They are elements of coordination more than differences. This means that the two can be seen as episodes of the same story or branches of the same tree. In the feasts the Italian Americans of different generations, age, and especially cultural origin, come together, thus making:

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Finally, even Columbus is brought in it. Reading about the controversies on Columbus, we learn that: From, COLUMBUS REAL TREASURE: ... "For us culinarians, what matters is that Columbus, as a good Italian, did play an important role in shaping the world's gastronomic evolution." Issue of October 27.

"possible the construction of a new ethnicity that moved beyond local village and regional identities. ...It is the ritual event that mobilizes the various community organizations in a unified project that encompasses the social, economic, and political life of the community. It is also a religious performance that centralizes and universalizes cult worship." (DiCarlo, 1994:110).

This kind of organization on the one hand underlines the function of the Church as the heart of the community, on the other hand, it gives it a leading role in the construction of the Italian American identity. The cultural differences can be reorganized as variations of a theme. If we read the official historian of Saint Peter's parish, we reckon a series of conscious efforts at unifying the sparse Italian American groups in the Los Angeles area.

In 1955 St. Peter's Church was transformed from a mission into a parish. Father Donanzan, then priest, in 1963 started to organize discounted charter flights to Italy. In 1967, he organized a citywide committee for the organization of Columbus Day celebrations. This was an important step in the centralization of the community. He then acquired the journal *L'Italo-Americano*. At the same time, he gathered the funds for the construction of the *Casa Italiana*, which became the social center of the parish. (Placidi, 1979).

The Catholic Church did not have a hold on the Italian Americans until relatively late. This was due to centrifugal and/or anticlerical traditions in many Italian cultures. Sensi-Isolani & Martinelli write that the Church: "began to exert its influence as Italian immigrants became more assimilated and Americanized." (1993:151). The

Church then gained its central position exactly by presenting itself as a unifying force inside the communities, and at the same time as facilitator toward adaptation. Tradition was reinterpreted as a guide in the process of adaptation:

"Historically, folk entertainments, while undoubtedly serving to preserve tradition and teach established values, have often played a role in the communication and promotion of new ideas and the adjustment to a new or evolving social or political situation." (Ranganath, 1980:15).

Economically, the Church slowly came to substitute the preceding mutual aid societies, which had been usually regionally based. Thus, they had less strength to help their members in the difficult times, that came with the Great Depression first and World War II after, bringing with them a surge of racism and xenophobia. The unification under the standard of the Church, however, offered a defense. Today, during the feasts, the Church is still an organizing force in the construction of the Italian American identity.

Having described the public event, I am going to describe the private one in the next chapter. Public and private levels are inextricably interrelated. Memories and sharedness become symbols of nation and religion in the public sphere. From the dialogue to the national anthem the community is reunited around performance. Performance that is charged with symbols of complex identity. So each public event is in reality the sum of a series of dialogues, or a series of conversations. The event makes the Italian Americans available to each other in conversation. In this sense the whole public event is like an elaborate apparatus that establishes a momentary

physical boundary for the community. Inside this boundary, delimited by series of symbols, an infinite number of conversation can go on.

### CHAPTER 3

#### CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY IN CONVERSATION

The following few personal narratives, of which I will furnish an analysis, were told by Ada, an old Italian-American woman, during a dinner. This was held at the home of her niece, Eni, and her husband Robert, in November 1994. Ada's son, Renzo, and I were also present<sup>55</sup>. Ada's narratives were at the center of our attention during the major part of the dinner. This was partially due to her talkativeness. Though, if she could keep the floor and have us listening was especially, I will argue, because she was doing something for us. She was constructing and reconstructing Italy for us.

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<sup>55</sup> The participants and setting have already been described in the introduction. From my consultants point of view, I could be seen as more native than they were. After all, they were not only called to show their "Italianess", but possibly to establish with me some sort of complicity in dealing with the anthropologist' part of myself.

The first question that I posed to myself, in analyzing this dinner's conversation, was: what is that is being accomplished here? My answer was that there are two kinds of activity, going on during this dinner, on which I want to focus. The first activity entails the construction of a shared reality, of a common ground of knowledge, of, to use V. Turner's famous term, *communitas* (Turner, 1974). Not only, but at a smaller (micro) level, this is indeed a way of constructing community. A common reality, a shared past, and a claim to Italian American identity are developed by Ada through a series of rhetoric, narrative devices. On this first kind of activity, a second kind is grafted. This is composed by the continuous repositioning of the participants among various ethnic identities (American, Italian, Italian American, and regional ones). Through this repositioning, identities come to be represented in the general conversational exchanges.

You may recognize, that these are the same two kinds of activity on which I focused in Chapter 2, while analyzing the public rituals. Of course, in the more private, more informal context of the dinner, the ways in which these activities get done is very different. In this case, they happen in conversation. I will dedicate here much more attention to the first kind of activity. This for two reasons: first, the complexity of Ada's narratives requires a very detailed analysis; and second, because throughout them there are several cases of the second kind of activity.

Let's now pass to the analysis of Ada's narratives. First of all, I have to make clear that this is not an analysis of the Italian American narrative style. It is instead an analysis of the way narratives can contribute to the reinforcement and maintenance of an Italian American identity. The "style" used, in this case, is Ada's personal variant of the Tuscan one.

## **I. Verbal Art and Construction of Community.**

There are two components of Verbal Art. The first is constituted by the “textuality”. The oral text is often defined by comparison to the written text. The term itself, “text”, was originally used to indicate only a written piece. The problem of defining the oral text on the base of written ones emerges first in transcription. The written word is not an effective means of preserving the oral text. This is due to the linearity/visualization/bidimensionality of the written word, against the circularity/audibility/tridimensionality of the sound.

The oral text is dialogical, developed in the encounter among tellers. Each person can be alternatively the speaker or the audience, the addresser or the addressed of the oral discourse. Verbal art is expressive, does not describe emotions, but evokes them. In Tedlock's words:

“What oral narrative usually does with emotions is to evoke them rather than describe them directly, which is precisely what we have been taught to expect in poetry.” (1983:51).

The oral text is made of *memory*. In this regard, the point is not repeating, but readapting and/or creating, not using the correct words, but the appropriate ones, with regard to the audience and the other elements of the context.

Oral art reflects “present cultural values rather than idle curiosity about the past.” (Ong, 1982:48). This means that it is not an event of the past which is related, but culture. Meaning for the present, not truthfulness, constitutes the *raison d'être* of these accounts. The point is not if Ada's narratives are truthful, or if the moral values

expressed are really felt, but that the listeners accept them as true and as part of their (family) history (Bauman, 1986:11). Also, the important point is that what is said is understood, made sense of. It is this making sense of the stories that defines the belonging of the listeners to the same reality, to the same social fabric.

The second component of verbal art regards the ways in which the text is performed, and it is connected to the context in which it is used and/or reproduced. In the performative part of verbal art, the relation that is constituted between the speaker and the audience has the greatest importance. The speaker in general re-contextualizes the oral text to make it more relevant and/or to adapt it to a particular audience. In Hymes' words:

"...these two latter considerations will be essential -- the performance as situated in a context, the performance as emergent, as unfolding or arising within that context." (1981:81).

Both audience and teller are then situated inside a particular society and historical moment. In our case, the audience is co-constructing the situation as one in which the stories have to be narrated. Ada is acting as a relay through which the identities of the others were focused and mirrored back. If this could be said with a metaphor, I would say that the participants were feeding themselves in Ada's stories.

There is also, of course, Ada's desire to be heard and to tell about her self, her life, her dreams, her values, her experience. She is performing herself as a Tuscan woman. Many times as a child, growing up, I have listened to the accounts of the old women of my village. I could recognize in Ada's words the style of the Tuscan teller. She was performing for a Tuscan public. Who else, but me, could listen? Her son,



maybe; maybe Eni; for sure not Robert. Then there had to be another reason for them to listen, to let those stories run freely. An audience performs too. It is like a chorus. The correct performance of the audience is what keeps the narrator going. In this case what we have is a performative dissonance. Ada performs as a Tuscan, while the listeners perform as Americans (or Italian-Americans). The performer's display (Baumann, 1989:3) was risking to fall short of effectiveness.

Verbal art, as any other form of art, is always culturally shaped, always understandable and appreciable in the context of the culture which created it. Once it is taken out of that context, it can only be understood through a translation or mediation. So why does the narration keep going? I think this is because there is another side, there is another dialogue among them, that forms the base for a communion, and that dialogue is a construction of identity.

Quoting Walter Benjamin, we can say that:

"The storyteller takes what he tells from experience - his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale." (1969:87).

The experience, in this case, is partially an interior experience of the self as Italian, that in the moment it is shared makes the others Italians. Most of Ada's narratives are narratives of personal experience. Many of them also present an anecdote as the punch line, which may regard (be expressed by) a third person. Goffman tells us why it is important to look at anecdotes:

"A tale or anecdote, that is, a replaying, is not merely any reporting of a past event. In the fullest sense, it is such a statement couched from the personal perspective of an actual potential participant who is located so that some temporal, dramatic development of the reported event proceeds from that starting point." (1974:504).

As I said before, the point is not reporting the past event, but connecting them to the present and to the audience. The stories are bridges over the ocean, connecting Los Angeles to Italy. Following Baumann, we have to ask:

"in what way events may be taken to be prior to and determinative of the narratives that recount them and in what way the events may be seen as being retroactively *constituted* by the narratives." (Baumann, 1989:51).

What I will argue is that what the narratives create here, is not the event in the past, but the relationship between that past and our present.

While Ada tells stories throughout the dinner, the others make a large effort to be an audience, to listen and collaborate. They show desire to enter in the reality that she is constructing. They seem to want to feel those stories as part of their identity, feel that they are their own stories, their family history. Stories of the past are important to Italian Americans.

People I met would talk to me about their families, the places they have left in Italy, places that maybe they have never seen, but that are present to their minds like if they had left them the day before, as if they were around the corner. If they had had a

chance to go back as tourists, they had not been distracted ones. Even the smaller happening had been pregnant of meaning to them when they were in Italy, and they would preserve the memory.

What Vizenor writes about the Native Americans, could be applied to the Italian Americans too, namely that their

"identities are created in stories, and names [of places] are essential to a distinctive personal nature, ...personal stories are coherent and name individual identities within communities." (1994:56-57).

Listening to Ada, I could have been surprised at how well preserved were those memories of places and names. Indeed, after coming to America, she must have clung to them as a piece of her home. But did those events that she recounts really happened? To make us answer yes or no, can be a measure of the narrator's ability to make us live those stories as true (Tedlock, 1983:166). Ada is clearly successful at this.

## **II. Ada's Narratives.**

In analyzing some of the rhetorical devices that she deploys to create verisimilitude, I will base myself on the lists proposed by Wiget (1987) and Tedlock (1983). The first was used to analyze Hopi Pueblo narratives, the second for Zuni

Pueblo ones. Even if my case is obviously different, the proposed lists are general enough to be deployed in my analysis. I have utilized them only in so far as they were useful to that end.

A) Opening Formulas:

Opening Formulas are an important part of narratives. They signal to the participants that the speaker needs “ground”, that he/she will talk for more than one, many turns. Thus the others have to give her/him ground for action, time, and appropriate feedback (Wiget, 1987). Opening Formulas also communicate the fact that the *frame* of reference of the talking has shifted. Even if the actual circumstances have not changed, the story that will follow will refer to another space and time, maybe to other participants: in sum, to another *context*.

I will now give examples from those of Ada’s narratives which I am going to analyze. I will also use this as an occasion to give a first description of those stories. The first narrative (1), which I have called “Why Renzo Does Not Eat Meat”, is told shortly after the dinner has started. Eni has realized that Renzo has not taken any of the various plates prepared which included meat. She is surprised. Indeed being vegetarian is a quite uncommon trait for Italians. Ada takes the turn and recounts why it is so. Renzo had been really sick as a child, and since then he had not touched any meat. Then she adds an anecdotal story: once Renzo, still a child, had been offered money to eat some chicken, and he had refused. Here is the opening of the anecdote:

ADA: Renzo is fifty-three years old right?

he was born in (19)forty-one

•

if you tell him eu- once we were bagging<sup>56</sup> the p- pig  
before coming to America

My second case, is an opening of a narrative which then is not developed. We had been talking about the recent serious flood of the Tanaro river in Northern Italy. I ask Ada if she calls her relatives in Tuscany often. She answers ‘yes’, and starts to tell of her last call. Though, Eni interrupts by starting to tell about her own last visit to Italy. Then we go on to talk about *pizza*, and the telephone call is forgotten. Here is the attempted opening:

VAL: Do you always call your relatives in Italy?

ADA: yes even last night we have-

VAL: Ha<sup>57</sup>! and are they in Tuscany?

ADA: ya

VAL: ha::

ADA: it was four o'clock here and there it was lu- it was one o'clock in the afternoon  
and they were eating (with)- they were celebrating the birthday

During the conversation on *pizza*, Ada takes the turn again to tell the narrative (3) I will called “Tuscans Did Not Use to Eat Pizza”. She tells how her mother went to visit her in Rome, when Ada was living there. The night, they went to eat pizza, but her mother did not like it, disgusted by its appearance. Here is the opening:

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<sup>56</sup> They were putting the pork's meat into sausage skins to make salami, sausages, and other kinds of preserved meat.

<sup>57</sup> Indicates understanding and/or acknowledgment.

ADA: \Eni! I want you (sing)- I wan[t to make you (plural) laugh.

\(ADA ==> ENI)

REN: [Yeah, you get (that way)

VAL: Hum.

*(BOB has been talking and everybody is looking at him. When ADA starts talking all others reorient themselves toward her.)*

ADA: in (19)thirty-six

in (19)thirty-six

BOB: yes

ADA: I had been- I had been in Roma for two years already

BOB: yes

ADA: I made my mother come \

\(slow positive head shaking)

Later on in the dinner, comes the narrative (4) I called “Ada Goes to Rome”. This is a very composite narrative, which is formed by several distinct parts. Ada first describes the family where she went to work as a maid. Then she tells how, at the time, pasta was not common as a food in Tuscany. Following, she tells the main story: how the daughters of her mistress knew how to do everything in the house, and why. After having been interrupted by various comments of the others, Ada tells how one of those ladies married a rich man, who was Jewish, and how the couple had to escape to America during fascism. Finally, she ends by saying more about the abilities of her mistress’ daughters.

ADA: \When I went to Rome

*\(ADA ==> VAL. All others turn to ADA)*

VAL: \hm hm

*\(positive head shaking)*

ADA: the family had eight people\\

*\(VAL: positive head shaking)*

Immediately after, Ada starts a new narrative (4a), of which I have transcribed only the Opening Formula:

ADA: When [I

ENI: [That was an art aunt=

ADA: = When I was going to take the Acetosa water

As the dinner proceeds, the conversation falls on smoking. During it Ada tells the story (5) which I have called “The Old Smoker”. She tells how her brother Ernesto used to work for a very old man. When the old man fell sick, the physician came and told him to quit smoking. But the old man defiantly refused the counsel.

ADA: yes listen!

Ernesto you know

BOB: yes

ADA: Ernesto my [brother]

BOB: [( )]

ADA: he used to live in a house

stable boy\\

*\(Bob & VAL: positive head shaking. )*

Finally, I report here the opening of a last narrative, which I am not going to analyze in this context. In it Ada told us about her voluntary work for the Senior Citizen Center in Sandima (Los Angeles).

*(ENI is coming from the kitchen with a cup of coffee, and she passes it to BOB)*

ADA: \Tá! Not tá, \Bob!

\(VAL ==> ADA, ADA ==> her plate) \ (Bob takes the cup of coffee, then ==> ADA)

\five days a week

\(ENI goes back to the kitchen)

REN: ( )

ADA: \I go to the Senior Citizens (Center)

\(ADA ==> BOB)

BOB: Yes.

Now, to make things more clear, I will propose a scheme of the common elements of these Opening Formulas:

	Attention Getting	Protagonist	Temporal Frame	Spatial Frame	Activity Frame
Narrative 1	Right? + (Reinstating initial statement)	Renzo	Once	((Before coming to America))	We were bagging the pig
Narrative (unfinished)			Four o'clock 1 pm	Here There	They were eating
Narrative 3	Eni! I want to make you laugh	I	In (19)thirty-six	I was in Rome	I made my mother come
Narrative 4		I	When	Rome	I went
Narrative 4a	(Repetition)	I	When		I went to take
Narrative 5	Yes listen!	Ernesto	When we came down ...	In a house	Stable Boy
Narrative 6	Ta! Not ta, Bob!	I	Five days a week	Senior Citizens (Center)	I go



So, as we can see, at the beginning of each narrative Ada recontextualizes the narrated event. She indicates: the protagonist (Who?); the place (Where?); the time (When?); and the activity (What?) that was going on in the background (and that sometime the events interrupt)<sup>58</sup>. Also, we can notice how Ada takes the turn, how she communicates that she is going to talk for a while<sup>59</sup>. The Opening Formulas, thus, give to the listeners the possibility to re-orient themselves, facilitating the understanding of what follows. The establishment of the frame also defines the planes on whose base the narrative has to be judged as truthful. The importance of this we have just seen. The audience has an active role in these openings. By giving to Ada the “permission” to go on, they define her at the same time as authoritative voice, as someone who is desirable to listen.

#### B) Code-Switching:

Notice that in all of these narratives but the last one, Ada uses Ital-English terms only in the opening, while establishing the new *frame*. For the rest, all narratives are done in Tuscan(Roman)-Italian. Only exception, the last narrative, in which Ital-English terms are used throughout. This is the only narrative about an event happening today in America. The use of Ital-English in these opening formulas may indicate the fact that she is in some way negotiating with the listeners the language in which the narration will be done<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Exceptions: In Narrative 1 the spatial frame is not directly indicated, but suggested indirectly as the place in which they were before coming to the U.S.. In Narrative 2, she does not indicate the protagonist, probably because she was answering to my question. In narrative 4a the spatial frame is not indicated.

<sup>59</sup> Exceptions: In Narrative 2 Ada is answering my question. In Narrative 4, it may be that I have to transcribe a little before.

<sup>60</sup> See also the discussion of language in chapter 1 and the one on code-switching in chapter 2.

Passing now to the analysis of the narratives themselves, I hope I can show in a convincing way how Ada transports the audience in the shared past. Ada has two obvious tasks: to construct her narration as truthful; to construct it as bearing upon the present. To do so she uses linguistic, prosodic and kinesic devices. If with the opening formula she has situated the event in space and time, now she has to build on it and find a way to anchor that separate frame to the “here” and “now”.

First, we have to notice the use of description of particulars. Particulars answer to both the important ends that Ada has to achieve. It is through particulars that the past is connected to the present, it is reified. Moreover through particulars she underlines that the story is an eye witness account (even when it was reported to her, like the narrative of “The old smoker”).

Let’s now see some examples. In the narrative 1, she tells us what they were eating, the name of the butcher and his degree of kinship with another person (Giorgio, of which nothing else is said), the amount offered to Renzo, the part of the house in which it happened:

ADA: ( ? ) we had cooked the hen

ADA: in p- in presence of the butcher wh- who was there Sperelli was the s- he would have been the father-in-law

ADA: Giorgio’s father-in-law I offered him, Renzino, one thousand liras  
if he would eat a drumstick of chicken  
\\do you remember? in the kitchen at (Dizioli)?

$\backslash(ADA ==> REN)$

In narrative 3, date and time of permanence of the mother are specified. She says the price and name of the hotel, the place where they went in the evening, the street in which they were living:

ADA: in (19)thirty-six

ADA: I made my mother come

$\backslash$ for a week in Roma for ( )

$\backslash(ADA ==> VAL)$

ADA: I brought her I made her come to Roma I was paying ten liras

a day at- at (Epprime) and de- for- for the di- ( )

in the evening

I and Tina, my friend who still writes to me

we would take her and we would go to the Pincio

to do- because we were living there in Bakery Street exactly

at the Triton

ADA: we brought her where they were doing pizza

$\backslash$  exactly  $\backslash$ with the oven, with firewood there at Bakery Street

$\backslash(ADA ==> ENI)$   $\backslash(G^2)$

---

<sup>G2</sup> Hands stretched forward, like forming a circle, indicating the shape of the oven.

In narrative (4), Ada tells us the composition of the family for which she was working, the kinds of food eaten in Tuscany at the time, the kinds of chores done by the daughters of her boss, where did they go to the market, the name, kinship and other information on the husband of one of them (Lenata):

ADA: eight people in the family

ADA: the younger one three females and a male  
wife and husband and a son in law

ADA: right? The polenta the necci ( ) the minestrone soup

ADA: Never always polenta necci beans minestrone I don't know  
and who- who was there who\\  
*\\(VAL: positive head shaking)*  
the hen they would kill for Saint Peter and for Christmas

ADA: sh- and the daughters who were so rich who would go to the private schools  
would cl- pol- listen \\would clean the shutters would clean the floors would  
*\\(G10)*  
machine-sew, iron, \\everything  
*\\(sweeping gesture)*

---

G10 Starts to count each activity on her fingers with large movements, looking down to the left and to the right.

ADA: the bags right? (from that) lady at Borgo Pio there behind (of the) Borgo- the street and the market was there

ADA: The lady - the second not the one that - would you guess who the first one married?

a son of one- of the biggest jeweler in Roma in Umberto Avenue and Vittorio Avenue, Montani

they were Montani and the so- the young man was called Fornari

\\the silverwares, the owners, Jewish

\\(positive head shaking)

In narrative (5), Ada gives us much information about the old man's family, his age, his belongings. Then she tells us the name of the doctor, and again the place of the house where it happens:

ADA: he went as a stable boy to this house there of Dante

there were wife and husband who were elders but they had a son in Columbia

BOB: okay

ADA: Attilio

ADA: my brother went there because they had the small gig

ADA: the old man then the old man ninety-three years old

ADA: and they called doctor Stefanutti in those times he was the doctor Stefanutti the

\\doctor went to the bedroom and Dante \\who was the son \\of the old man

\\(ADA ==> REN)

\\(ADA ==> VAL)

\\(ADA ==> BOB)

accompanied the doctor

To a deeper analysis, it appears that there are at least three different kinds of particulars. The following scheme should put them in evidence:

	Names of people	Names of places	Other particulars
Narrative 1	Sperelli, father in law of Giorgio	(Dizioli)	cooked the hen one thousand liras a drumstick of chicken in the kitchen
Narrative 3	Tina	(Epprime) Pincio Bakery Street Triton	In (19)thirty-six for a week ten liras a day
Narrative 4	Montani Fornari (Lenata)	Borgo Pio Umberto Ave and Vittorio Ave	eight people the younger one, three females and a male polenta, necci, beans and minestrone a hen or a rabbit clean the shutters, the floors, machine-sew, iron The silverware
Narrative 5	Ernesto Dante Attilio Stefanutti	Ghivizzano Columbia	The had the small gig ninety-three years old in the bedroom Dante accompanied the physician

How much is the ten liras paid for the hotel? I do not know. Ada does not give us any clue. She is assuming that we know. But why no one asks? Because that assumption is fundamental. To declare of not understanding, would be destroying that delicate plane of reality, of shared memories, that Ada is spinning. By maintaining

that assumption, Ada is opening them the gates to the participation in a common identity.

Particulars are accumulated over particulars. She does not say that they went out in the evening to do a particular activity (go to the cinema, to a concert?), she tells us that they went to the Pincio, letting us imagine what kind of things could people do there (and where is this place) 60 years ago. And where did they live? Near to that same Pincio, of which nothing has been said. Places, activities, people, are described in relation to each other, but all of them severed from any relationship with the present. She contextualizes each place respect to other places of which again we do not know anything.

A very important kind of particular that Ada furnishes very often are names, both of people and places of the past. For sedentary people, people who cannot think of themselves but connected to a place, everything in their dominion has a name. Everything is in its place. Places and names have histories, and have meaning. For my grandmother the opening to the underworld is in the "Fondaccio" that is just the name of a part of the woods, on the other side of a hill from my village. For Ada there is not just a fountain, but the Triton, not just a doctor, but Stefanutti.

Another important kind of particular, which I prefer to analyze separately, is the descriptions of how things were done: how pants were adjusted, how she would go to take water at the fountain, or how she used to wash the clothes and iron them. This is a very important way to construct truthfulness. These particulars tell to the audience who they are, by describing them their relationship (of which Ada thus poses herself as mediator) between them and people and places in Italy. The construction of shared knowledge and reality is at the same time the construction of a shared ethnic identity.

Part of it, is a knowledge of patches on the pants and the road to the market in Rome. Ada's memories become the audience's memories. Ada's descriptions of her "know-how" become the audience "know-how". These descriptions are never detailed, but more kind of glimpses. They always regard activities that are no more done today. People in her stories are always associated with activities, from which we can have an image of Ada's values and her love for an active life. Here are some examples.

Narrative 1:

ADA: if you tell him eu- once we were bagging the p- pig

Narrative 3:

ADA: we brought her where they were doing pizza

\\exactly \\with the oven, with firewood there at Bakery Street

\\(ADA==>ENI) \\(gesture)

Narrative 4:

ADA: she was small and to make pasta the mother

ADA: and she would put for her a piece of wood there and this child

had to do an egg of pasta

ADA: really patches but she instead would do she would take a small piece of the same material

\\and she would thread all colors all colors all colors to

\\(gesture to thread with right hand)



\\these holes to this fusto<sup>61</sup>

\\(ADA ==> REN, then turns around)

ENI: that you couldn't see anything

ADA: \\Nothing

\\(ends up turned toward BOB, bumping over the table)

Another notable device, that builds immediacy in the text, is Quotation. Reported speech can sound more objective, and Ada takes care of expressing it with clear cut sentences, that seems to have emerged untouched from memory. Quotation is also a powerful mean to transport the audience inside the frame. It gives them the possibility to hear the words as they were said, as if they had been there. In narrative 3, the reaction of her mother to the pizza is first stated, then explained, finally expressed through quotation, in a crescendo that creates a comic effect.

\\no no no - she said - you go on and eat it, \\but \\I do not want to eat those

\\(ADA ==>ENI and makes G4.VAL: positive head shaking) \\(laughing) \\(ADA repeats G4)

filaments there; \\can you believe it?

\\(ADA==>VAL. VAL:positive head shaking)

I do not want to eat those filaments there, \\then we bought her

\\(recovers an erect position)

In narrative 4, the answer of the "Signora"<sup>62</sup> constitutes the moral statement, and the anecdote of the story. Ada reports in quotation both her question and the answer.

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<sup>61</sup> I do not understand this word.

G4 She rolls back and forth on the chair + Negative head shaking + crosses and then opens her arms in front of herself, with a horizontal movement that reinforces the negation of the head.

\\I said to her Madame why is it that

\\(ADA ==> ENI)

I kn- I knew that they were so rich

you know?

\\why is it that you s- you make them do everything, your daughters you know

\\(bends forward)

the know how to do everything they have to- she says: \\Ada

\\(bends her head to the side)

•

\\if one day my daughters will marry for love

\\(slowly head up and down)

•

VAL: hh

ADA: with a poor employee

or with a worker

•

the family \\will not go to the dogs because they are used to everything

\\(negative head shaking)

•

m:?

if instead they marry rich

ADA: that- that he can keep her a maid

---

<sup>62</sup> See transcripts: Trieste a Roma (Trieste in Rome). Trieste asks the lady why she makes her daughters work so much, and the woman answer that it is to prepare then for future life as good brides.

ADA: they know how to rule the maid

- 

\\and the house does not go bad

\\(ADA ==> ENI)

Finally, in narrative 5, the quotation of the dialogue between the old man and the physician has, again, a comic effect. Notice that in this case the force of the quotation makes the audience forget a particular that Ada had stated a few seconds before, namely that at the time of this event, she was not born yet.

ADA: FIRST OF ALL

\\the doctor told to the son

\\(ADA ==> BOB)

\\(HE HAS) TO QUIT SMOKING

\\(looks forward)

this little old man it is said that \\he moved his head like this

\\(moves the head from side to side)

\\WHAT DID YOU SAY SIR DOCTOR

\\(reclines head and chest to the left side, like to listen)

- 

can you imagine

- 

\\do not smoke anymore

\\(looks and bend forward)

- 

because you are loosing your eyes \\may they \\both fall

\\G17)      \\(G17)

\\but I \\smoke. hhh he he he he he he he he

\\(ADA ==> BOB)    \\(G18)

From these examples it is possible to notice that quotations are always united to descriptive, articulated gestures, and to a rich contextualization of the place in which they happen (in the bakery, carrying the bags to the market, in the bedroom). Prosodic features, like variation of volume, pitch and pace of the speech, are also used to identify these different speaking personas.

I have left for the last a discussion of the use of gestures. However, we have already come across gestures when talking about quotation. This is probably to be reconnected to the fact that gestures are used also for a dramatization of the story, for example the gesture of doing the pasta. Thought gestures can serve to narration in various ways. Indexic gestures, for example, can be used to anchor the moment in space and time. Understanding gestures presupposes the knowledge of the (geographical) space, to which the gesture refers. The narrator bases him/herself on the fact that the audience know, or *should* know the described space (Haviland, 1993:38).

This assumption of the teller puts, defines, positions the listener and him/herself in the same community. By opposition, assumption or recognition that the listener may have difficulty in understanding, would put the two in two different

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G17 Hands with fingers touching her eyes, then falling straight forward.

G18 Straightens up and makes the gesture of bumping her fist on the table.

communities/groups (who may share communality for other reasons but not on the one that is relevant at this point). Ada, through her narratives, operates a double definition of identity. First she establishes herself as Italian (or Tuscan). Then she implicitly defines the identities of the listeners as part of the same social group or enclave, as part of the same community.

*Indexic* gestures play an important part in this redefinition. I will analyze in deep one of them. In the narrative 4, Ada's attempt at transposition of the cultural past in the Italian Americans' everyday lives, reaches its peak in the gesture with which she indicates the position of the old market in Rome, indicating somewhere beyond Eni's house:

ADA: the morning when we went to do the shopping, that I was carrying \the bags

*\(arms down on the side, picking up the bags)*

right? (from that) lady \at Borgo Pio there behind (of the) Borgo- the street

*\(G12)*

and the market was there

Haviland writes that: "gestures cannot always be understood by reference to the immediate moment and place of speech. They must instead be transposed to a discursively established origo." (1993:13). Ada's deictic gesture must be understood in reference to the plane of reality that she has constructed throughout her narrative<sup>63</sup>, namely the geographical space of Rome. By superimposing the narrated space of Rome to the near space of Eni and Robert's house, Ada captures the listeners more

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<sup>G12</sup> She indicates the place with her arm as being in front of her, beyond something else.

<sup>63</sup> Haviland calls this a narrated space.

deeply in the narration. At the same time, from the point of view of the audience, being able to understand is being able to participate in the imagined community.

### III. Negotiating Ethnicity in Conversation.

Having now discussed Ada's narratives, I will look at the conversation in which they are embedded. Inside this, I will show the repositionings of the ethnic identities of the participants. I hope to demonstrate how often and how easily shiftings in ethnic identification happen. Utilizing the concept of "repertoire of identities" (Kroskrity, 1993)<sup>64</sup>, we can consider that these shiftings happen inside a number of possible identifications available to each person. I will show through which subtle linguistic shades (a word, a pronoun) they come to be represented. I will focus on the conversation I have called "Pizza and Pizza Pie", of which Narrative 2 is a part. In the central piece, the participants have been talking about recent news received from their relatives in Italy, and from that, about their last travel to Italy. Suddenly, Robert takes the turn to make a strong statement: *THEY*, Italians, do not know how to make pizza:

BOB: \[was the only) good pi-

\(BOB ==> VAL REN ==> BOB)

\THEY MAKE TERRIBLE pizza in Italy!

\(Bends forward with hands open at the sides touching the table)

REN: Yeah

BOB: \TERRIBLE [pizza.

\(VAL ==> BOB)

---

<sup>64</sup> Which I have already discussed in the Introduction.

VAL: [hhhh No:: hh

In saying that he has been turning toward me. He also raises the volume of his voice, repeats the statement, and changes his posture bending forward. All of this augments the strength of his words. The fact that he is looking toward me in conjunction with those words, is immediately identifying me as Italian, and the opposite party, and calls me to defend myself. Or so I felt, because this is one of the rare moment during the dinner that I enter the conversation, to moderately defend the culinary ability of the Italians. Moreover, by saying those words, Robert has positioned himself as non-Italian, by answering, I position myself as Italian.

This is only the first of a series of segmentations, through which Robert and the other presents shift. With his initial statement, Robert communicates in some way the desire to differentiate himself from Italians. It is also a quite ironic statement that is able to involve me, a quite silent visitor, in the conversation. He is forcing me, in some way, to expose myself, to take a position, to abandon the role of onlooker-distant-researcher, to put myself in discussion has having an ethnic identity. The argument is also a “hot” one, and obtains many concurring answers from all the presents. First of all, for the opposition that creates, and the risk in which it puts me, the guest, of a loss of face (in Goffman’s term). Then also because it is an element of the stereotype of Italians and Italian Americans, and thus a possibly delicate argument of discussion. Here is what happens next.

BOB: Everything el- \I mean the food is \del- I- I had to eat.

\\(straightens up)      \\(opens arms in resignation)

VAL: hu hu hu.

BOB: But pizza \they don't know how to mak[e. No: =

*\(crosses arms in front , in a negative gesture, then opens them again)*

ADA: \[Let's see now

*\(ADA ==> BOB)*

VAL: = No: it's just very different.

Next Robert extends the negative judgment to all Italian food. Since I suppose that everybody in the room, including me, had a very strong belief that Italian cooking is very good, this second statement is less ambiguously ironic, and therefore receives as an answer not a defense, but a laughing from me. Then Robert repeats with other words the judgment about Italian pizza, and obtains defensive answers both from Ada and me. By showing lack of agreement with Robert's words, Ada also seems to reposition herself as Italian. This is made even more salient by her next words:

BOB: = \I a- no: é: [but- but ( ] ) \the pizza they are =

*\(BOB ==> VAL)*

*\(bends forward again)*

ENI: [very ( )]

BOB: = really- \pizza originated \in- in- in- in Southern Italy,

*\(ADA ==> BOB) \(\indicates behind himself and down with the right arm, while looking forward)*

[in Si- in [Sitily- in Sicily. So:

VAL: \[Southern [Italy

*\(positive head shaking)*

ADA: [yeah, yeah

ADA: \Rome and Naples.

*\(BOB ==> ADA)*

VAL: Ro[me and Neaples.



ADA: [The original.

Here the interpretation becomes more complicated. What Robert is saying now is that Italians do not know how to make pizza because the pizza originated in Sicily. It appears then that his previous judgment on Italy has been restricted to regard only non-Sicilians. I add that pizza is from Southern Italy and then I agree with Ada who adds that it is from Rome and Naples. In these four turns, then, pizza has been redefined as belonging to Southern Italy. At the same time, through this action, Ada and I have washed up our hands from the question. Robert position is more ambiguous, still shifting: he is now non-Southern and non-Italian. Renzo, instead, takes the turn. He now tries to defend the Southern pizza. This can be understood on the base of the fact that he is born in Rome, and thus he can position himself as a Southern Italian, and feel on himself the duty to defend the pizza.

REN: \You gotta re- you gotta think ( ) Bob. When originated the pizza in: Neaples  
\\(ADA ==> REN)  
and Rome?

ADA: Yeah.

REN: \It was fogaccia<sup>65</sup>. [With olives, \the holes in it =  
\\(shows something round between his hands \touches the table with finger various times,  
like to put it into holes)

BOB: \[Ya::h ya:::h  
\\positive head shaking

REN: = and capers and that's it. And little else.

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<sup>65</sup> Particular kind of flat bread, usually very oily and salty.

The Neapolitan pizza, states Renzo, was something different. Renzo describes it like if it was some kind of prototypical version. It was more simple, almost unfinished. This leaves open the question of where pizza, as is it known today, originated. The mention of the simplicity of the Neapolitan pizza, makes more easy for Robert to position himself in his next identity: he can draw a contrast with the American pizza.

BOB: \Well : see <but \I'm americanized and the Americans [ (pizza) ] PIZZA=  
           \(\opens arms)       \(\arms at his chest)

REN: [I know tha-]

BOB: = PIE here pizza started here in New York City.

[And they called it], (there) [in Chicago e-] Pizza =

ENI: [ C h i c a g o ] [ he he he he ]

BOB: = pie they call- you know I didn't know what pizza

Robert first states to be Americanized. By saying that, he operates another double repositioning. He defines himself as non-American. It would not have sense to say that an American is Americanized. To be Americanized imply that he was not so originally. This is also confirmed by the fact that he says “the Americans” “they called it”. Then by using the pronoun “I” (he could have used “we”) he separates himself from the other presents, and thus defines them as non-Americanized. By saying “THEY called it”, he also positions the others as non-Americans. Immediately after, though, he says that pizza originated in New York and Chicago, and was called “pizza pie”. We know that these two cities had the two major historical Italian American

communities in the US. Also, the term “pizza pie” is an Italian American one that is full of meaning (La Sorte, 1985). Notice here the uptake of Eni, until now silent. Evidently the term “pizza pie” has the power to recall memories and cause new shiftings of identity.

BOB: = pie they [ call- ] you know \\I didn't know what pizza =

*\\(right arm toward himself, negative head shaking)*

REN: [he he]

BOB: = was until I was in the n- when I \\went in the [Navy,

*\\(indicates in front of himself)*

ENI: [me neither.

REN: \\Pizza pie.

*\\(positive head shaking, protracted through the following turn)*

Robert starts to recall memories that are connected to a new, apparently contradictory statement. He did not know what pizza was until he was already an adult, going out of the community (in the Army, among strangers). Now he puts himself among those who do not know how to make pizza. Up to now, Robert seems to have identified himself only negatively: non-Italian, non-Sicilian, non-American, and now, not even Italian American. What remains is his regional identity: Piedmontese. Eni's uptake of his words also tells us that she is positioning herself as non-Italian American. Notice, on the contrary, Renzo's repetition of the word “pizza pie” together with a positive head shaking: he knows what it means. In that short gesture, there is his repositioning of himself as Italian American.

Next, it is Ada's turn to redefine positions again, and she does it through a narrative, about her mother in Rome. The theme is still the one of the “pizza pie”. It is

a discourse about identity, and about multiple identities and need to free them from stereotypes. In regard to the stereotypes, the story has a liberating ability: it ironically underlines the blindness of the stereotype who sees pizza as Italian's staple food. Since food is an important element at the base of Italian American definition of themselves, we should not be surprise if it is around it that many battles on identity are carried on.

Here Ada has a double identity. This is particularly interesting because it implies that the various possible choices inscribed in the “repertoire of identities” can be enacted more than one at a time. This shows how limiting would be any prospective that would see ethnic identity only in terms of boundaries and traits. Ada, respect to her mother, is in some way “Romanized”. She says about her mother that she and her girlfriend:

ADA: we brought her where they were doing pizza

This implies that, after all, Ada used to eat pizza. She wanted her mother to try it. Respect to the listeners, though, she is a Tuscan. In fact the whole narrative serves as a definition of what a Tuscan is (would or would not eat). So Ada is saying, about herself as a Tuscan, that she does not eat pizza, and about herself as a “Roman” that pizza is worth trying.

I hope I can make things a little more clear with a scheme. In it I put on the column the person who defines, in the row the person who is defined. On the diagonal we can see the auto-definitions. Notice that Robert, who started this discussion, is the only one who defines the others and is not defined by them.

	1 Robert	2 Valentina	3 Ada	4 Renzo	5 Eni
--	-------------	----------------	----------	------------	----------

A Robert	non-Italian, nonSouthern nonAmericn non Ital-Am	Italian nonAmericn	nonItalian nonAmericn	non-Italian nonAmericn	non Italian nonAmericn
B Valentina		Italian nonSouthern			
C Ada			Italian nonSouthern Tuscn/Romn		
D Renzo				Southern Ital ItaloAmericn	
E Eni					nonItalAmer

Robert presented himself as Piedmontese at various times during the dinner. In some cases he does that in a very direct way, for example by producing a phrase in Piedmontese to show its difference from the Italian standard language. In this particular conversation he does it in a very indirect way, through use of pronouns (I, they), by letting us understand what he is not, and what the others are.

In sum, the Italian-American identity and the sense of a community itself is built in an innumerable series of encounters: from the family getting together at dinnertime to the five hundred noisy participants to the Feast of San Trifone. Ada's narratives are part of this construction. These encounters are like bricks, out of which ethnicity is built. In Watson and Potter's words:

"Social interaction gives form to the image of self and the image of the other; it gives validity and continuity to the identifications which are the source of an individual's self-esteem." (1962:246).

In this and the preceding Chapter 2, I have seen, in two separate and different occasions (the community event and the private dinner), two mechanisms of action. The first is the creation of a community, through sharing of traditions, and of memories. This is also the creation of an internal boundary. This can be seen to correspond to the emic definition of the participants, of themselves as being Italian Americans. It is also connected to a presupposed knowledge of those memories and those traditions. The second mechanism in action, is the representation of a “repertoire” of identities. Each individual can assume different identities, each of them implying different fields of knowledge, different dimensions of sharing. Both in the public event and in the private conversation, many ethnic identifications are displayed and characterized. In the same moment of the creation of the boundary, several possible identifications are displayed, in some way undermining, not the boundary itself, but the possibility for it to come to be seen as substantial to the definition of each and every Italian American individual.

As I said in my discussion of the usage of stereotypes in Chapter 1, the creation of a boundary, be it external or internal, always introduces a categorization, thereby simplifying reality. The possibility for the individual, to switch among multiple identities acts, on the contrary, toward a complexification of reality. So we can see that there is the possibility for a balance between these two mechanism. This balance assures for the person freedom of choice and, at the same time, links in a relevant network of other people. In the next chapter, I will conclude by trying to examine the conditions in which this balance could be altered.

## CHAPTER 4

### COMPLEX IDENTITIES

In my discussion of the *double boundary* in the Introduction, I already noticed that A. Peterson Royce considers the outer boundary as the one ascribed from outside, while the inner boundary would be self ascribed by the participants in a group. In the case of the Italian Americans, there are two outer boundaries to be distinguished. The first, that we have already seen in Chapter 1, had been created by the mainstream American society. Up to now, the inner boundary has protected the Italian Americans from the negative definition enforced on them by this outer

boundary. Today, though, the Italian Americans are coming to a confrontation with a new external boundary: the one created by the Italian themselves. As long as Italian Americans claim their identity to be "truly" Italian, they always run the risk of being disclaimed by the Italians, that may refuse such an identification. This is exactly what has been happening at various levels. At the macro-level, an example of this refusal could be the fact that the Italians have opposed the possibility to allow Italian Americans with Italian citizenship to vote in Italian elections (while resident in another country)<sup>66</sup>. At a micro-level, this identity could be disclaimed in actual encounters between Italians and Italian Americans, for example when they meet as tourists or students visiting the other country. An example of this happens, I think, during the dinner at Tony's house and it is the origin of the misunderstanding between Luca, Paolo and Tony.

Differently from the American one, this new external boundary tends to define not what the Italian Americans are, but what they are not, namely Italians. In so doing, though, the Italian external boundary may affect the existing balance between the tendency to fixation and that to flexibility inside the Italian American community. On one side, it may cause a defensive reinforcement of the inner boundary, while on the other, may negate the freedom of the Italian American individuals to shift to an identification as Italians.

The first effect can be seen, when Italian Americans answer by refusing to recognize the Italians themselves as Italians, by saying that we have lost the traditions that would have made us Italians. In doing this, the Italian Americans could end up clinging even more to the re-elaboration of stereotypes that I have analyzed in Chapter

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<sup>66</sup> Source of information: "L'ItaloAmericano", newspaper. Also, personal knowledge of Italian events.



1. To the second effect I will dedicate the following pages, through the analysis of another event and of some interviews.

### **I. A Revealing Misunderstanding.**

Now, I intend to furnish a first analysis of the dialogue between Tony, Luca and Paolo during the dinner at Tony and Daniel's home<sup>67</sup>. Luca and Paolo, since their arrival, had been teasing the presents in various ways. They were the most lively among us, often recalling the general attention on their pranks. Since they had come as friends of Matteo, no one knew them. I had met them only once before. Considering this, some people felt that Luca and Paolo were giving themselves too much freedom of action, and that they were not behaving too nicely and respectfully. In their dialogue with Tony, they used a series of jokes that offended him, even if, I have to say, at the time, I did not realize that could have happened.

The perceptions of the participants, about what was going on that evening, are extremely important. Luca and Paolo thought that they were just being funny. They did not realize at all that Tony was perceiving them as offensive. Prove of this is that, when they were told a few days later, they personally and spontaneously apologized with Tony and assured him that they did not mean it.

The women present, perceived their jokes as not funny and sexist. The Italian ones, Roberta and I, also perceived a stereotyping of the Southern Italians. We have to remember, thought, that Matteo, their best friend, is Southern Italian, and Paolo himself is half Southern Italian. No offense could really have been meant even in this

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<sup>67</sup> See the Introduction for a description of the participants and setting.

case. Tony, finally, perceived their words as offensive not so much as a Southern Italian, but as an Italian American

Let's start from the beginning. Inside the dinner, I have chosen in particular ten minutes, which I found to be the central point of the misunderstanding. This starts with a name-calling: *rigatoni* and *macaroni* instead of Iaccarino:

LUC: Tony *macaroni*.<sup>68</sup>

( . )

MAT: Rigatoni<sup>69</sup>

LUC: Rigatoni,<sup>70</sup> what's- what's your last name;

(1.0)

TON: Iaccarino.

Plays with words are the more difficult to do in another language. What for Paolo and Luca was just a joke, for Tony was a challenge to show his ability with the language. Tony is usually eager to talk Italian, but during this dinner he spoke Italian less and less, to the point of talking only English (we saw in Chapter 1, when talking about language, that this could be a way to enhance an identification as American).

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<sup>68</sup> "Macaroni" is pronounced with a parodistic imitation of an English accent and spelling, instead of using the Italian accent and spelling "Maccheroni".

<sup>69</sup> Alberto corrects Giovanni's word from "macaroni" to "rigatoni". At the beginning of the evening, Alberto had already said that he was thinking of doing a film. In it the protagonist would be called "Rigatoni". "Rigatoni" is not a common family name in Italy (to my knowledge). It has humorous connotations, being also the name of a kind of pasta. "Maccheroni" is also a kind of pasta. Though in this case there is a slight pejorative sense in the word. A shade of meaning, connected probably to the fact that a derived adjective, "maccheronico," means "vulgar".

<sup>70</sup> Now he pronounces "Rigatoni" with a faked English accent.

He later told me that in primary school he had been used to this kind of jokes. To a name-calling as "Tony macaroni" he could have answered: "yes, your mother's big fat phony". But what to answer in Italian? He felt he could not but loose this challenge (see Appendix D). Immediately after, Luca asks if he is Italian, to which Tony answers with a "yes":

LUC: IACCARI::NO so you are italo- italo italian.

TON: \yes::<sup>71</sup>

*\(TON ==> LUC and sits back in his place. All others ==> TON & LUC)*

Here we could ask what does it means this statement for the two parties. Luca and Paolo do not seem to really take it seriously. In fact, later on they will ask again. To them then, Tony's affirmation of being Italian means that somewhere in his ancestry there was an Italian. To Tony it means that he feels to belong to the "Italian people". Following, Paolo and Luca first find out that the *Iaccarino* are from Neaples, then they start a series of jokes by imitating the Neapolitan language:

LUC: fro[m where.

TON: [in Naples =

PAO: = (original/ho really) =

TON: = Sorrento<sup>72</sup>.

PAO: no Na[ples no

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<sup>71</sup> In the way he says "yes" there is a slight overtone of nuisance. Tony is evidently starting to be tired of Giovanni's pranks.

<sup>72</sup> Nice, medium size city, south of Neaples, on the coast.

LUC: [\Surri:ento<sup>73</sup>

*\(opens his arms)*

TON: \Surrient[oǃ \

*\(Moves on the chair, laughing) \ \(general laughing)*

MAT: [hu hu hu hu huhu huhu [huhu huhu

LUC: [SURRIENTO \

*\(everybody is laughing)*

*\(1.25)*

*\(TON looks at his plate, moves his body notably away from LUC and toward JEN, shakes head negatively, while still smiling)*

LUC: \HA::: MARADONA si meglio e Pele':.<sup>74</sup>

*\(LUC ==> TON, moves left hand back and forth)*

Ha::: Maradona, you are better than Pele'

*\(0.50)*

*\(laughing)*

LUC: \Ha::: Surriento ha:::

*\(Bends forward. TON oscillates on the chair and looks away from LUC, toward the others)*

*\(1.00)*

*\(laughing)*

PAO: \vedi Napoli e poi-

*\(PAO ==> LUC)*

You see Naples and then-

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<sup>73</sup> In this and other following words, the Neapolitan accent is imitated. Notice also, that Giovanni is not from Naples. He makes an approximate imitation of that language. This is a common way to tease or joke in Italy.

<sup>74</sup> Again he imitates the Neapolitan speech. His voice shows extreme enthusiasm. Maradona, used to play soccer in Naples' soccer team. When he arrived in it, around ten years ago, it aroused many hopes in the Neapolitans to win the national championship. This phrase became then a common sing-song, comparing Maradona to the great Brazilian champion, Pele'. Today, the phrase can still be used for teasing.

(0.65)

LUC: \mori mori.<sup>75</sup>

\(LUC ==> his plate. TON ==> PAO)

you die, you die          or

Mori, Mori

Luca is known among his friends for being a very good imitator of several Italian accents. Often they request and enjoy his performance. Of course, this was not known to Tony, who again perceives them as part of the same challenge. This time he has been called to testify the truth of his being Italian and Neapolitan, by speaking the Neapolitan language, by answering them in that same code. He felt that he was tested on his belonging to the Italian group (see Appendix D).

Luca and Paolo pick up this joke again and again. At each of these starts, we can see that Tony has a slightly embarrassed reaction. He smiles forcefully, bends his upper body away from Luca, and makes an attempt to change the argument of the conversation, or change the focus from talking about himself, to talking about Luca or Paolo:

PAO&LUC: O SARRACINO!

(0.5)

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<sup>75</sup> It is also a very famous way of saying, in Italy, the phrase "vedi Napoli e poi mori" that means "you see Naples and then you can die". The word "mori" is the more common pronunciation of the word "muori" (you die) in Central-Southern Italy. With this pronunciation, though, the phrase becomes ambiguous, since "Mori" could be intended as the name of a place (especially to the Northern hear). In this case the meaning would be "you see Naples and then you see Mori." In the first case, this proverb means that Naples is so beautiful, that after having seen it, a person may die happily. Many Italians, though, accept the second meaning and believe in the existence of a little town called Mori, just south of Naples, and having incredible beauty. Such a city does not exist.

PAO: \0 Iaccarino!

*\(PAO ==> TON, who is still bending away and smiling forcefully)*

\(1.7)

\( laughing)

TON: ex- so your accent is much better than (mine)¿

LUC: Yeah I am from the North

TON: \right (.) where are you from.

*\(TON moves and ==> LUC)*

PAO: 0 Sarracino

LUC: 0 SARRACINO

PAO: Tutte le femmine fa innammura'

TON: \.hhhhh hhhhh.

*\(bends forward over his plate, visibly uncomfortable)*

PAO: \Trasite o non trasite =

*\(TON bends forward toward PAO and smiles forcefully)*

LUC: = [cosa vuol dire, andate?]

What does it mean? Go?

VAL: [Hhh hh hh tra(h)si(h)te]

PAO: entrate

come in/enter

LUC: hu entrate entrate =

hu come in, come in

PAO: = [trasite] o non trasite.

TON: [( )]

JEN: hu hu

TON: so you lived in Naples? =

PAO: = yeah

PAO: = O Sa[racino \\\( ) e'.]

LUC: [ \\\((whistling))]

*\\(LUC repeats the movement. TON is shaking his head positively and smiling, evidently uncomfortable)*

PAO: O Sarra[cin- (( groan like sound )) ] =

LUC: [O SARRACINO! O SARRACINO!]

PAO: = TUTTE LE FE[MMINE FA INNAMMURA']

LUC: \\\[MMINE FA INNAMMURA']

*\\(TON bends away from LUC)*

When Italians from different regions are getting acquainted, it is quite common to spend time discussing each other culture. This dinner was no exception in that sense. What may be unusual, is the claim of who Paolo and Luca perceived as an American, to be Italian. As the conversation passes to cooking, Paolo asks if Tony's mother is Italian. This shows that he had not taken too seriously Tony's previous affirmation to be Italian from Naples. I think the first time Luca and Paolo were asking about ancestry. This time they are asking about a closer descent:

PAO: = your- your mother is Italian¿ [( )

?: [ h hh hh hh hh hh

TON: [my- both of them are

[Italian.

PAO: [<second generation of- or::: first generation =

TON: = no my parents were: ((clearing throat)) \\my dad's from Naples, my mom's

\\(*bends toward PAO*)

from Calabria<sup>76</sup> =

PAO: =Oh so \\they are really Italian [where were they] born=

\\(*TON shakes head positively*)

LUC: [ De CALABRIA ]

from Calabria

PAO: = (where) they were born.

TON: They were born and lived in Italy<sup>77</sup>.

PAO: (was li[ke-)

LUC: [what [(city)-

TON: [I was- but I was born here.

LUC: So what city in Calabria.

TON: Reggio<sup>78</sup>.

---

<sup>76</sup> Other region in Southern Italy.

<sup>77</sup> In Tony's voice there is now a little nuisance.

<sup>78</sup> Reggio Calabria, the principal city of the region, near the channel that divides the peninsula from Sicily.



LUC: Re:ggio.

PAO: Ma parli Italiano allora.

But then you can talk Italian

TON: si.

yes

Still, Paolo hypothesize a first or second generation for the parents. Here, by first generation he probably means "born in Italy", while to Tony it means "the first generation to be born in America. This explains why Tony's voice sounds so bored: he feels it redundant, to have to answer the same question again and again, while, from Paolo and Luca's point of view, I think, they have been asking different questions.

The final revelation is when Paolo asks him if he talks Italian. Of course Tony does. Though, we can notice again how he has been talking English throughout the dialogue, an unexpected behavior, given that he usually likes to "exercise" his Italian. I think that, by avoiding Italian, he was trying to avoid that confrontation, that test of identity to which Luca and Paolo seemed to call him. Talking in Italian could have shown his American accent. When Tony finally talks Italian, he does it feigning an excessively marked American accent:

TON: Un poco (.) \parlo (.) un[o parola<sup>79</sup>] hh hh hh hh hh =

*\(puts his fingers together to reinforce the idea of "a little")*

A little, I talk one word

---

<sup>79</sup> Tony is now imitating the way of talking Italian of an American who knows very little Italian. Indeed his knowledge of Italian is much higher, which is demonstrated by the fact that he can make such an imitation. In particular, notice the pronunciation of the "r" in the American way, without the "trill".

PAO: [capisci ( )]  
 you understand ( )

In this way, Tony is putting in front of Luca and Paolo the kind of stereotype of American identity that he feels they are trying to impose on him. The silliness of it becomes immediately visible, and Tony seems to have been able to answer the challenge of identification. Though for Paolo and Luca, for whom such a challenge has never existed, Tony's words are just an invitation to more ethnic imitations. They end up submerging Tony again, and he goes back to a defensive position, again trying to divert the conversation. Finally, Tony is able to take distance from Luca and Paolo and start a conversation with Jennifer. A little later, anyway, Luca and Paolo are able to recall him again:

LUC: Avevi ventidue anni, il momento migliore, da quella volta \\  
 \\\(descending whistling, left hand up then falling down)

You was twenty-two, the best moment, from that time

PAO: Ec[co ( )] \\\raggiunge il picco e poi (dopo \\\un po')=  
 \\\(hand up, imitating LUC's gesture) \\\(gesture<sup>80</sup>)

There, ( ) it reaches the top and then (after a while)

TON: \\\[No, ero-]  
 \\\(smiles forcefully)

No, I was-

PAO: = O Saracino \\\( ) e'. \\\

---

<sup>80</sup> Right hand makes a rotatory movement. In Italian it means scarcity or lack of something.

\\(descending with the hand) \\(LUC repeats the movement. TON is shaking his head positively and smiling, evidently uncomfortable)

This time, their joking becomes even more heavy, and Tony is evidently uncomfortable. This probably, they start to sense, and Luca finally changes subject by asking: "Did you see *Caro Diario*?"

## **II. The Double Boundary and the Individual.**

The *double boundary* around the Italian American ethnic identity becomes evident in the different presuppositions of Italians and Italian Americans. It is this non-shared knowledge or vision, that makes the misunderstanding possible in the first place. For Luca and Paolo, Tony's belonging to the American category is unproblematic. In front of it, Tony's perception of his own identity becomes problematic. Clearly Tony would rather avoid this confrontation, and since this is not possible for him, his sense of uneasiness keeps growing. In the end, Tony will be left with the sensation of having been offended and treated rudely. Similar reciprocal perceptions of Italians and Italian Americans have emerged from the interviews. Richard, talking about his stay in Italy, says:

“Even then, after I said I was Italian American, they would always consider me American because ... m: I was always categorized as an American regardless of how- even when I was there I would think “oh: I’m becoming more Italian!” you know, because I’m originally from Italy, .. m: you know. And hu: they way I was ... raised here in America .. is sort of

like, an Americanized Italian way, in my opinion, because it's different from a lot of other .. hum a lot of they ways- ways my friends are brought up. They were more ... from hu different cultures. They came to America. And I was brought up in a way that I thought .. originally Italian but kind of modified to America. ... So:, I kind of considered myself more Italian than they did. They saw me as more ((smiling)) American than I considered myself, (it was like) hum: So that was kind of hard. That kind of- for a while that kind of hurt my feelings 'cause I thought "wait a second, I came to Italy, I'm constantly trying to be more like you and learn from you and yet you are still constantly categorizing me with America. And to me that wasn't the nicest thing 'cause I was trying to disassociate myself (with) America. Honestly." (See Appendix D).

Expressing the other point of view, Alessandro and Lisa show very different perceptions:

"LIS: I do not consider them Italians, the Italian Americans. Right Ale they are not;

ALE: Well, Mina, who is the only one I have known, .. she was a girl that:: has grown up, I don't know, maybe also born here. ... His family at home would talk Italian, so she talks Italian very:: ... Though she went to school, she went to college, like all the Americans, she had her dates like the Americans, she ate American, she saw American films and ... she is American by culture, but, she has this myth of Italy. She, Italy, she saw Italy only in holiday and she sees it as a very beautiful country, very

picturesque, in which everybody- I mean a bit- ... she saw Italy as a tourist, She never really lived it.

LIS: Yes, and also she has this myth, she says “I want to go in Italy, I want to work there, live there,” and: the impression she was making on me is that she wasn’t neither meat or fish<sup>81</sup>, can you see it? Because we are Italians, there is nothing to do, maybe we can feign to be Americans, maybe even ask the green card, but we will remain Italians there is nothing to do. She, instead, is born from Italian parents here, and then she made the life of an American, but she didn’t do, I mean, you understand, she made only half step, she didn’t ma- because she refuses this culture, she would

say that “the Americans, disgusting”, Hum::: [not ( )

ALE: [Well she- she even told us once, one evening she op[ened] herself. She told us that she ... is- was- was a little:- well she felt refused from both of them.” (See Appendix D).

Such a sad existential feeling of being refused from both sides, from the Italian community and from the American one, is something that the Italian Americans share with other groups that find themselves in what V. Turner has called a “liminal” space (1974). For example the “returned” Puertorican immigrants studied by A. C. Zentella (1990). I have tried to show, throughout this thesis, that each person has a *repertoire* of identities among which he/she can move and switch. This is, at the base, what

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<sup>81</sup> Another idiomatic expression, to say that someone or something is not clearly defined, does not have a defined personality or trait. It is used often to indicate children, because they haven’t still reached a definition of themselves, typical of adulthood.

makes human communication a *polyphony* of voices, and not a monologue. This is also an important element of human freedom, that of experiencing change, positively, in themselves. In this situation the use of a “repertoire of identities” has become difficult, in some way painful to the person (Zentella, 1990).

R. Cohen (1978) notices that every attempt to define an ethnic group by creating a boundary is artificial. The creation of the boundary, moreover, implies a reification of ethnicity, and therefore rigidity. This cannot account for the many *situational* transformations of ethnic identity and/or ethnic group. From this point of view, the *outer boundary* is always a limitation of freedom, an attempt to fixation. Probably without realizing, Paolo and Luca became the agents of enforcement of that boundary over Tony. Not only because they seem to negate the one side of his identity, but also because they put on him the necessity to define himself either as Italian or American, renouncing to the other part. Here is how Tony expresses his feeling about it:

“Secondly, I- I- this thing- this is probably the most important thing which is, I really felt ... like my- like my identity- my- (like) identity, (that’s a) big- .. big- was very important to me was being challenged. .. I do ... whether it’s- you know, whether .. it’s::: I don’t know exactly how important being Italian American is to me, Okay. But, I do know that .. I can say it, I can say I am Italian American, I can say my family’s from Italy. .. I can use this line right, about- “also where’re you from?” You know I can say, “I’m from San Francisco” and everybody says “ho cool!”, ‘cause San Francisco’s one of the coolest cities in the United States hhhh hh. And then I can say “yeah my parents were from Italy actually, you know” like “huahu, that’s kind of cool!”. (See Appendix D).

Tony seems to feel that he could use the Italian American ethnic identity as a strategy (it is a “line” you can use), a possible choice that could have been taken away from him. He could have been put in the necessity to acquire a defensive *fixity* of the internal boundary. It is exactly this defensive fixation that is one of the mechanisms for the formation of an Italian American identity, since the stereotypes that are used, are in themselves fixed lumps of identity, re-appropriated pieces of an external boundary. The external boundary is also a metaphorical refusal. The refusal of American society against the different immigrants. The refusal of Italians, to recognize the dark side of our history, that gave birth to these far children.

### **III. Conclusion.**

In the Introduction I wrote that the anthropologist operates inside established relations of power, which give to his/her work an inevitable political dimension. Talking about ethnic identity is talking about relations of power and strategies of empowerment. Relations of power are well evident in the construction of the outer and inner boundaries.

On the basis of social research, H. Tajfel concludes that the conditions that bring the individual to act more in terms of group, and less in terms of self, are the division of society in distinguished groups and the perception of their boundaries as unsurpassable (1985:429-430). “The essential condition”, writes Tajfel, “for the appearance of extreme forms of intergroup behavior ... is the belief according to

which the important social boundaries among the groups are clearly delineated and unchangeable, in the sense that ... it is impossible or at least very difficult that the individuals may move from a group to another“(1985:369).

M. Foucault has argued that the establishment of power goes hand in hand with the capacity to obtain control over the definition of truth -- transforming a particular discourse in a statement about reality (Foucault, 1978:89). We have seen how ethnic identity is represented through a series of (symbolic or conversational) narratives. Ethnic groups can use those cultural narratives to obtain control over the definition of themselves, by dissociating them from their origins or authors and *fixing* them in some way. So we can say that while individuals produce narratives of expression of their ethnic identities, groups use those narratives by reifying them, producing discourses about ethnicity and its boundaries, its meaning, its consequences. These become the more stabilized and fixed, the more the group feels that its power of self-determination is threatened by external forces.

When this happens, though, there is always the danger of “exclusionary implications”, as J. Scott warns, what could happen is that:

"all those not of the group are denied even intellectual access to it, and those within the group whose experiences or interpretations do not conform to the established terms of identity must either suppress their views or drop out. ... That all of this isn't recognized as a highly political process that produces identities is troubling indeed, especially because it so closely mimics the politics of the powerful, naturalizing and deeming as discernibly objective facts the prerequisites for inclusion in any group." (Scott, 1992:18).



What happens in this case to the “repertoire of identities”? When people come to be seen as belonging to one and only one ethnic identity, mixed cases come to be seen as aberrations. It is now easy to see why the feeling of belonging to more than one ethnicity can become painful to the individual. Whatever the reaction of the people may be, it seems clear to me that policies of fixation are policies of mystification. They negate the power of people as agents of their own decisions.

I said that this fixation is a reactive, defensive mechanism. It also seems to be an aphoristic answer, bringing to reinforced stereotypical perceptions (and possible hostility) among groups, to limitations of the agency of their members, and to reduced adaptability to changing social conditions. Against this, we must recover a concept of the social agent as:

"constituted by an ensemble of subject positions that can never be totally fixed in a closed system of differences. The social agent is constructed by a diversity of discourses among which there is no necessary relation but a constant movement of overdetermination and displacement." (Mouffe, 1992:28).

If the danger is for claims of identity to become normative, then:

"the social construction of an identity must be conceived in terms of a logic of the subject, that is, in terms of the logic of an actor who cannot be identified with any sociological category or constituent group." (Ranciere, 1992:80).

Ethnic identity, thus, can be used as a strategy for cultural resistance, by maintaining for it a high degree of flexibility. Personally, I think that the proposal of complex identities is the first answer to exclusionary policies brought about by groups struggling for power. From the Italian side, which is also mine, this may mean a rethinking of “what makes us Italian”, both in an historical and cultural sense.

The misunderstandings and/or lack of empathy between Italians and Italian Americans, that we have just seen, I think, are partially derived from a lack of knowledge of the respective realities. Unfortunately, up to now the contacts between Italian Americans and Italians have only happened through government officials or the Church. Both these agencies have, sometime, had an interest in feeding nationalistic tendencies, conservative ones, and to keep the Italian Americans substantially separated from the course of Italian history.

In the future, I hope that this situation can change in better, as more and more Italian Americans and Italians have the opportunity to meet. The development of fast and cheaper transportation has already started to allow many Italian Americans to visit Italy. The phone, has permitted the re-establishment of kinship networks on the two sides of the ocean. While the mass media’s messages have always freely traveled from the US toward Italy, the contrary, Italian TV broadcasting reaching the US, is a much more limited enterprise. Though it is an enterprise that is rapidly expanding.

These new contacts may in the end bring with themselves new visions of ethnic identity, on both sides of the sea. Even if I am the first one to admit, that I feel that Italian Americans are very different from me, I also believe that this cannot be a base

for exclusion. After all, there are already many cultures in Italy. Italian Americans could be considered just another one of them.

Anthropology could help here. Much more research needs to be done on the Italian American language usage. My study, even if limited, has been probably the first one in the area. I hope that others will follow. Also, it could be of extreme interest to have a series of researches comparing the Italian American culture to the Italian ones, so to show patterns of change and possibly future divergence or convergence between them.

## APPENDIX A

### NOTATION

#### **General Notation<sup>82</sup>:**

**Times:** Main text.

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<sup>82</sup> Includes only the notation that I have created for my particular needs.

(smaller italic times (10) in parenthesis): Non-verbal notation. It is always put immediately under the verbal text. It is also used at the beginning of narratives or dialogues, for a brief description of the setting.

==> Looks toward

\ \ Point where the action indicated begins, in the verbal text. It is also put at the beginning of the corresponding non-verbal notation.

(( )) Explanation of other sounds.

G<sup>n</sup> Special notes that describe gestures.

### **Appendix B:**

Palatino: Translations into English. It follows the verbal line, or the non-verbal line when present.

New York: Words produced imitating English spelling and/or accent.

Monaco: Words produced imitating the Neapolitan language.

*Italics Courier*: Spoken in Tuscan.

### **Appendix C:**

- Pause of 1 second or longer. Pauses between 0.5 and 1 second long are indicated by starting another line with a shift. The absence of pause in the speech, when it is necessary to pass to the next line, is instead indicated by 2 shifts.

^ ^The words between these two signs are pronounced at a lower volume and faster pace. They sound like less important particulars, or reminders of things that should be known.

## APPENDIX B

Dinner at Tony and Daniel's home. 10 Minutes of transcription. This conversation happens more or less in the middle of the dinner.

Setting: Tony & Daniel's dining room.

Participants: PAOlo (Tuscan/Sardinian Italian), LUCa (Friulano Italian), TONy (Italian American, Neapolitan/Calabrese parents), JENnifer (Irish American), MATteo (Barese Italian), ROBerta (Lombard Italian), DANiel (Anglo American), VALentina (Tuscan Italian), BORis (Russian).

---

*(LUC, PAO, JEN, MAT, ROB, and DAN are sitting at the table. VAL got up and is walking around the table. Tony was in the kitchen, now he comes back and stands near LUC, touching his chair with the hand, and looking at him. LUC, PAO, and JEN ==> Ton )*

TON: ho: you want some more pasta? Luca =

LUC: I::: just a little bit;

TON: si.\

*\(TON goes back to the kitchen)*

(0.75)

MAT: he needs to grow.<sup>83</sup>

(0.75)

LUC: yeah.

(0.80)

MAT: so who is the chef. (yeah) so you are the chef?

?: yeah ( ).\

*\(VAL reaches the tape recorder at TON's sitting position. TON comes back from the kitchen with the pan of the paasta.)*

(1.20)

MAT: NO::: I thought that (he)= \

*\(VAL is tampering with the microphone several lines are unintelligible)*

MAT: = \[(he is) ( )]

*\(TON is waiting for me to leave his space.)*

?: [( )]

?: [( )]

LUC: \FUNziona dai FUNziona su da::i \ (1.0) su dai funziona

---

<sup>83</sup> This is the translation into English of a common way, in Italy, of teasing those who eat too much, by comparing them to little children, who need still have to grow.

\(\text{LUC} \Rightarrow \text{VAL}\)                      \(\text{VAL starts toward her place}\)  
 It's working, come on it's working come on, come on it's working  
 VAL: (*guardavo*) *che (s'e') finita l[a cassetta]*  
 I was looking that the tape is finished  
 TON:    \(\text{[Pasta any]body?}\)  
    \(\text{Arrives to LUC's place}\)  
 TON: more?  
 ? : hum.  
 TON: just you?  
 LUC: \(\text{yeah b[ut n[ot-] (0.7) ] not all of that}\)<sup>84</sup>  
    \(\text{LUC looks inside the pan. TON starts to pour pasta in his dish}\)  
 DAN?:                      [ hh hh ]  
 TON:    [ different ]  
 LUC: let me space (here) ( ) no not- not of- of that =  
 TON: = some- (what)  
    (2.60)

PAO: *gia' tutto (loro/l'oro) ( ) [( )]*  
    already all the ( ) ( ) ( )  
 LUC:    [thank you \(\text{no no no}\)]  
    \(\text{TON finishes to give pasta to LUC}\)  
 VAL: \(\text{pasta (this) is really good, who made it. you}\)  
    \(\text{She sits back in her place. TON starts back toward the kitchen}\)  
 LUC: thanks a lot.  
 DAN: Tony did [ i t ]  
 VAL:    [Tony] did it?  
    (0.85)  
 LUC: Tony **maccaroni**.<sup>85</sup>  
    ( . )

---

<sup>84</sup> There are people talking in the background from now on, almost continuously.

<sup>85</sup> "Maccaroni" is pronounced with a parodistic imitation of an English accent and spelling, instead of using the Italian accent and spelling "Maccheroni".

MAT: Rigatoni<sup>86</sup>

LUC: Rigatoni<sup>87</sup> what's- what's your last name;  
(1.0)

TON: \Iaccarino.  
\\(TON comes back from the kitchen)

LUC: what?

TON: Iaccarino.

LUC: IACCARI::NO so you are italo- italo italian.

TON: \yes:::<sup>88</sup>  
\\(TON ==> LUC and sits back in his place. All others ==> TON & LUC)

PAO: Iaccarino =

LUC: = Bra::vo =

PAO: = \\(my parents) they know Iaccarino in Italy.  
\\(Bending toward TON)

LUC: fro[m where.

TON: [in Naples =

PAO: = (original/ho really) =

TON: = Sorrento<sup>89</sup>.

PAO: no Na[ples no

LUC: [\\Surri:ento<sup>90</sup>  
\\(opens his arms)

TON: \\Surrient[o;  
\\(Moves on the chair, laughing, general laughing)

---

<sup>86</sup> Alberto corrects Giovanni's word from "maccaroni" to "rigatoni". At the beginning of the evening, Alberto had already said that he was thinking of doing a film. In it the protagonist would be called "Rigatoni". "Rigatoni" is not a common family name in Italy (to my knowledge). It has humoristic connotations, being also the name of a kind of pasta. "Maccheroni" is also a kind of pasta. Though in this case there is a slight pejorative sense in the word. A shade of meaning, connected probably to the fact that a derived adjective, "maccheronico", means "vulgar".

<sup>87</sup> Now he pronounces "Rigatoni" with a faked English accent.

<sup>88</sup> In the way he says "yes" there is a slight overtone of nuisance. Tony is evidently starting to be tired of Giovanni's pranks.

<sup>89</sup> Nice, medium size city, south of Naples, on the coast.

<sup>90</sup> In this and other following words, the Neapolitan accent is imitated. Notice also, that Giovanni is not from Naples. He makes an approximate imitation of that language.



MAT: [hu hu hu hu huhu huhu [huhu huhu

LUC: \\[SURRIENTO

\\(everybody is laughing)

\\(1.25)

\\(TON looks at his plate, moves his body notably away from LUC and toward JEN,  
shakes head negatively, while still smiling)

LUC: \\HA::: MARADONA si meglio e Pele':.<sup>91</sup>

Ha::: Maradona, you are better than Pele'

\\(LUC ==> TON, moves left hand back and forth)

\\(0.50)

\\(laughing)

LUC: \\Ha::: Surriento ha:::

\\(Bends forward. TON oscillates on the chair and looks away from LUC, toward the others.  
General laughing)

(1.00)

PAO: \\vedi Napoli e poi-

You see Neaples and then-

\\(PAO ==> LUC)

(0.65)

LUC: \\mori mori.<sup>92</sup>

you die, you die or

Mori, Mori

\\(LUC ==> his plate. TON ==> PAO)

?: ( )\\

\\(laughing)

---

<sup>91</sup> Again he imitates the Neapolitan speech. His voice shows extreme enthusiasm. Maradona, used to play soccer in Naples' soccer team. When he arrived in it, around ten years ago, it aroused many hopes in the Neapolitans to win the national championship. This phrase became then a common sing-song, comparing Maradona to the great Brazilian champion, Pele'. Today, the phrase can still be used for teasing.

<sup>92</sup> It is also a very famous way of saying, in Italy, the phrase "vedi Napoli e poi mori" that means "you see Neaples and then you can die." The word "mori" is the more common pronunciation of the word "muori" (you die) in Central-Southern Italy. With this pronunciation, though, the phrase becomes ambiguous, since "Mori" could be intended as the name of a place (especially to the Northern hear). In this case the meaning would be "you see Naples and then you see Mori." In the first case, this proverb means that Neaples is so beautiful, that after having seen it, a person may die happily. Many Italians, though, accept the second meaning and believe in the existence of a little town called Mori, just south of Neaples, and having incredible beauty. Such a city does not exist.

?: HU HU HU HU HU [HU

LUC: [\We told that to::: l:- no (Lahort) who is the- (what) is the  
\\(LUC ==> PAO)

name of [the girl who ( )]

PAO: [ea::: Baccigalupo ]

LUC: Yeah (0.2) and he didn't kno::w she said but mori is a- is a place right? it's- a  
sh:- a small:: I think city near Naples.

(0.6)

VAL: \[THAT'S A MYTH.] That's a [myth. h]hh Ye[s is very=  
\\(VAL ==> LUC. LUC ==> VAL)

LUC: [And he didn't kno:w [NO: no] [NO:

VAL: = small (such as to see:)[hh[h hh mo]ri [hha ha=

?: [hh he he hh h

LUC: [\No no there is]  
\\(LUC ==> his plate)

PAO: [huh

VAL: = ha ha .hhh [it means (0.2) [you see Naples and =

PAO: [( )- [( ) now a-

VAL: = [then you di:e.]

PAO: [( ) ( )] an apple tree is a (never heard of) [(Mori)

VAL: [you see Naple and then you die n[on you see =

LUC: [m-

VAL: = Na[ples and then (.) ] [another city;

LUC: [he didn't know too

PAO: \[<but it was another TITLE of a movie, \it's the title of a movie  
\\(PAO ==> LUC) \\(PAO ==> VAL)

(1.5)

LUC: mm

(0.7)

VAL: \[ho ho what movie  
\\(VAL ==> PAO. General laughing)

LUC: \[the idea is that- [before dying you have seen Naples =  
\\(LUC ==> PAO)

VAL: [HU HU ( )

VAL: = ( ) [hu hu

LUC: [like La Mecca. =  
like The Mecca

MAT: = (si no) cosi non ne parla.  
yes, no, so he will not talk about it

LUC: \IACCARINO!<sup>93</sup> \GIUA'! \AH:: COME VA'? [BENE E  
\(LUC ==> plate.) \ (LUC ==> TON) \ (TON ==> LUC with a smile that looks  
rather forced, bends toward JEN)

TU?=

Iaccarino! Giua! How are you doing? Fine, and  
you?

TON: [hhh huu hu

LUC: = \ha[insomma.  
\(TON ==> table)  
well enough.<sup>94</sup>

PAO: \O Sarracino<sup>95</sup>!  
\(PAO ==> LUC)

LUC: \O Sarracino! [O SARRACINO!  
\(LUC ==> his plate)

PAO: [\Tutte le femmine fa innammura'.  
\(bending forward)  
you make all the women fall in love for you

PAO&LUC: O SARRACINO!  
(0.5)

PAO: \O Iaccarino!  
\(PAO ==> TON, who is still bending away and smiling forcefully)  
\(1.7)  
\(laughing)

---

<sup>93</sup> While saying this (like every time he imitates the Neapolitan accent) Giovanni starts to gesticulate. He is following the common stereotype of the Southern Italians as always using many gestures while talking.

<sup>94</sup> Giovanni here dramatizes an encounter between two Neapolitans, an exchange of greetings.

<sup>95</sup> Singing. This is the most famous part of a traditional Neapolitan song, of the same title ("O Saracino", The Saracen).

TON: ex- so your accent is  
much better than (mine);

LUC: Yeah I am from the North

MAT: Te l'aspettavi te  
Did you expect  
questa parentesi folklorica  
this folkloric parenthesis

VAL: e' no:  
not really

TON: \right (.) where are you from.  
\\(TON moves and ==> LUC)

LUC: Udine.<sup>96</sup>

TON: \(( )  
\\(TON ==> his plate)

PAO: from [(Sicily)

VAL: [\e' be' ma scusa lo vedi alla faccia che e' [di Udine. \ha hha ha  
\\(VAL ==> TON. LUC, PAO, TON ==> VAL) \\(TON laughs)  
but of course, you can see from the face that he is from Udine

MAT: [Udine Svizzera.  
Swiss Udine<sup>97</sup>

PAO: (perché) (che) vede [\la faccia vede ( )=  
\\(hand at his chin, moving down)  
why, what do you see, the face you see ( )

MAT: [Udine Svizzera

LUC: = ( ) =

VAL: = sicuramente Nord:(.)-Est.  
for sure North-East

TON: [North-East

PAO: [\chi io?  
\\(pointing at himself with a finger)  
who me?

?: hu hu hu

VAL: hhu No lui hh te no:

---

<sup>96</sup> Udine is a medium size city in Friuli Venezia-Giulia, a region in the extreme North-East of Italy.

<sup>97</sup> This is a joke. There is not a Udine in Switzerland. They have been joking about Switzerland throughout the dinner.

no, him, not you

PAO: \\\ah bé. io so: a- Sardo<sup>98</sup> (praticamente) \\\hhh he he  
\\(PAO ==> forward) \\(PAO ==> VAL)

Well then, I am a- Sardo (practically)

(0.6)

VAL: [(guarda) di dove sei.]

see, where are you from

PAO: [ Sardegnolo<sup>99</sup> ] (come) [( )]

Sardegnolo, like ( )

VAL: [cioe' davvero se- della Sardegna?]

I mean, are you really from Sardinia?

PAO: = no di padre Toscano e mia madre:: Sardegnola. =

no, of a Tuscan father and a Sardegnola mother

VAL: = *appunto lo sapeo 'e eri Toscano.* =

there! I knew you was Tuscan.

PAO: = appunto

that's it

LUC: \\\pero' lui si sente Svizzero.

\\(LUC ==> PAO)

but he is Swiss in his heart

PAO: io mi sento Svizzero. <Pero' i- mi- mia nonna e' della Basilicata<sup>100</sup>.

I feel Swiss. But i- my- my grandmother is from the Basilicata.

VAL: hm hm hm hm

(1.2)

LUC: \\\Ah:: la Svizzera! anche Bulagna<sup>101</sup>, sei stato a Bulagna.

---

<sup>98</sup> The people of the island of Sardegna (Sardinia).

<sup>99</sup> The term "Sardegnolo" indicates a particular race of donkeys originary of Sardinia. When applied to the people it is usually offensive. Though many Tuscans use the term normally.

<sup>100</sup> The name of the region, "Basilicata", is pronounced while bending toward the microphone, and imitating a Southern accent. Basilicata is between Apulia and Campania. One of the more arid and underdeveloped parts of Italy.

<sup>101</sup> The name of the city, Bologna, is mispronounced, this time like in an overcharged imitation of a Northern accent.

$\backslash(LUC ==> TON. \ TON ==> LUC)$

Ah:: Swisserland! also Bologna, have you been to Bologna?

TON: I lived there.

LUC: Did you go to the John Hopkins?

TON: No: I just (0.5) lived there. [I taught English] an:-

PAO: [ for five hours ]

LUC: REALLY? In Bologna?

TON: yeah. =

LUC: = Where. Who did you know.

TON:  $\backslash^{\circ}$ I don't  $\backslash$ know

$\backslash$ (smiling, straightens up, shakes head negatively)  $\backslash$ (general laughing)

LUC: NO WHERE. When?

TON: I taught at that:(.) Anglo-American school,[ V i a ] Santo Stefano.

LUC: [oh really?]

Saint Stephen Street

LUC: Br:a:vo! (0.6) when?

MAT: hm hm [hm  $\backslash$ I [was there

$\backslash$ (raising one hand)

VAL: [ hh hh hh hh hh hh hh hh

TON: [THREE years ago.[ four years ago.

LUC:  $\backslash$ (Three:: years ago! ( ) three years  
 $\backslash$ (LUC ==> MAT)

ago: yeah he was there.

(0.7)

TON: [w h e r e d i d y o u s:- ] you s:- studied at th[e university]

LUC:  $\backslash$ (and you lived in Bologna) [ university ]

$\backslash$ (LUC ==> TON)

LUC: I- and I am resi[dent in Bologna.

TON: [what do you study.

(1.1)

LUC: Chemistry. ( ) technology.

(1.0)

TON: hum

(1.4)

LUC: NO but hum::-

TON: where did you live.

LUC: Via Friuli<sup>102</sup>, do you know? Via Mazzini.

TON: \hu hum

*\(from now on, VAL, ROB, MAT, and DAN are following less of this conversation and starting other conversations among themselves)*

LUC: the end of Via Mazzini then there is Via [Emilia](buo[:)-

TON: [Fuori-] [Fuoriport[aç

LUC: [s:i

(1.4)

LUC: Via Friu- Via Porta e' la Via (Porta) [Via Arno Via =

TON: [hum hum

LUC: = Porta,

(1.2)

TON: [hum hum.

LUC: [HA:::: Anglo-American School. <but do you know- did you know some Americans there? [<let me see there were] (0.5) =

TON: [y e : : a h t h e r e' s- ]

LUC: = (that was) (was) her name. shit! (I think) I have it, no (0.7)

let me check [if I have it.

TON: [ hhhh hh

\(1.2)

*\(LUC takes out his purse and looks for something in it, TON follows his actions)*

LUC: I don't remember her name.

(4.2)

LUC: There were a lot of Americans.

TON: Ho they have this exchange program.

(1.0)

LUC: yeah. \Karen Smith (1.0) [see (I deleted it) because =

*\(TON bends toward LUC, who is showing him a name on a piece of paper)*

TON: [\n:..... =

*\(shakes head negatively)*

---

<sup>102</sup> This and the following are all streets (Via) in Bologna.

LUC: = I think now she is in Londra.

TON: = ::::::::::no.

(1.1)

TON: I never met her. =

LUC: = This are (chance) ( ) (were).

(1.25)

TON: UC- UC system? as exchange program with hu::: [\ di Bologna ] Padova,  
\\(counts on the fingers)

of Bologna Padova

LUC: [oh university di Bologna]

oh university of Bologna

LUC: yeah

(0.8)

TON: Bologna e Padova.

Bologna and Padua.

?: ( ).

TON: NO I jus- I went there just t- hum for fun. (0.7) after I finished school.

(1.00)

TON: [I Wanna to break-]

LUC: [( )] Martin Hopkins right? ( ) [( )] is a Master

TON: [yeah.]

TON: = \\which is a CIA sort of- =

\\(coughing)

PAO: \\CIA yeah

\\(PAO ==> LUC & TON)

TON: = institution =

LUC: = they told me- yeah they told me that every year- (1.0) every year they have

the one- at least one or two (.) people (.) that (are) (2.0) i- [i ( ),

PAO: \\[Luca (works) for the CIA.

\\PAO indicates LUC. All others turn toward them.

[<the way (sh)e] \\swallow this \\microphones here.

\\(shows to bring something to the mouth) \\(tapping on the microphone)

LUC: [ yeah sure. ]

\\(2.0)

\\(general laughing)



PAO: for the Italian (sismi<sup>103</sup>) hh

\\(2.5)  
\\(laughing)

LUC: OH: me- I think-

MAT: la Digos<sup>104</sup> =

the D.I.G.O.S.

LUC: =maybe (0.6) Danielle Welmont; \\<did you know her<because I think [(0.4)]=  
\\(TON: shakes head negatively)

TON: [m: ]

LUC: = she taught (0.5) also at the Anglo-American school.

(1.0)

TON: \\n: n: n::o I don't remember.

\\(eating)  
(1.1)

LUC: ok[e::y ( )]

TON: [I just taught there for: (2.0) six months an- (0.5)

made a little money and then [ (1.0) (left). ] hhhh.

LUC: [((whistling))]

LUC: \\hai capito che peperuzzo.

\\(LUC ==> plate. TON ==> plate & bends away from LUC, smiling forcefully)

understood, what a peperuzzo<sup>105</sup>

VAL: \\hu ha ha ha ha

\\(PAO ==> LUC)

PAO: 0 Saracino (.) o Saracino =

LUC: = 0 SARRACINO<sup>106</sup> =

PAO: = 0 Sarracino

---

<sup>103</sup> If I got the right word, S.I.S.M.I. is the Italian secret service.

<sup>104</sup> D.I.G.O.S., is the Italian special police. Its task is to fight terrorism. Its target is often every political group outside the parties. Its methods are often discussible. Here Alberto is being ironic.

<sup>105</sup> This word does not mean anything but sounds funny. "Peperone" in Italian is "bell pepper", -uzzo is a diminutive.

<sup>106</sup> Singing again.

LUC: O SARRACINO =

PAO: Tutte le femmine fa innammura'

TON: \.hhhhh hhhh.

*\(bends forward over his plate, visibly uncomfortable)*

MAT: hm hm hm hu hu hu hu hu hu

LUC: O Sarraci[no,

JEN: [light ( ) not[ bad

LUC: [you learned to cook there

TON: No:: I learned to cook here, my [mother ] taught me. =

PAO: [( )]

PAO: = your- your mother is Italian; [( )]

?: [ h hh hh hh hh hh

TON: [my- both of them are [Italian.

PAO: [<second generation of-

or:: first generation =

TON: = no my parents were: ((clearing throat)) \my dad 's from Naples, my mom 's  
*\(bends toward PAO)*

from Calabria<sup>107</sup> =

PAO: =Oh so \they are really Italian [where were they] born (where) they were born.  
*\(TON shakes head positively)*

LUC: [ De CALABRIA]  
from Calabria

TON: They were born and lived in Italy<sup>108</sup>.

PAO: (was li[ke-)

LUC: [what [(city)-

TON: [I was- but I was born here.

LUC: So what city in Calabria.

TON: Reggio<sup>109</sup>.

LUC: Re:ggio.

---

<sup>107</sup> Other region in Southern Italy.

<sup>108</sup> In Tony's voice there is now a little nuisance.

<sup>109</sup> Reggio Calabria, the principal city of the region, near the street that separates the peninsula from Sicily

PAO: Ma parli Italiano allora.

But then you can talk Italian

TON: si. =

yes

PAO: = *lo 'apisci?*

you understand it

LUC: ( ) e certo!

( ) of course!

TON: Un poco (.) \parlo [(.) un[o parola<sup>110</sup>] hh hh hh hh hh =

*\(puts his finger together to reinforce the idea of "a little")*

A little, I talk one word

PAO: [capisci ( )]

you understand ( )

LUC: [\(\ma)(va lá) ma adesso fa apposta a far

*\(LUC indicates TON while ==> PAO and smiling)*

come on, but now he is teasing us by

l'accento. NON FAR LO SCEMO.

feagning the accent. Don't be silly.

TON: = hh hh hh hh hh hh hh hh

*\(0.7)*

*\(TON, LUC and PAO laughing)*

LUC: [ MANNAGGIA CHI T' HA ] MUORTO.<sup>111</sup>

PAO: [Sarracino non fa lo scemo].

Saracen, don't be silly.

*\(1.6)*

*\(laughing)*

TON: \[io

*\(people turns to JEN)*

I

---

<sup>110</sup> Tony is now imitating the way of talking Italian of an American who knows very little Italian. Indeed his knowledge of Italian is much higher, which is demonstrated by the fact that he can make such an imitation. In particular, notice the pronunciation of the "r" in the American way, without the "trill".

<sup>111</sup> I cannot translate this phrase from the Neapolitan language. I guess the meaning is something like: "the hell who killed you!".

JEN: [<but Americans aren't too used to: (.)

interrogations like this. [hm he he he he

PAO: [\ca ni[(.) ca ni]sciun'e' fesse<sup>112</sup>.

*\(bending forward)*

here no- here no one is stupid

TON: [ no io- ]

no, I

TON: \io capire-

*\(coughing)*

I understand

PAO: ca nisciun'e' fes[se

here no one is stupid

LUC: [io capire varda che roba.

"I understand", look at this

*\(1.0)*

*\(general laughing all the way long)*

PAO: 0 sarracino: ca nisciun'e' fesse.

(1.3)

PAO: 0 guaglione scugnizze [ca nissun'e' fesse]<sup>113</sup>

LUC: [ e b\_ra : v o ] In Bulagna!

Anglo-American School! ma sorbole!<sup>114</sup>

*\(3.0)*

*\( JEN is laughing)*

PAO: Trasite o non trasite.

Are you coming in or not?

VAL: \Trasite o non trasite<sub>i</sub>

*\(laughing)*

---

<sup>112</sup> I am not sure to understand this phrase that is said in Neapolitan.

<sup>113</sup> "Guaglione" and "Scugnizzo" both mean "boy" in Neapolitan, I am not sure about the shade of meaning.

<sup>114</sup> Now Giovanni is imitating an Emiliano accent and typical exclamation (sorbole!). The word is not translatable, "Sorbo" is a kind of tree and "Sorbole" could be its fruits. Sounds like a real duel for the best imitator.

PAO: \Trasite o non trasite =  
*\(TON bends forward toward PAO and smiles forcefully)*

LUC: = [cosa vuol dire, andate?]  
 What does it mean? Go?

VAL: [hhh hh hh tra(h)si(h)te]

PAO: entrate  
 come in/enter

LUC: hu entrate entrate =  
 hu come in, come in

PAO: = [trasite] o non trasite.

TON: [( )]

JEN: hu hu

TON: so you lived in Naples? =

PAO: = yeah =

TON: = for a while?

PAO: when I was a kid.

TON: hum

LUC: (he/you) was six. When did [you (were) ( ) ( )?]

TON: [where. (.)where in Neaples.]

PAO: what?

TON: where. =

PAO: = ha:: Via Manzoni venticinque bis.  
 ha:: Manzoni street twentyfive A

TON: really.

LUC: ha::

PAO: ( ) ha:: =

VAL: = Manzoni he' [hh ( ) ( ) ]

TON: [My mother's father-] (.) no my mother's

[ father lived on Via ] Manzoni.

PAO: [vicino al riformatorio]  
 near the juvenile home

PAO: are [you serious.

VAL: [hu hu

TON: hm hm

PAO: (a ch)

TON: [yeah.

VAL: [<how you say "riformatorio" in English.

(0.9)

PAO: ha::: juvenile: home.

(1.0)

PAO: [you know.

JEN: [is it for delinquent? =

TON: = (si/see) you lived there.

(0.6)

PAO: no no no close to it. [( )]

TON: \[ho::: hh] hh hh hh hh

\(laughing)

PAO: (I was loosing) the toys from the window, (there) was a ru- a r- a rush with these delin- delinquents (.) going together (then) my (always) was (stomped)<sup>115</sup>.

(1.0)

TON: [hm.

PAO: [yeah.

(0.8)

LUC: \PIERPAOLO!<sup>116</sup>

\(LUC ==> the door)

\(3.2)

\(laughing)

PAO: PATROCLO!<sup>117</sup>

MAT: hh Patroclo? hh

---

<sup>115</sup> I cannot really make sense of this phrase.

<sup>116</sup> Giovanni is now calling outside the window, where he had heard someone passing by and talking Italian in the street. Of course he cannot know that person's name, therefore he uses a funny intonation. Following, other uncommon, literary and therefore funny names are used.

<sup>117</sup> Patroclus, hero of the Iliad, best friend of Achilles, killed by Hector.

LUC: EURIPIDE!<sup>118</sup>

\\(1.1)  
\\(laughing)

LUC: EURIPID[E! \\

\\(Gio ==> PAO and they talk to each other for a while. The others are taken in other conversations.)

TON: [\\who did you work with. down (.) at UCLA.  
\\(TON ==> JEN. JEN ==> TON)

JEN: I w- work with Alessandro Duranti,

TON: ho really?

JEN: and:: Mariko Tamanoi.

TON: Really? My roommate- well my (.) former roommate had her in his committee.

JEN: ho [hua:hu.

TON: [disputation committee.  
(1.4)

JEN: What was his:: disputation.

TON: he is doing it as a ( ) (on),

JEN: hum.

TON: foreign policy an:d modernization theory? (0.5) I don't know if you are familiar with- this (so called)-  
(0.8)

JEN: in part ( ) [ ((coughing)) ]

TON: [(he) (expands)] in: academic thought,  
a[n:d ] especially //in the nineteen(fifties) (0.9) =

JEN: [yeah]

TON: and hu:: so the way in

which modernization theory

shape Americans ( )

LUC: Ha Marco deve essere andato all'

Ha Mark must have gone to the

Anglo-American School. Marco::

Anglo-American School. Mark

PAO: Marco: Marco ( )

LUC: S:i. Mi sembra di sì. adesso let's  
Yes, I think so,

---

<sup>118</sup> Euripides, Greek dramatist.

((bell rings))\ chiediamo.  
ask.  
\\(DAN turns then gets up, probably to open the door.)  
LUC: Scusa! c'e' un mio \ami[co Pierpaolo, hah scusa.  
\\(TON ==> LUC for a second, then again ==> Jen)  
Scuse me! There is a friend of mine, Hey Pierpaolo, oh sorry!  
TON: [ I think so (.) <anyway she [( )]  
JEN: [wll- (.) was he in Anthropology?  
TON: No, he is: in History. ( [ ).  
JEN: \\[hm:::<but she does Historical Anthropology actually.  
\\(All but JEN and TON ==> the door)  
\\(1.0)  
\\(Boris arrives entering from the front door)  
TON: \\Hey Boris.  
\\(TON ==> the door)  
(0.8)  
JEN: \\HI::: hh.  
\\(JEN ==> the door)  
(0.6)  
TON: you [want-  
BOR: [( ) [( )] ( ) (called) already,  
JEN: \\[°a cooper]  
\\(JEN ==> TON)  
TON: okey.  
BOR: wanna go [to ( ) ]  
TON: [that's it<sub>i</sub>] =  
JEN: = you g-  
TON: where are you going.  
BOR: ( ) =  
JEN: the [coop party I live at the coop.  
TON: [hhh hh  
TON: (do) you know there's a party tonight =  
JEN: = Yeah (there's) have a band even.  
TON: so maybe we should go: afterward.  
(1.0)



JEN: hhhhhh

LUC: So (.) \[c'era un] ragazzo che e' an[dato all'Anglo- =  
\\(TON ==> LUC. DAN comes back and sits at his place)

Allora (.) there was a boy that was going to the Anglo-

TON: [( )]

?: [ hhhhhhhhhhhhhh

LUC: = American Scho[ol ( ) e' qua a Los Angeles. ] =  
American School ( ) he is here in Los Angeles.

JEN: [( )- hu:: it's huge.<it's gonna be big.]

LUC: = s- si chiama Marco, (1.0) D'Amico.

His- his name is Marco D'Amico.

TON: hm::: non lo conos[co.

hm::: I don't know him.

LUC: [niente da fare.

nothing to do

TON: Era quattro anni fa,

It was four years ago,

LUC: E' be' ( )

Ho well

PAO: perche' te quanti anni hai.

why, how old are you?

TON: ventisei.

twentysix.

(1.0)

LUC: Aevi ventidue anni, il momento migliore, da quella volta \\

\\(left hand up then falling down, with a descending whistling)

You was twentytwo, the best moment, from that time

PAO: Ec[co ( )] \\raggiunge il picco e poi (dopo \\un po')=

*\(hand up, imitating LUC's gesture) \ \(gesture<sup>119</sup>)*

There, ( ) it reaches the top and then (after a while)

TON: \[No, ero-]  
*\(smiles forcefully)*  
 No, I was-

PAO: = O Sa[racino \ ( ) e'.]  
*\(descending with the hand)*

LUC: \[ (whistling) ]  
*\(LUC repeats the movement. TON is shaking his head positively and smiling, evidently uncomfortable)*

PAO: O Sarra[cin- ( ( groan like sound ) ) ] =

LUC: [O SARRACINO! O SARRACINO!]

PAO: TUTTE LE FE[MMINE FA INNAMMURA']

LUC: \[MMINE FA INNAMMURA']  
*\(TON bends away from LUC)*

LUC: O MAradona.

PAO: ( )

LUC: \e'?  
*\(LUC ==> PAO)*

PAO: ( ) ( ) ( )

LUC: (non c'e' niente) ( )  
 (there is nothing) ( )

PAO: in che senso ( )  
 what do you mean ( )

LUC: \VA BENE! \Avete visto Caro: \Diarario.<sup>120</sup>  
*\(shakes head positively, shaking upper body back and forth.) \ \(LUC ==> around)*  
*\(LUC ==> PAO)*  
 All right! Have you seen "Dear Diary"?

---

<sup>119</sup> Right hand makes a rotatory movement. In Italian it means scarcity or lack of something.

<sup>120</sup> "Caro Diario", the last film of the Italian director Nanni Moretti.

## APPENDIX C

### Why Renzo Does Not Eat Meat.

*(ENI has just taken a dish from BOB BOB looks at ENI, waiting for the dish. VAL and REN look toward their plates.)*

ADA: \ Renzo ha: cinquantatre' anni no?

\(ADA ==> ENI)

E' del quarantuno

•

se tu gli dice eu- una volta si insaccava l m- maiale prima di venì n' America

•

\ sai? e (avendo) cucina[to

\(ADA ==> BOB)

ENI: \[( )

\(passing a dish to BOB)

ADA: \ (vamo) avevamo cucinato la gallina

\(BOB passes the dish to ADA who takes it)

ENI: Si'

ADA: E'h ?

•

in \p- in presenza al macellaio ch- ^che era li' il Sperelli era il s- sarebbe stato il

\(ADA puts the dish in front of herself and serves herself)

socero^ \Basta Bob?

\(ADA ==> BOB)

BOB: ( )

ADA: Mo?

BOB: ( )

ADA: \\\il socero di PierGiorgio^ \\\gli OFFERSI a Renzino MILLE LIRE

\\(ADA passes the dish to BOB) \\(ADA bends forward ==> ENI )

se mangiava un coscio di pollo

\\te lo ricordi? in cucina al (Dizioli)? =

\\(ADA ==> REN)

REN: = quanti anni avevo? (dici) =

BOB: = \\Si Sperelli?

\\(ADA ==> BOB)

ADA: \\prima di venì n'America =

\\(ADA ==> REN)

REN: = [okey

VAL: [(Sperelli)

BOB: [my grand]father was Sperelli

ADA: \\[capito?] \\ hu hu

\\(ADA ==> ENI) \\(negative head shaking)

neanco le mille lire prese pe' mangiá i coscio di pollo

BOB: Zia!

ADA: \\lu n'ha ma' mangiato mai

\\(ADA ==> BOB briefly then ==> ENI)

Eni, una- una bistecca. \\

\\(VAL positive head shaking)

Translation:

(ENI has just taken a dish from BOB. BOB looks at ENI, waiting for the dish. VAL and REN look toward their plates.)

ADA: \\Renzo is fiftythree years old right?

\\(ADA ==> ENI)

he was born in (19)fortyone

•

if you tell him eu- once we were bagging<sup>121</sup> the p- pig  
before coming to America

•

\\you know? and after having [cooked

\\(ADA ==> BOB)

ENI: \\( )

\\passing a dish to BOB

ADA: \\( ? ) we had cooked the hen

\\ (BOB passes the dish to ADA who takes it)

ENI: yes

ADA: right<sup>122</sup>?

•

in \\p- in presence of the butcher wh- who was there

\\(ADA puts the dish in front of herself and serves herself)

Sperelli was the s- he would have been the father-in-law

\\enough Robert?

\\(ADA ==> BOB)

BOB: ( )

ADA: and now?

BOB: ( )

ADA: \\PierGiorgio's father-in-law \\I offered him, Renzino<sup>123</sup>,

\\(ADA passes the dish to BOB) \\(ADA bends forward ==>ENI<sup>G1</sup>)

one thousand liras

if he would eat a drumstick of chicken

\\do you remember? in the kitchen at (Dizioli)?

---

<sup>121</sup> They were putting the pork's meat into sausage skins to make salami, sausages, mortadella and other kinds of preserved meat.

<sup>122</sup> The sound *e::* or *e'e* or *éh* request or acknowledge a positive answer from the audience.

<sup>123</sup> Diminutive of the name Luigi, appropriate to a child.

<sup>G1</sup> Left hand, a sign. Thumb and index touch, the other fingers remain separated, movement from the side of the face, at the eyes, forward and down. This gesture in Tuscany underlines what is said as particular, notable or strange.

\ (ADA ==> REN)  
 REN: = how old was I? (you say)  
 BOB: = \yes Sperelli?  
 \ (ADA ==> BOB)  
 ADA: \before coming to America  
 \ (ADA ==> REN)  
 REN: = [okey  
 VAL: [(Sperelli)  
 BOB: [my grand]father was Sperelli  
 ADA: \did you understand<sup>124</sup>? \no no  
 \ (ADA ==> ENI) \ (negative head shaking)  
 not even one thousand liras he would take to eat a drumstick of chicken  
 BOB: Aunt!  
 ADA: \he has absolutely never eaten  
 \ (ADA ==> BOB briefly then ==> ENI)  
 Eni, a- a steak<sup>125</sup>. \  
 \ (VAL positive head shaking)

---

<sup>124</sup> Better translated, not literally, as "*Can you imagine?*" underlines something particular, strange, unexpected.

<sup>125</sup> For Italians it is hard to believe that anybody could dislike meat. Especially for the older generation, it is seen as an aberration, if not a straight offense. Until a few decades ago, for the majority of the Italian population meat was a luxury. Corn, beans, potatoes and chestnuts were the staple food of Tuscan peasants.

## Pizza and Pizza Pie.

ENI: \But, all the rain too coming down fro[m the mountain;]  
\\(ENI ==> ADA, ADA ==> ENI)

BOB: [I guess I should] call.

ADA: Yah. Dalla [Francia?

ENI: \\[Torino ( ) \\awfully[( )]  
\\(ENI ==> BOB) \\(negative head shaking)

BOB: \\[You know I should talk to. Gino, I bet that Gino's called.  
\\(BOB==> ENI)

ENI: Probably.

REN: Are you going to (Buy) ( )?

ADA: \\N'ha risentit' anche Venezia, BOB: Oh I have hu: Oh my aunt  
\\(ADA ==> ENI)

n'ha risentito é? has thought I had two, I have

ENI: Sí lo só. two ( ) in there.

ADA: C'é anche Venezia. REN: ( ) in that area?

ENI: \\Lei parla l'Italia come, se parlasse ( ). L'ha chiamati alle quattro stamattina.\\  
\\(ENI ==> VAL, VAL ==> ENI) \\(VAL: positive head shaking)

BOB: \\Yeah, I have some other cousin too but, I haven't ( )  
\\(VAL==> ADA, ADA ==> VAL, others look at their plates)

VAL: Lei telefona sempre ai suoi parenti in Italia?

ADA: Sí anche stanotte ci'abbiamo-

VAL: HA! (e che) Sono in Toscana?

ADA: ya

VAL: ha::

ADA: era le quattro qui e lá era lu- era l'una di pomeriggio  
e stavano mangiando con- festeggiavano 'l compreanno

VAL: \\hm  
\\(ADA ==> REN)

REN: [di chi?

ADA: della mamma di Gloria

ENI: di Elda

REN: Ho!

ADA: [e c'era anche

ENI: [SI CHIAMA LE' Elda no?

ADA: E'

ENI: Elda;

ADA: sì

•

e c'era anche:: quella coppia questa che sta laggiù n'casa

REN: Anna

ADA: A[nna, ] la cuoca c'era via

ENI: [Anna sì]

REN: la cuoca

ADA: il marito

?: hm

ADA: \Vora hanno fatto la sala da mangiá giú é;

\(ADA ==> REN)

ne- nella cantina =

ENI: = \dov'era il forno

\(ENI ==> ADA, ADA & REN ==> ENI)

REN: Good! [I-

ENI: [IL forno l'hanno messo fuori e hanno f[atto: de-

REN: [l'hanno accominciato già quando  
ero io, (you know) [e ci] hanno il foco a du facce

ENI: [( )]

ENI: Zia ma! quando eramo lá noi \Matteo e é:: Gloria hanno fatto la pizza nel forno

\(shift forward)

le- e Anna non c'era ma loro l'han- hanno fatto

\[Dio! ] quanto- pizza quan[to (n'hanno) fatta

\(hands around her chin, sligh negative head shaking)

ADA: [ha ha]

BOB:

\[(was the only) good pi-

\(BOB ==> VAL REN ==> BOB)

\THEY MAKE TERRIBLE pizza in Italy!

\(Bends forward with hands open at the sides touching the table.)



REN: Yeah

BOB: \TERRIBLE [pizza.

\(VAL ==> BOB)

VAL: [hhhh No::[: hh

BOB: [Everything el- \I mean the food is \del- I- I had to eat.

\(straightens up \opens arms in resignation)

VAL: hu hu hu.

BOB: But pizza \they don't know how to mak[e. No: =

\(crosses arms in front, like in a negative gesture, then opens them again)

ADA: \[É bá

\(ADA ==> BOB)

VAL: = No: it's just very different. =

BOB: = \I a- no: é: [but- but ( ] ) \the pizza they are =

\(BOB ==> VAL) \bends forward again

ENI: [very ( )]

BOB: = really- \pizza originated \in- in- in- in Southern

\(ADA ==> BOB) \indicates behind himself and down with the right arm, while looking forward)

Italy, [in Si- in [Sitily- in Sicily. So:

VAL: \[Southern [Italy

\(positive head shaking)

ADA: [yeah, yeah

ADA: \Roma e Napoli.

\(BOB ==> ADA)

VAL: Ro[ma e Napoli.

ADA: [L'originale.

BOB: ( ).

ADA: [ A:h sí sí.]

REN: \[You gotta re-] you gotta think ( ) BOB. When

\(ADA ==> REN)

originated the pizza in: Napoli and Rome?

ADA: Yeah.

REN: \It was focaccia. [With olives, \the holes in it =

\(shows something round between his hands \touches the table with a finger various times, like to put it into holes)



nel trentasei

BOB: sí

ADA: io ero- ero a Roma già da du anni =

BOB: \sí  
*\(slow positive head shaking)*

ADA: feci vení la mi mamma\  
*\(ADA ==> VAL)*

*\per una settimana a Roma [pe' fá (la) ( )*  
*\(ADA ==> ENI)*

ENI: *\[A ROMA! é andata nonna?*  
*\(slow positive head shaking)*

ADA: porta[ta io fatta vení a Roma] pagavo dieci lire =

ENI: [( ) ((eating?)) ]

ADA: = al giorno da- da (Epprime) e de- pe- pe la pe \di- ( )  
*\(VAL positive head shaking while eating)*

LA SERA

i' e Tina, la mi amica che ancora mi scrive

la prendévamo e s'andav'a' 'Pincio

a fa- pecchè stávamo lí a Via della Panetteria proprio

al [Tritone

VAL: \[hm  
*\(positive head shaking)*

ADA: e, prima di riportalla l- a dormì a casa

e noi andá a (casa) ( ) n- da noi alla nostra casa \LA PORTAMMO dove  
*\(ADA ==> BOB)*

faceano la pizza

\propo \col forno, colle legna lí a Via della Panetteria  
*\(ADA==>ENI) \(\textsuperscript{G2})*

•

\le le- non ci fu caso \di fargli assaggiare la \pizza alla mi mamma  
*\(negative head shaking) \ \(ADA ==> BOB) \ \(positive head shaking, chin raised up)*

\non la volle assaggiá  
*\(looks around then ==> ENI)*

---

<sup>127</sup> Ital-English term for 36, I wrote it with the Italian spelling, but not exactly, because the word is an onomatopoeic imitation of an English sound.

<sup>G2</sup> Hands stretched forward, like forming a circle, indicating the shape of the oven.

ENI: Perche[:' non la ] conosceva

ADA: [per la muzza-]

ADA: che \la \MUZZARELLA che videa que \FFILI

\(G3) \(\textit{looking around})

\(ADA==> REN, I start laughing)

\NO NO NO disse ma altri mangiatela pure \ma

\(ADA==>ENI and makes G4. VAL: positive head shaking) \(\textit{laughing})

\io nun voglio MANGIÁ QUE FILI LÍ \pensa é:

\(ADA repeats G4)

\(ADA==>VAL. VAL:positive head shaking)

nun voglio mangiá que fili lí \allora no li comprammo du don<sup>128</sup>- \du paste che

\(\textit{recovers an erect position})

\(G5)

faceano anco pasticceria

e le' mangió quelle

ma nun volse allargiá la pizza!

Translation:

ENI: \But, all the rain too coming down fro[m the mountain<sub>l</sub>]

\(ENI ==> ADA, ADA ==> ENI)

BOB:

[I guess I should] call.

ADA: Yah. From [France.

ENI: \[Turin ( ) \awfully[( )

\(ENI ==> BOB) \(\textit{negative head shaking})

BOB:\[You know I should talk to Gino. I bet that Gino's called.

---

G<sup>3</sup> Hand from the table up, representing the way mozzarella melts.

G<sup>4</sup> She rolls back and forth on the chair + Negative head shaking + crosses and then opens her arms in front of herself, with a horizontal movement that reinforces the negation of the head.

<sup>128</sup> Here she may have started to say the English word "donut", then correct herself. In this case she may have meant to indicate a particular kind of Italian pastry called "ciambella" which looks like a big donut.

G<sup>5</sup> Arms straight forward, hands semi-closed, near to each other, like having a pastry among them.

$\backslash(BOB ==> ENI)$

ENI: Probably.

REN: Are you going to (Buy) ( )?

ADA:  $\backslash$ Even Venice was touched by it, BOB: Oh I have hu: Oh my aunt has

$\backslash(ADA ==> ENI)$

was touched, right?

thought I had two, I have two

ENI: Yes I know.

( ) in there.

ADA: There is also Venice.

REN: ( ) in that area?

ENI:  $\backslash$ She talks Italy like, if she was talking ( ). She called them at four o'clock this

$\backslash(ENI ==> VAL, VAL ==> ENI)$

morning. $\backslash$

$\backslash(VAL: positive head shaking)$

BOB:  $\backslash$ Yeah, I have some other cousin too but, I haven't ( )

$\backslash(VAL ==> ADA, ADA ==> VAL, others look at their plates)$

VAL: Do you always call your relatives in Italy?

ADA: yes even last night we have-

VAL: Ha<sup>129</sup>! and are they in Tuscany?

ADA: ya

VAL: ha::

ADA: it was four o'clock here and there it was lu- it was one o'clock in the afternoon

and they were eating (with)- they were celebrating the birthday

VAL:  $\backslash$ [hm

$\backslash(ADA ==> REN)$

REN: [of whom?

ADA: of Gloria's mother

ENI: of Elda

REN: Ho!

ADA: [and there was also

ENI: [she is called Elda right?

ADA: what

ENI: Elda;

ADA: yes

•

---

<sup>129</sup> Indicate understanding and/or acknowledgment.



BOB: [Everything el- \I mean the food is  
*\(straightens up)*

\del- I- I had to eat.  
*\(opens arms in resignation)*

VAL: hu hu hu.

BOB: But pizza \they don't know how to mak[e. No: =  
*\(crosses arms in front, like in a negative gesture, then opens them again)*

ADA: \[Let's see now  
*\(ADA ==> BOB)*

VAL: = No: it's just very different. =

BOB: = \I a- no: é: [but- but ( ] ) \the pizza they are =  
*\(BOB ==> VAL) \bends forward again)*

ENI: [very ( )]

BOB: = really- \pizza originated \in- in- in- in Southern  
*\(ADA ==> BOB) \indicates behind himself and down with the right arm, while looking forward)*

Italy, [in Si- in [Sitily- in Sicily. So:

VAL: \[Southern [Italy  
*\(positive head shaking)*

ADA: [yeah, yeah

ADA: \Rome and Naples.  
*\(BOB ==> ADA)*

VAL: Ro[me and Naples.

ADA: [The original.

BOB: ( ).

ADA: [ Oh yes yes ]

REN: \[You gotta re-] you gotta think ( ) BOB. When originated the pizza in:  
*\(ADA ==> REN)*

Naples and Rome?

ADA: Yeah.

REN: \It was fogaccia<sup>132</sup>. [With olives, \the holes in it =  
*\shows something round between his hands \touches the table with a finger various times, like to put it into holes*

BOB: \[Ya::h ya:::h

---

<sup>132</sup> Particular kind of flat bread, usually very oily and salty.

*\\(positive head shaking)*

REN: = and capperi and that's it. [And little else].

BOB: *\\[ W e l l : ]* see <but *\\I'm americanized and the*  
*\\(opens arms)* *\\(arms at his chest)*  
Americans [ (pizza) ]PIZZA=

REN: [I know tha-]

BOB: = PIE here pizza started here in New York City. =  
[And they called it], (there) [in Chicago e-] Pizza =

ENI: [ Chicago ] [ he he he he ]

BOB: = pie they [ call-] you know *\\I didn't know what pizza =*  
*\\(right arm toward himself, negative head shaking)*

REN: [he he]

BOB: = was until I was in the n- when I *\\went* in the [Navy,  
*\\(indicates in front of himself)*

ENI: [me neither.

REN: *\\Pizza pie.*  
*\\(positive head shaking, protracted through the following turn)*

ENI: *\\[Hm hm.*

BOB: *\\[I wa- I was twentyone years old before I new what pi-*  
*\\(BOB ==> REN)*  
*\\because we never new what pizza was nobody ever talks*  
*\\(opens arms in resignation)*  
ab[out it.

ADA: [É<sup>133</sup>.

REN: [Well not too many people (who got) (the restaurant) at that time either.

BOB: [Well, that's true too.

ADA: *\\[Eni! I want you (sing)- I wa[nt to make you (plural) laugh.*  
*\\(ADA ==> ENI)*

REN: [Yeah, you get (that way)

VAL: *\\Hum.*  
*\\(BOB has been talking and everybody is looking at him. When ADA starts talking all others reorient themselves toward her.*

ADA: in (19)thirtysix<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> In this case this sound is used to recall the attention of Velma. Trieste is ready to pass to the next story, which is when she talks about her mother going to Rome.





\\\(negative head shaking)      \\\(ADA ==> BOB)      \\\(positive head shaking, chin raised up)  
 \\\she did not want to try it  
 \\\(looks around then ==> ENI)  
 ENI: becaus[e s h e d i d n o t ] know it  
 ADA:      [because of the mozza-]  
 ADA: because of \\\the \\\mozzarella that she would see those \\\filaments  
          \\\(G3) \\\(looking around)      \\\(ADA==>REN. I start laughing)  
 \\\no no no - she said - you go on and eat it, \\\but I do not want to \\\eat those  
 \\\(ADA==>ENI and makes G4.VAL: positive head shaking)      \\\(laughing)      \\\(ADA repeats G4)  
 filaments there; \\\can you believe it?  
          \\\(ADA==>VAL. VAL: positive head shaking)  
 I do not want to eat those filaments there, \\\then we bought her two don<sup>135</sup>- \\\two  
          \\\(recovers an erect position)      \\\(G5)  
 pastries because they were a cake-shop too  
 and she ate those  
 but she did not want to (eat) pizza!

---

G<sup>3</sup> Hand from the table up, representing the way mozzarella melts.

G<sup>4</sup> She rolls back and forth on the chair + Negative head shaking + crosses and then opens her arms in front of herself, with a horizontal movement that reinforces the negation of the head.

<sup>135</sup> Here she may have started to say the English word "donut", then correct herself. In this case she may have meant to indicate a particular kind of Italian pastry called "ciambella" which looks like a big donut.

G<sup>5</sup> Arms straight forward, hands semi-closed, near to each other, like having a pastry among them.

## Ada in Rome.

ADA: \Quando io andai a Roma

\(ADA ==> VAL. All others turn to ADA)

VAL: \hm hm

\(positive head shaking)

ADA: la family aveva otto persone\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

eight people

^la family^

VAL: hm=

ENI: = \le (.) parla Italiano \

\(ADA ==> ENI) \ (VAL: smiles)

ADA: no parl(o) ( ) ((laughing)) hhh hé

ADA: \Otto persone in famiglia \

\(ADA ==> VAL) \ (VAL: positive head shaking)

right?\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

la piu' piccola tre femmin'e un maschio \

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

^mogli'e marito e un genero^

la piu' piccola aveva dodici anni\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

quand'io sono arrivata a Roma

ch'i un sapeo neanche impastarla

^la pasta- la pa:sta fatta in casa non sapevo perché \a Vitizzano chi faceva la pasta

\(ADA ==> ENI and making <sup>G6</sup>)

fatta in casa?^

\é:? La polenta i necci ( ) \i' minestrone

\(ADA moves hands )

\(VAL: positive head shaking and moves on chair)

VAL: hm =

ADA: = a? =

VAL: = si nun si (fanno) [( )]

---

<sup>G6</sup> She sits upright and opens her arms, like in a mild resignation.

ADA: [chi faceva le tagliatelle chi?  
VAL: si va ( ) [( )]  
ADA: [compravi li spaghetti potei comprá m ma- um- u'mmi ricordo neanco  
seramo mangiati gli spaghetti da ragazzi  
ENI: davvero zia?  
ADA: \MAI sempre polenta necci fagioli minestrone n'só  
\\(negative head shaking)  
e chi li- chi li c'era chi:\\  
\\(VAL: positive head shaking)  
la gallina l'ammazza'ano [per San Pietro e pel' Natale =  
VAL: [( )]  
ADA: = se c'era una gallina o un coniglio\\  
\\(VAL: positive head shaking)  
VAL: hm  
ADA: No: é terribile la miseria tutti no mia no' da soli  
\\quando io andai a Roma la piu' piccola avea dodic'anni  
\\(ADA ==> VAL)  
\\vera piccolina e per \\far la pasta \\la mamma  
\\(G7) \\(G8) \\(indicates up)  
REN: \\Dove lavora'ate voi [(piu' piccola)?  
\\(ADA ==> REN)  
ADA: [Sí \\Lí era pi- la piu' piccola di famigli[a  
\\(positive head shaking)  
REN: [(ancora) piu'  
piccola (che un) eravate voi?  
ADA: \\giá!  
\\(looks down at her hands)  
e: e li metteva \\un pezzo di legno lí e questa bimba \\dovea fá n'ovo di pasta  
\\(G9) \\(ADA ==> ENI)  
•  
le'e le figliole \\ricche com'erano ch'andavan'a collegi  
\\(ADA ==> VAL then ADA ==> ENI)

---

G7 Indicates the short height with the palm of the hand suspended and facing down.

G8 Gesture of rolling out the dough.

G9 Indicates toward her feet, where the piece of wood would have been.

pul- luci- senti \puliano le persiane puliano i pavimenti cuciano a macchina  
\\G10)

stiravano \TUTTO SAPAEANO FÁ Eni \TUTTO  
\\(sweeping gesture) \\G11)

la mattina quando s'andava a fá la spesa ^ch'io portavo \le borse no? (da quella)  
\\(arms down on the side, picking up the bags)

signora \la Borgo Pio lí dietro (del la) Borgo- la strada e 'l mercato era lí.  
\\G12)

\io li dissi SIGNORA COME MAI CHE  
\\(ADA ==> BOB)

\sa- sapeo che erano cosí ricchi  
\\(ADA ==> ENI)

no?

\COME MAI CHE GLI S- GLI DÁ A FÁ TUTT'ALLE SU BIMBE NO?  
\\(bends forward)

sanno fare tutto gli vá- dice \Ada  
\\(bends her head to the side)

•

\se un giorno le mie figlie fanno un matrimonio d'amore  
\\(slowly head up and down)

•

VAL: hh

ADA: con'impiegatuccio

o co'n'operaio

•

la famiglia \nun vá 'm malora perché loro enno abituate a tutto  
\\(negative head shaking)

•

m:?

---

G10 Starts to count each activity on her fingers with large movements, looking down to the left and to the right.

G11 Arms up and forward, gesture to underline what she said

G12 She indicates the place with her arm as being in front of her, beyond something else.

SE 'NVECE FANNO UN MATRIMONIO RICCO

[(si puo')]

ENI: [ Ma non ] d'amore

ADA: [No

VAL: [hh ha [ha ha ha ha ha

ADA: [CHE- ]CHE LI PÓ [TENÈ LA SERVA

REN: [( )]

ENI: [le du cose nun vann' assie[me

ADA: [NO

NO [CHE LI PÓ TENÈ LA SERVA

BOB: [hh hh

ADA: \LORO SANNO COMANDARE ALLA SERVA

\(ADA ==> BOB)

•

\e la casa nun vá male

\(ADA ==> ENI)

REN: (ha ragione)

ADA: Capito?

•

ve lo dico io vai TUTTO sapeano fá la figl- \la signorina m:- che p- ho saputo  
\(G13)

ch'é morta

la signorina- la seconda no quella che- sa la prima chi sposó?

un figliolo di un- dei piú grossi orefici di Roma di Corso Umberto e Corso

Vittorio Montani\

\(VAL: positivehead shaking)

lor'erano Montani e 'l figl- il giovanotto si chiamava Fornari

\l'argenterie i padroni EBREO

\(positive head shaking)

che dopo quanno vense 'l- che mandonno via tutti l'ebrei \loro vensero

\(indicates up on the left side)

n' America

---

G13 Starts pointing the finger in front of her. She does that for a while.

ENI: \oh[::

\(moves back on the chair)

ADA: [la signora (Lenata) col marito \vettero ritorn- in America dopo \quando

\(repeats indication)

\(G14)

passó tutta quella storia son ritor\inati a Roma ma (sennó) dovettero vení via

\(indicates with left hand toward right side)

dall'Italia

\tutti- tutti l'ebrei fuori dall'Italia funno mandati=

\(negative head shaking)

? : = ( )

ADA: anche loro ch'erano cosí ricchi

m:?

e le metteva l- me l- la ragaz- quella ch'é morta mettean fine sa'a \que tempi i p-

\(G15 )

gl'omini d- i pantaloni degl'omini \erano scozzesi

\(ADA ==> ENI)

a quadrucci [di stoffe no] tutti un colore

ENI: [si si si si ]

ADA: e quando il figlio- il fratello e il papá qua- stando 'n ufficio a volte si

consuma\vano qui

\(touches her own buttocks)

che \noi- io a v- pe te t'ho fatto tanti fondelli proprio fondelli \ma le 'nvece

\(ADA ==> REN)

\(ADA ==> ENI & VAL)

faceva prendeva 'l pezzetto del materiale uguale

\e 'nfilava tutt'i colori tutt'i colori tutt'i colori a

\(gesture to thread with right hand)

\questi buchi a questo fu[sto<sup>136</sup>

\(ADA ==> REN, then turns around)

ENI: [che non si vedeva niente=

ADA: \NIEN:TE \

\(ends up turned toward BOB) \ \(bumping over the table)

---

G14 Gesture for passing of time. Vertical circles in front of her face with one hand.

G15 Turns to BOB and slightly indicates his side, where he is sitting on the chair.

136 I do not understand this word.

Translation:

ADA: \When I went to Roma

\(ADA ==> VAL. All others turn to ADA)

VAL: \hm hm

\(positive head shaking)

ADA: the family had eight people\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

eight people

the family

VAL: hm=

ENI: = \she talks Italian\

\(ADA ==> ENI) \ (VAL: smiles)

ADA: not talking ( ) ((laughing)) hhh hé

ADA: \eight people in the family\

\(ADA ==> VAL) \ (VAL: positive head shaking)

right?\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

the younger one three females and a male\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

wife and husband and a son in law

the younger one was twelve\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

when I arrived to Rome

that I did not know not even to knead it

the pasta- the homemade pasta I did not know because\ at Vitizzano who would

\(ADA ==> ENI and making <sup>G6</sup>)

make homemade pasta?

\right? The polenta the necci ( ) \the minestrone soup

\(ADA moves hands)

\(VAL: positive head shaking and moves on chair)

VAL: hm =

---

<sup>G6</sup> She sits upright and opens her arms, like in a mild resignation.



ADA: = right? =

VAL: = yes we don't (do) [( )]

ADA: [who would have made the tagliatelle who?

VAL: we go ( ) [( )]

ADA: [you would buy the spaghetti you could buy m but- I don't I don't  
remember not even we had eaten spaghetti when we were kids

ENI: really aunt?

ADA: \Never always polenta necci beans minestrone I don't know  
\(negative head shaking)

and who- who was there who\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

the hen they would kill [for Saint Peter and for Christmas=

VAL: [( )]

ADA: = if there was a hen or a rabbit\

\(VAL: positive head shaking)

VAL: hm

ADA: No, it is terrible the extreme poverty everybody not just us

\when I went to Roma the younger one was twelve

\(ADA ==> VAL)

\she was small and to \make pasta \the mother

\(G7)

\(G8)

\(indicates up)

REN: \where you were working [younger?

\(ADA ==> REN)

ADA: [yes

ADA: \there was the mor- the younger of the fami[ly

\(positive head shaking)

REN: [(even) younger (than) you were?

ADA: \right!

\(looks down at her hands)

and she would put for her \a piece of wood there and this child \had to do an

\(G9)

\(ADA ==> ENI)

---

G7 Indicates the short height with the palm of the hand suspended and facing down.

G8 Gesture of rolling out the dough.

G9 Indicates toward her feet, where the piece of wood would have been.

egg of pasta

•

sh- and the daughters \who were so rich who would go to the private schools

\(ADA ==> VAL then ADA ==> ENI)

would cl- pol- listen \would clean the shutters would clean the floors would

\(G10)

machine-sew, iron, \everything they knew how to do, \everything Eni

\(sweeping gesture)

\(G11)

the morning when we went to do the shopping, that I was carrying \the bags

\(arms down on the side, picking up the bags)

right? (from that) lady \at Borgo Pio there behind (of the) Borgo- the street

\(G12)

and the market was there

\I said to my Madame why is it that

\(ADA ==> BOB)

\I kn- I knew that they were so rich

\(ADA ==> ENI)

you know?

\why is it that you s- you make them do everything, your daughters you know

\(bends forward)

the know how to do everything they have to- she says: \Ada

\(bends her head to the side)

•

\if one day my daughters will marry for love

\(slowly head up and down)

•

VAL: hh

ADA: with an poor employee

---

G10 Starts to count each activity on her fingers with large movements, looking down to the left and to the right.

G11 Arms up and forward, gesture to underline what she said.

G12 She indicates the place with her arm as being in front of her, beyond something else.

or with a worker

•

the family \\will not go to the dogs because they are used to everything  
\\(negative head shaking)

•

m:?

if instead they marry rich

[(we can)]

ENI: [ but not ] for love

ADA: [No

VAL: [hh ha [ha ha ha ha ha

ADA: [that-] that he can [keep her a maid

REN: [( )]

ENI: [the two things don't go toge[ther

ADA: [NO

NO [that he can keep her a maid

BOB?: [hh hh

ADA: \\they know how to rule the maid  
\\(ADA ==> BOB)

•

\\and the house does not go bad

REN: she is right

ADA: understood?

•

believe me, they knew how to do everything, the daug- \\ the lady who p- I have  
\\(G13)

heard that she is dead

the lady- the second not the one that- you know who the first one married? a son  
of one- of the biggest jeweller in Roma in Umberto Avenue and Vittorio

Avenue, Montani\\

\\(VAL: positive)

---

G13 Starts pointing the finger in front of her. She does that for a while.

they were Montani and the so- the young man was called Fornari

\\the silverwares, the owners, Jewish

\\(positive head shaking)

that after when it came the- that they sent all the jewish people away \\they came

\\(indicates up on the left side)

to America

ENI: \\oh[::

\\(moves back on the chair)

ADA: [Madame (Lenata) with the husband \\they came (came back)- in America

\\(repeats indication)

after \\when all of that had finished they ca\\me back to Roma but (otherwise)

\\(G14)

\\(indicates with left hand toward right side)

they had to get out of Italy

\\all- all the Jewish people were sent out of Italy=

\\(negative head shaking)

? : = ( )

ADA: even them who were so rich

m:?

and she would put l- to me l- the girl- the one who is dead they would put even

you know \\in those times the p- the

\\(G15 )

men d- the pants of the men \\were tartan

\\(ADA ==> ENI)

with little squares [ of cloths not ] all of one color

ENI: [yes yes yes yes]

ADA: and when the son- the brother and the dad whe- being in the office sometimes

they would get \\worn here

\\(touches her own buttocks)

that \\us- I to y- for you I have done many patches really patches \\but she

\\(ADA ==> REN)

\\(ADA ==> ENI & VAL)

instead would do she would take a small piece of the same material

\\and she would thread all colors all colors all colors to \\these holes to this

\\(gesture to thread with right hand)

\\(ADA ==> REN, then turns around)

---

G14 Gesture for passing of time. Vertical circles in front of her face with one hand.

G15 Turns to Bob and slightly indicates his side, where he is sitting on the chair.

fu[sto<sup>137</sup>

ENI: [that you couldn't see anything=

ADA: \Nothing \

\(ends up turned toward BOB) \ (bumping over the table)

#### **Narrative 4a**

ADA: quando [io

ENI: [QUELL'ER'UN ARTE zia =

ADA: = QUANDO IO ANDAVO a prende l'acqua Acetosa

BOB: cosa acetosa?

ADA: When [I

ENI: [That was an art aunt=

ADA: = When I was going to take the Acetosa water

BOB: What acid?

---

<sup>137</sup> I do not understand this word.

## Il Vecchio Fumatore

*(Vilma is in the kitchen, visible in the background. ADA turns to BOB. All others turn to ADA)*

ADA: sí liste!

Ernesto no?

BOB: sí

ADA: Ernesto il mi [frate]llo

BOB: [( )]

ADA: stava 'n una casa

garzone<sup>138</sup> \

*\(BOB & VAL: positive head shaking.)*

\quando si venne giù a Ghivizzano dalla montagna io ancora un'ero nata

*\(ADA ==> VAL)*

\andó garzone a questa casa lí di Dante

*\(ADA ==> BOB)*

che c'erano moglie e marito anziani però avevano un figlio in Columbia

---

<sup>138</sup> The Italian term "garzone" is very generic. I have chosen the translation "stable boy" because of the meaning of the overall discourse. I could have translated as "servant" too.

BOB: okey

ADA: Attilio

\e allora

\(ADA ==> VAL)

mi fratello ci andó perché avevano il \calessi- il calessino =

\(gesture to lead horses)

VAL: = hm =

ADA: = lu facea (le) faccende della (iasa:) stava laggiú e dormiva laggiú \BIMBO

\(bends forward and makes a negative head shaking)

pecchè lui era nato nel tre e quest' é nel quattordici proprio bimbo hm

•

\lo sai

\(ADA ==> BOB)

il vecchio poi il vecchio di novantatrè anni\

\(ENI comes to take plates)

di novantatrè anni

•

\si mis'a letto malato

\(ADA ==> ENI then ==> VAL and straightens herself up)

malato a letto ma aveva \NOVANTATRÈ ANNI

\(bends forward. VAL:positive head shaking)

•

e chiamarono \il dottore Stefanutti a que tempi era 'l dottore Stefanutti il \dottor'

\(ADA ==> BOB)

\(ADA ==> REN)

andó 'n camera e Dante \che era il figliolo \del vecchio

\(ADA ==> VAL) \ \(ADA ==> BOB)

lo accompagnó 'l dottore

•

e:: e'l dottore dice: \il vecchio sentiva perché era lí cosí no? il vecchietto

\G16)

ADA: novantatrè anni

•

\PRIMA COSA

\(looks forward)

---

G16 She erects herself up to the back of the chair, chin up, arms along her sides, like a person laying in bed.

\li disse 'l dottore al figlio  
 \\\(ADA ==> BOB)  
 \SMETTERE DI FUMARE  
 \\\(looks forward)  
 questo vecchietto dice che \\\mosse la testa cosí  
 \\\(moves the head from side to side)  
 \\\CHE HA' DETTO SOR DOTTORE  
 \\\(reclines head and chest to the left side, like to listen)  
 •  
 e:<sup>139</sup>  
 •  
 \non fumare piú  
 \\\(looks and bend forward)  
 •  
 perché vai perdendo l'occhi \\\mi caschin tutt'e \\\ddue  
 \\\(G17) \\\(G17)  
 \\\ma io \\\fumo .hhh [he \\\he he he he he he he he  
 \\\(ADA ==> BOB) \\\(G18) \\\(ADA ==> REN)  
 VAL: [hh hh hh hh hh hh  
 ?: [hh hh hh hh hh hh

Translation:

*(Vilma is in the kitchen, visible in the background. ADA turns to BOB. All others turn to ADA)*

ADA: yes listen!

Ernesto you know

---

<sup>139</sup> I translate liberally. The sound "éh" in Italian means many and diverse things according to the intonation and the context in which it is produced. In this case it request participation, an answer or sign of consent from the audience

<sup>G17</sup> Hands with fingers touching her eyes, then falling straight forward.

<sup>G18</sup> Straightens up and makes the gesture of bumping her fist on the table.



BOB: yes

ADA: Ernesto my [brot]her

BOB: [( )]

ADA: he used to live in a house

stable boy<sup>140</sup>

*\\(BOB & VAL: positive head shaking.)*

*\\when we came down from the mountain to Ghivizzano I still wasn't born*

*\\(ADA ==> VAL)*

*\\he went as a stable boy to this house there of Dante*

*\\(ADA ==> BOB)*

there were wife and husband who were elders but they had a son in Columbia

BOB: okey

ADA: Attilio

*\\so*

*\\(ADA ==> VAL)*

my brother went there because they had the *\\ gig-* the small gig=

*\\(gesture to lead horses)*

VAL: = hm =

ADA: = he was doing the chores of the house he lived there and slept there *\\still a*

*\\(bends forward and makes a negative head shaking)*

child because he was born in (19)three and this happens in (19)fourteen

really a child hm

•

*\\do you know*

*\\(ADA ==> BOB)*

the old man then the old man ninetythree years old

*\\(ENI comes to take plates)*

ninetythree years old

•

*\\he fall sick*

*\\(ADA ==> ENI then ==> VAL and straightens herself up)*

he was sick in his bed but he was *\\ninetythree years old*

*\\(bends forward. VAL: positive head shaking)*

•

---

<sup>140</sup> The Italian term "garzone" is very generic. I have chosen the translation "stable boy" because of the meaning of the overall discourse. I could have translated as "servant" too.

and they called \doctor Stefanutti in those times he was the doctor Stefanutti the  
\\(ADA ==> BOB)

\doctor went to the bedroom and Dante \who was the son \of the old man  
\\(ADA ==> REN) \\(ADA ==> VAL) \\(ADA ==> BOB)  
accompanied the doctor

•

a::nd and the doctor sa:ys \the old man was listening because he was there this  
\\G16)

way you know? the (little) old man

ADA: ninetythree years old

•

\\FIRST OF ALL  
\\(looks forward)

\the doctor told to the son  
\\(ADA ==> BOB)

\\(HE HAS) TO QUIT SMOKING  
\\(looks forward)

this little old man it is said that \he moved his head like this  
\\(moves the head from side to side)

\\WHAT DID YOU SAY SIR DOCTOR  
\\(reclines head and chest to the left side, like to listen)

•

can you imagine<sup>141</sup>

•

\do not smoke anymore  
\\(looks and bend forward)

•

because you are loosing your eyes \may they \both fall  
\\G17) \\(G17)

---

G16 She erects herself up to the back of the chair, chin up, arms along her sides, like a person laying in bed.

<sup>141</sup> I translate liberally. The sound "éh" in Italian means many and diverse things according to the intonation and the context in which it is produced. In this case it request participation, an answer or sign of consent from the audience

G17 Hands with fingers touching her eyes, then falling straight forward.

\but I \smoke .hhh [he \he he he he he he he  
\(ADA ==> BOB) \(\textsuperscript{G18}) \(\textit{ADA ==> REN})

VAL: [hh hh hh hh hh hh

?: [hh hh hh hh hh hh

### Ada at the "Signor Siti"

*(ENI is coming from the kitchen with a cup of coffee, and she passes it to BOB)*

ADA: \Tá! Sí tá, \Bá!

\(VAL ==> ADA, ADA ==> her plate) \(\textit{BOB takes the cup of coffee, then ==> ADA})

\Cinque giorni alla settimana

\(\textit{ENI goes back to the kitchen})

REN: ( )

ADA: \lo vado al signor siti

\(ADA ==> BOB)

BOB: Sí.

ADA: Non solo martedì, per il mio- cinque giorni.

---

<sup>G18</sup> Straightens up and makes the gesture of bumping her fist on the table.

\A eleventory, a l'una e me- \a l'undici e mezzo c'è il lonce  
 \(\(ADA ==> VAL) \(\(VAL: positive head shaking)  
 hum? \Quando siamo novanta persone, quando siamo cento persone, quando  
 \(\(ADA ==> BOB)  
 siamo ottanta, quando centoventi.  
 •  
 \tutt'i tavolini no? =  
 \(\(VAL: positive head shaking)  
 BOB: = \(\ ( )parla[(Ital-) Italiaio ( ) par]li Inglé?<sup>142</sup>  
 \(\(VAL ==> BOB)  
 ENI: \[Questo centro]  
 \(\(talking from the kitchen)  
 ADA: Inglese. Hh hh  
 ENI: Per l'anziani. ( ) ( )  
 ADA: Hm anziani. \Un dollaro e venticinque.  
 \(\(VAL: positive head shaking)  
 BOB: Ah sí? (Ma che í, ma che) ( )<sup>143</sup>.  
 ADA: \É. Chi non vuole nun- no é obbligato a pagá.  
 \(\(ADA ==> VAL)  
 VAL: Hu hu.  
 ADA: Right?  
 ENI: \[ ZIA::! ] L'avete presa la puntura per l'influenza?  
 \(\(From the kitchen. ADA ==> ENI)  
 ADA: [Io però:]  
 ADA: Sí.  
 ENI: (Okey)  
 ADA: Ho preso anche quella di l:- che dura dieci anni.  
 BOB: Oh I got that to do tomorr[ow].  
 ENI: [Contro la polmonite?  
 ADA: Sarà contro la polmonite me l'ha fatta il dottore quando m'ha fatto il check up.  
 ENI: Davvero?

---

<sup>142</sup> Here I cannot understand at all this phrase, but from the last word, and from the general sounding of it, I may guess that Robert is in some way teasing the others by saying a phrase in Piedmontese, which of course no one else can understand.

<sup>143</sup> Again I do not understand in which language is he talking.

ADA: Hu. \In una spalla qui.  
 \(\textit{touches her left shoulder with her right hand}\)

(1.7)

REN: Yeah.

ADA: Allora,

ENI: Zia dieci anni, quanti anni avete?

ADA: É dovea d'andá a novantadue a- al- ha ha ha  
 ha dieci anni, [ a novantotto ].

ENI: [vole- li dovete] dire di darvela  
 [( )] e farlo per cinqu'an[ni alla volta ].

ADA: [novantanove] [No: ottantanove], ottantanove, ci posso  
 arrivá a ottantanove?

ENI: Sí sí, ( [ ] ) sí.h[hh he] he ha ha ha ha

ADA: [Hu:?] \[É:: ? ]  
 \(\textit{VAL: positive head shaking}\)

ADA: [Po' ne faccio un'antra dopo.

BOB: [She's ( ) she is the matriarc of the family.

ADA: Dopo ne faccio un'antra.\

\(\textit{VAL smiles}\)

?: Hu hu

?: Hhh ha ha

ENI: Ha ha ha ha ha ha

ADA: \Senti, quando vado lá,  
 \(\textit{ADA ==> BOB, BOB ==> ADA}\)

•

dieci- a- alle undici io mangio. Io e nu- e un'antro uomo si mangia.

ENI: \Chi é quest'omo?  
 \(\textit{Still from the kitchen}\)

ADA: Nella cucina.

•

nella cucina la- la- la bossa ci dá a mangiá \nella cucina \e si mangia.  
 \(\textit{ADA ==> and indicates toward VAL}\) \(\textit{VAL: positive head shaking}\)

ENI: La (chi)?

ADA: All'undici e mezzo cominciamo a serví

•

ognuno al su posto,

\preempio va- se a me mi tocca l- il posto degli spaghetti, \quell'altro la carne,  
\(hands parallel on the table in front of herself, like to indicate a sector) \(\moves parallel  
hands toward left)

\quell'altro la verdura, \quell'altro il riso.  
\(moves hands more left) \(\moves hands more left)

\E si fa i piatti.  
\(ADA ==> BOB)

\E le c'è tre o quattro donne che le portano a tavolini  
\(indicates a semicircle in front of herself)

VAL: Hum.

ADA: Dopo io quell'uomo, perché ci hanno fatto mangiare prima, \si rimane lí,  
\(ENI comes back from the kitchen with a cup of coffee that she puts at her place on the table.)

perché quello che ci resta,

\chi ne vole ancora torna. \E allora così le- \quelle donne della cucina che  
\(indicates up) \(\ENI sits at the table) \(\ADA ==> ENI)

comandano vanno a mangiá \a sedé,  
\(indicates behind herself with the right hand)

ENI: \LA BOssa!  
\(smiling)

ADA: E noi si- e noi si rimane lí a servire,

\POI SI comincia, \a pulí tutto.  
\(ADA ==> VAL, her chin up) \(\brings hands to her chest)

Translation:

(ENI is coming from the kitchen with a cup of coffee, and she passes it to BOB)

ADA: \Tá! not tá, \Bá!  
\(VAL ==> ADA, ADA ==> her plate) \(\BOB takes the cup of coffee, then ==> ADA)  
\five days a week  
\(ENI goes back to the kitchen)

REN: ( )

ADA: \I go to the Senior Citizens (Center)  
\(ADA ==> BOB)

BOB: yes.

ADA: Not only on tuesday, for my- five days.

\\At eleven thirty, at one thir- \\at eleven thirty there is the lunch  
\\(ADA ==> VAL) \\(VAL: positive head shaking)

•

hum? \\Sometime there are ninety people, sometime one hundred people,  
\\(ADA ==> BOB)  
sometime eighty, sometime one hundred and twenty.

•

\\all the tables you know? =  
\\(VAL: positive head shaking)

BOB: = \\( )talk[( ) ( ) Do you] talk English?<sup>144</sup>  
\\(VAL ==> BOB)

ENI: \\[T h i s c e n t e r]  
\\(talking from the kitchen)

ADA: English. Hh hh

ENI: For the seniors ( ) ( )

ADA: Hm seniors. \\One dollar and twentyfive.  
\\(VAL: positive head shaking)

BOB: Oh yes? ( ) ( )<sup>145</sup>.

ADA: \\Right. Who does not want, does not have to pay.  
\\(ADA ==> VAL)

VAL: Hu hu.

ADA: Right?

ENI: \\[ Aunt! ] Did you take the shot for the flu?  
\\(From the kitchen. ADA ==> ENI)

ADA: [I though]

ADA: yes.

ENI: (Okey)

ADA: I also took the one of- that remain ten years.

BOB: Oh I got that to do tomorr[ow.

---

<sup>144</sup> Here I cannot understand at all this phrase, but from the last word, and from the general sounding of it, I may guess that Byron is in some way teasing the others by saying a phrase in Piedmontese, which of course no one else can understand.

<sup>145</sup> Again I do not understand in which language is he talking.

ENI: [Against the pneumonia?  
 ADA: It may be against pneumonia, the physician did it to me when he made me the  
 check up.  
 ENI: Really?  
 ADA: Hu. \Here in a shoulder.  
 \(\textit{touches her left shoulder with her right hand}\)  
 (1.7)  
 REN: Yeah.  
 ADA: So,  
 ENI: Aunt, ten years, how many years do you have?  
 ADA: Well it had to go until ninety-two to- to- ha ha ha ha ten years, [to ninety-eight].  
 ENI: [want- you should]  
 tell him to give it to you  
 [( )] and do it for five yea[rs at a time ]  
 ADA: [ninety-nine] [No: eighty-nine], eighty-nine, can I get to  
 eighty-nine?  
 ENI: yes yes, ( [ )] yes.h[hh he] he ha ha ha ha  
 ADA: [Hu:?] \[right?]  
 \(\textit{VAL: positive head shaking}\)  
 ADA: [Then I'll make another one after.  
 BOB: [She's ( ) she is the matriarc of the family.  
 ADA: After I make another.\.  
 \(\textit{VAL smiles}\)  
 ?: Hu hu  
 ?: Hhh ha ha  
 ENI: Ha ha ha ha ha ha  
 ADA: \Listen, when I go there,  
 \(\textit{ADA ==> BOB, BOB ==> ADA}\)  
 •  
 ten- at- at eleven I eat. I and an- and another man we eat.  
 ENI: \Who is this man?  
 \(\textit{Still from the kitchen}\)  
 ADA: In the kitchen.  
 •  
 in the kitchen, the- the- the boss gives us to eat \in the kitchen \and we eat.



*\(ADA ==> and indicates toward VAL) \ (VAL: positive head shaking)*

ENI: The (Who)?

ADA: At eleven thirty we start to serve

•

everybody at his/her place,

*\for example va- if I get t- the place of the spaghetti, \that other one the meat,  
\(hands parallel on the table in front of herself, like to indicate a sector) \ (moves parallel  
hands toward left)*

*\that other the vegetables, \that other the rice.  
\(moves hands more left) \ (moves hands more left)*

*\And we prepare the plates.  
\(ADA ==> BOB)*

*\And there is three or four women that bring them to the tables.  
\(indicates a semicircle in front of herself)*

VAL: Hum.

ADA: After I and that man, because they made us eat before, *\we remain there,  
\(ENI comes back from the kitchen with a cup of coffee that she puts at her place on the table.)*

because what has remained,

*\who wants more of it comes back. \And so the- \those women of the kitchen  
\(indicates up) \ (ENI sits at the table) \ (ADA ==> ENI)*

*who are in charge go to eat \sitting,  
\(indicates behind herself with the right hand)*

ENI: *\The (female) boss!  
\(smiling)*

ADA: And we- and we remain there to serve,

*\THEN WE start, \to clean everything.  
\(ADA ==> VAL, her chin up) \ (brings hands to her chest)*

## APPENDIX D

## INTERVIEW TO RICHARD.

This interview was done on the 11/15/94, between 5:00pm and 6:00pm. Following, I videotaped the Richard's family dinner. Richard is a third-fourth generation Italian American. He was born in Visalia, California. Today, he is a student at UCLA. Last academic year Richard was in Italy, as an exchange student, at the University of Bologna. He had learned Italian before, and today he talks it very fluently. This interview was done at our second encounter.

VAL: Where you always identified as American?

RIC: Yeah that's kind of- In Italy or here?

VAL: In Italy.

RIC: In Italy? Yeah, they always- a lot of times they thought, because of the way I look, I'm not what most people would think of when they think of Americans, so they would ask me a lot of times it- first they think I was Italian I think, because I .. was able to dress and kind of .. groom myself in a way, I kind of got into it. And then, they think I was- when I- as soon as I talked they knew I wasn't Italian from an accent, if I talked over for a while, so that came out, and then they'd say "(from) where are you? Are you Spanish? Are you?" A couple of times people said "are you Spanish? Are you French?" So they didn't associate me with America. And then I'd say "I'm American"



RIC: And to me that wasn't the nicest thing 'cause I was trying to disassociate myself (with) America. Honestly.

#### INTERVIEW TO RICHARD AND HIS PARENTS.

This interview was done on the 2/3/95, between 9:00pm and 11:00pm. We were in the living room of Richard's family's apartment. The parents, Karen and Martin, are third and second generation Italian Americans. Martin was born in Buffalo, New York, and came to live in California after marrying Karen. Karen was born in San Francisco. They have four sons. Richard is the younger. Karen and Martin do not talk any Italian.

MAR: {...} They were Italians, who had a lot of the culture, .. of, you know, the cooking, the religion, the closeness of the family, and the way they hu:: lived,

VAL: So you ar- you approve that Richard's learning Italian?

You like the fact that ( )

MAR: Oh yes, we were very happy that he could learn it- I always wanted to learn the language but, no one would speak it ...no I didn't think it was ba:d to [speak] it, ..but =

VAL: [hu hu]

MAR: = we were not taught.

VAL: Hu hu.

MAR: And hu:: I think it was- they were trying to assimilate into the American culture, and I guess they thought- hu:: that generation many thought that- how could- especially, they were being prejudiced against anyway, and it was hu:- so therefore, they were trying to make it easier for the children, hu a: hu: their children not to be associated with an ethnic group. They were p- taught to hu: in more or less hu:: hu pressured to be American, you should speak English an:d act like American and not act like that. That's the way it was in the: thirties and forties and fifties. And then, it wasn't until more recently that that's changed. Now people realize that, you know, it's good to have your culture and your history.

VAL: Hu.

MAR: See they were trying to make people who came here, ( ) act just like hu hu: as if they never had been anywhere else.

VAL: Hu hu, I see.

VAL: How do you see, hu: the misrepresentation, the representation of Italians in- e:: in the- in the films, in the media, you know that has- has been done, and is done even today. How do you feel about that?

RIC: Hu (I know). I think it's funny how every time you see- whenever the word Sicilian comes up, it's always immediately associated with the Mafia, and that's (this) huge rapr- exaggeration because- I mean I don't know the statistics but I would imagine that ninety, the ninety-five percent of the people that are Sicilian, I would assume that a huge group are not associated with the Mafia, it's just a small

percentage of (them). And I think it's funny how it's almost .. romanticized in the movies, how if- if there is a Sicilian who's the Ma- who is in the Mafia and is- he loves opera, he loves fast cars, and .. he got this great mansion and it's just kind of a silly thing. It's either that, or:: another image that I see a lot in the movie is this ... sort of a: New York type Italian, who is not very- like I have seen comedies like the- Eddy Murphy and he'll do exaggerations of what an Italian American is like, and is .. some uneducated ( ). Kind of:, I don't know, what do you think? ( )

KAR: ( )

RIC: Well .. just-

MAR: The movie tend to:: hu:: exaggerate Italians. They don't really portrait them hu: hu:: as- as normal (plain) peo[ple].

RIC: [And a lot of times, they don't show a lot of- ... a lot of aspects about it that are there. For example you always see Italians in films and they are sort of showing us carefree, .. non concerned people. They are never worried about business or: [ seri]ous things, always this kind of- hum::

MAR: [yeah]

VAL: ( )

RIC: Just.

MAR: Like a couple [( )] experience it's hu: ten, =

RIC: [not serious]

MAR: = fifteen years ago "The Godfather". That was a big, big movie in the United States, really big, successful. And look at what they portrayed ((laughing)), you know, and there were, I guess, three versions of it.

RIC: But usually, it's pretty flattering, the depiction it's not as bad [as s]ome other culture, I think.

MAR: [yeah]

MAR: Oh yeah, much better.

RIC: Whenever they show an Italian, ... hardly it's- it's usually not a villian- a villain, excuse me, and when it is a villain it's like the respectable villain.

KAR: ((laughing))

MAR: Most Americans, are completely hu: un hu: aware of the- all the contributions that Italian Americans have done, into this country. In the schools, in sciences, in art, in hu:: Marconi: and, I mean, just thousands of them, and in every different field, I mean not just- I mean, in music, you know, ( ) and all these-

INTERVIEW TO TONY.

Transcription.

This interview was done at my home on 11/20/94, between 5:20pm and 9:00pm (we also had dinner in the middle of it). Only me and Tony were present for most of the time. We saw the video of the dinner at Tony and Daniel's home (10/15/94) and used this as a base for comments and discussion of what had been going on that time. Tony is often referring to Luca and Paolo, who were present at the dinner, and to the "dialogue" Tony had with them at that time.

TON: There was a strange ... I was feeling very ambivalent about what they were saying. Especially when they started speaking- when they started singing in- using a few ( ), uf- af- us- using a few phrases in dialect, right? At that point ... I felt like ... they were ... in a way, they were demonstrating to me that .. they were more Italian, in a sense, than I was. Because I didn't feel as I could participate ... in these jokes that they were making. ... And: when someone's singing a song in dialect you can't just jump in, you don't know the song, right? So all a can do is stand by and watch as they ... kind of ... hu: ... ((laughing)) I'm not explaining myself very well and I know all these people are gonna be listening to these tape, but

VAL: No, [no, ((laughing)) no one will listen to this tape =

TON: [((laughing)) believe me.

TON: No: I felt ... I felt strange at that moment I felt, I'll admit it I felt a kind of jealousy, you know?

VAL: hhhh

TON: That, here I am, a someone who identifies themselves, someone who likes to identify themselves as someone who is Italian American. Not only Italian American



but someone who's from, who's family is from, Southern Italy and Naples, Calabria.  
Hhh And here were these people, who weren't even from Naples, except for Paolo  
who lived around there for a while, these people who are ... I .. did not identify with at  
all,

VAL: Hu.

TON: Being more ... Neapolitan .. than I was. =

VAL: ((laughing)) Hm, [they were not (really) Neapolitan, =

TON: [((laughing))

TON: = yeah but though- =

VAL: = By making those stupid thi:ngs. =

TON: = I know but, well that's- that's how I read it though. You know? That- ... and  
then I- I got jealous, I felt like ... (here) my- my sense of my identity, of who I am, in a  
way is being ... taken away.<not so much taken a way but being challenged, being  
challenged by these guys. Who I(hh)- ((smiling))

who I detest, you [know, who I (really) don't] =

VAL: [ ((laughing)) ]

TON: = [like and ho: hh hh]

VAL: [ ((laughing)) ]

TON: I'm thinking huahu these guys ... who- .. can I keep talking?

VAL: ((voice coming from farther away)) Yeah, [keep talking].

TON: [hu hu, okay] hhh

he he the[se guys w]ho are ... who ... are using all =

VAL: [ I listen ]

TON: = these stereotypes about ... where my family's from, these people who I don't really like at all ((clearing his throat)) they are ... even they, are more .. Neapolitan than I am.

TON: This guy- these guys are more Neapolitan than I am because they can have a bonding experience over some .. Neapolitan song and dialect, and I can't participate in this. And so, I just felt as if my identity in a way was being challenged and then I felt, at that point, very ... I felt at that point very American. I was thinking God, I'm- all I am is just American, I'm not special anymore, I'm not dif- different, there's nothing about me that is unique.

VAL: But you told me another thing the other (day), no? ... Namely that you could have .. told them .. answer them better if they had used some kind of ( ) that you had known, like, for example, if they had said something ... Tony Rigatoni in American and you would said your mo[ther- what?]

TON: [hhhh hh hh ] ho: I don't know. Hum: ... well ...  
yeah I mean kids in school would sa:y ((sing-song)) Tony Balloony Tony Maccaroni.  
((looks at me eating, and laughs)) That looks so disgusting.

TON: So I mean, yeah, people would say Tony Balloony, Tony Maccaroni, that's no big deal. Now ... right had they been ... yeah I guess what I said last time was ... these guys in a sense were making fun of me, I felt as if they were making fun of me, but in such a way, that I couldn't really respond, because I- I didn't know the language, that they were insulting me, ... Id- I didn't know- I didn't know how to use the language

that they were using. If someone challenges me in my own language, then I can respond, in a f- in a way which is familiar to me and which is easy to me. ... You know? So like I was saying before if someone says Tony Balloony, I can say, ho your mama's big fat phony, or something. But ... if these guys singing to me, in .. Neapolitan dialect, I mean, it ta- it would take a tremendous effort for me to reach back, deep into my mind, and remember some song that my father sang twenty years ago and they try to- you know. ((coughing))

TON: What- ... what bothered me was ... first of all that ... I was embarrassed at myself, for not being able to:- to::: fight back, in a way.

TON: Secondly, I- I- this thing- this is probably the most important thing which is, I really felt ... like my- like my identity- my- (like) identity, (that's a) big- .. big- was very important to me was being challenged. .. I do ... whether it's- you know, whether .. it's::: I don't know exactly how important being Italian American is to me,

VAL: Hu hu.

TON: Okay. But, I do know that .. I can say it, I can say I am Italian American, I can say my family's from Italy. .. I can use this lines right, about- "also where're you from?" You know I can say, "I'm from San Francisco" and everybody says "ho cool!", 'cause San Francisco's one of the coolest cities in the United States hhhh hh. And then I can say "yeah my parents were from Italy actually, you know" like "huahu, that's kind of cool!".

TON: In an interesting way, I wasn't so upset at them, ... like I said before, I was more upset at myself.

VAL: You told me that befor[e, yes.

TON: [for allowing myself to be so ... to be so hurt, to be so offended by these stupid, by these .. kind of insignificant comments. 'Cause it made me realize, that perhaps ((clearing throat)) this ... this ... identity I have constructed for myself, is nothing more than a mask. ... In a way it's- [it's really not (that) ( )]

VAL: [Is it something that you] are realizing just because you have been ... under observation by an anthropologist f[or a while?

TON: [No:, no no, I mean I thought- I thought about this. ... I have thought about this when I lived in Italy for:- when I lived in Bologna for like nine months or so.

INTERVIEW TO LISA & ALESSANDRO.

Transcription.

Lisa and Alessandro are a married couple of Italians living in Pasadena, at the California Institute of Technology's students' housing complex. Lisa is doing her Ph.D. at UCLA, in Mathematics. Alessandro is doing his Ph.D. in Chemistry at CalTech. They have been in the United States for almost three years, and they enjoy living here. They are from Modena, a city in the region of Emilia-Romagna, in particular an Emilian city. This interview was done on the 12/19/94. It was the third time I was meeting them, and we were on the way to become friends. We were in the common facilities of the housing complex, where there are a TV screen and VCRs, and couches and tables for communal activities. We were the three of us alone. It was done after dinner, between 9:00pm and 11:00pm.

VAL: Come vi sentite di fronte ... allo stereotipo degli Italiani negli Stati Uniti?

LIS: [No no.]

VAL: [ jus- ] [ e' tutto lo stere]otipo nel cinem[a ]e poi =

ALE: [io completamente:]

LIS: [No:]

VAL: = lo stereotipo che le altre persone ti presentano?

ALE: [Io completamente diverso perche' lo stereotipo viene =

LIS: [Entrambi

ALE: = soprattutto dal[la : : . . ]da un uomo del Sud emigrato=

LIS: [sí dal Sud]

ALE: = nel ventennio fascista.

LIS: [Sí.

VAL: [Hu hu.

ALE: Che e' un:

LIS: Quindi questo e' lo stereotipo del ci[nema insomma.

ALE: [e' lontano da me come puo' essere un Turco.

Insomma,

VAL: Hu hu.

ALE: Si lo stereotipo della: ... cos'e' l'uomo che mangia solo pasta al pomodoro, mai visto (dal film) (non l'ho) mangiata mai. hhh he'. ...

LIS: Ma io- cioe' questo stereotipo che viene dal film cioe' quello: che: non so' si fa la pizza: che s- rutta a tavola e gira in canottiera cioe' hai pres(h)en(h)te? Queste cose qui:: molto grezzo, m::: che parla con quell'accento che insomma io non penso di avere quell'accento lí ecco, anche. E:: low classe, molto low classe. Noi ci sentiamo molto lontani dallo stereotipo del film, quello che viene interpretato d'attori come:: c'era Kevin Kline che s'e' fatto un film: (appunto), quello no! "The Godfather" uguale e' lontano. Tutt'e due. Poi c'e' lo stereotipo secondo me degli Italiani, cioe' degli Americani che vedono gli Italiani, .. qui. Io mi sento diversa anche da quelli. Ancora secondo me perche':- perche' siamo diversi anche da quelli? Da- da[ll-

ALE: [Qual'e'

lo stereotipo? [Cioe' come] ti senti vista?

LIS: [ Ma sí : : ]

LIS: Avevo l'impressione .. loro appena ti vedono dicono ha: mafia, cioe' hanno la- questo:- se ci pensi, appena tu dici ha: Italiano ha: mafia, subito! =

VAL: = E' vero! .[. Mi succede anche a me.

LIS: [e quindi questo a me da' immediatamente fastidio perche' io vengo da una regione in cui la mafia proprio non c'e', non c'e' mai stata, non e' mai penetrata a Modena assolutamente.

VAL: Hu hu.

LIS: E nell'Emilia. Quindi questo mi urta tantissimo. Poi l'altra cosa che sanno dell'Italia e' che c'e' questa situazione politica ridicola, .[. che:

VAL: [Hu hu. E' vero ultimamente: tutti mi chiedono, ma perche', ma come mai, (com'e'),

ALE: Si:, [esc[ono articoli sul New York Times.

LIS: [Sí:

VAL: [mi da' anche 'm po' noia anche questa cosa qua.

LIS: Al punto che, poi gli Italiani sono considerati gente approssimati:va:,

VAL: Hu hu.

LIS: Che fa le cose un tanto al braccio, invece io faccio matematica e, nonostante che tu vedi casa mia inca[sinata, sono una persona ] precisa.

ALE: [ma sai ma questo forse e' vero], questo forse e' vero di tutti gli Stereotipi, insomma:

LIS: Certo, [cioe'.

ALE: [Uno si fa lo stereotipo dello Svizzero, poi incontra: duecento Svizzeri non ce n'e' neache uno come lo stereotipo.

LIS: Lo stereotipo di se'- e'- e' cosí, pero' in particolare io, mi sento- cioe' come ad esempio se tu mi dici lo stereotipo della donna Emiliana io, ci- ci cado dentro in pieno. Cioe' quella- quella un po' a cicciazza che pensa solo a mangiare no? sai a uscire, far casino. Questo stereotipo no? La- la *Risdora Mudnesa*<sup>146</sup>, come si dice, che

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<sup>146</sup> These two terms are in the Emiliano language.

passa il suo tempo a mangiare, a cucinare, io mi ci sento dentro, anche se non passo il mio tempo:- se ci pensi. Invece questo qui del- cioè' secondo me catturano, l'immagine dell'Italia del Sud. .. Quando (al cine) perche' dicono mafia, roba approssimativa:, tutto: gl- Italia:ni:, pensano soltanto così a divertirsi, a non lavorare, son sfaccendati, non so' Ale dai. ... Io ho sentito gente, ti giuro, gente della mia facoltà che mi ha detto "cavoli, io pensavo che gli Italiani fossero così poi invece ho conosciuto te che sei una persona intelligente non pensavo"<cioe' .. hanno fatto un comp- cioè' hanno fatto un complimento a me: e un: non-complimento a:- a tutto il resto degli Italiani.

VAL: Hu hu.

VAL: Una cosa che hai detto te prima interessante a m- per me e' che te: preempio quando ti fanno lo stereotipo: della donna Emiliana che mangia sempre ti ci senti dentro,

LIS: Sí.

VAL: Pero' in questo stereotipo qua [non] ti ci senti dentro.

LIS: [N:o]

LIS: No perch[e' secondo me:

ALE: [(ti fanno) ( )

((someone enters the hall))

VAL: Dove vanno?

ALE: E' c'e' la sala [per fare il bucato.

LIS: [a fare il bucato.....

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LIS: Ba': secondo me perche' qui catturano l'uomo del Sud, e io mi sento piu' vicina agli Americani che non agli uomini del Sud.

VAL: Hu.

LIS: Questa e': (come) come (se) ( )

VAL: Ti senti piu' vicina agli Americani che [alle p]ersone =

LIS: [Sí sí ]

VAL: = del Sud? [Questa e' na- molto forte come affermazione.

LIS: [A completa-

LIS: No: ma e' sicura!

VAL: Gli ItaloAmericani, com'e' che voi li vedete? Cioe', avete mai pensato a loro come:?

LIS: Guarda noi abbiamo avuto degli amici, vero Ale?

ALE: La Mina.

LIS: La Mina.

ALE: Mina.

LIS: Chi altro? Fammi pensare, abbiamo conosciuto anche qualcun altro? ...

ALE: M:: [ b e : , l a : N a t a ]lia se vuoi.

LIS: [Io sí, sí, ho conosciuto]

LIS: No, Natalia no, Natalia no:, non e' calcolata.

ALE: Sí sí.

LIS: E::: ho conosciuto anche due ragazzi, che sono con me al Ph.D., pero': io non li considero Italiani, gl'ItaloAmericani,

VAL: Hu hu.

LIS: Vero Ale non sono;

ALE: Ma, la Mina, che e' l'unica che ho conosciuto io, .. era una ragazza che:: e' cresciuta:: non so forse anche na[ta qui

LIS: [forse nata [qui, sí

ALE: [e' nata e cresciuta qui. I suoi in casa parlavano Italiano, quindi lei parla l'Italiano molto::

LIS: Molto ben[e ma con acce]nto, un po' d'accento ha.

ALE: [molto bene ]

ALE: Pero' lei e' andata a scuola, e' andata al college, come tutti gli Americani, ha fatto i date come gli Americani, ha mangiato Americano, ha visto film Americani e ... lei di cultura e' Americana, pero', ha questo mito dell'Italia, lei

[l'Italia, lei L'Italia l'ha vista solo in vacanza e la=

LIS: [Sí: (lei vuol) vivere- sí e' vero,

ALE: = vede come un paese molto bello, molto pittoresco, in cui tutti:: cioe' un po': ... l'ha vista da turista l'Italia,

VAL: Hu hu.

ALE: Non l'ha mai vissuta veramente.

LIS: Sí, e poi lei ha questo mito, dice voglio andare in Italia, voglio lavorare la', vivere la', e: l'impressione che faceva a me e' che non fosse lei ne carne ne pesce lei hai presente? Perche' noi siamo Italiani, non c'e' niente da fare, noi magari possiamo fingere di essere Americani, venire qui, lavorare come gli Americani, magari chiedere anche la green card, ma noi rimarremo Italiani non c'e' niente da fare. Invece lei e' nata da genitori Italiani qui, e poi ha fatto una vita da Americana, pero' non ha fatto, cioe' capito ha fatto solo meta' 'l passo, non ha fa- perche' lei ri- rigetta questa cultura, lei diceva che gli Americani, disgustosi, e:: m: m: [non (son altro capace)

ALE: [ Cioe' lei- lei ce l'ha anche detto  
una volta, una sera si e' ape[rta] ci ha detto che lei ... =

LIS: [Sí ]

ALE: = e' - era- era un po'::, insomma si sentiva rifiutata da tutti.

Translation:

VAL: How do you feel in front of ... the stereotype of the Italians in the United States?

LIS: [No no].

VAL: [j u s - ] [and the whole stere]otype in the cinem[a ] and=

ALE: [ I , t o t a l l y ]

LIS: [No]

VAL: = the stereotype that the other people offer to you?

ALE: [I feel totally different because the stereotype comes =

LIS: [Both

ALE: = especially fr[o m : : - . . ] a Southern man emigrated =

LIS: [yes from the South]

ALE: = during the two fascist decades.

LIS: [Yes.

VAL: [Hu hu

ALE: Who is one-

LIS: So this is the stereotype in the ci[nema, after all.

ALE: [it is far from me like a Turkish could be. After all,

VAL: Hu hu.

ALE: Yes the stereotype of the- ... what's it, the man that eats only pasta with tomato sauce, never seen (from the film) (I haven't) never eat it. hhh he'....

LIS: Well I- I mean this stereotype that comes from the films I mean the one that, I don't know, makes himself pizza, that burps at the table and walks around in vest., I mean, ((laughing)) do you know what I mean? This kind of things, very uneducated, m::: who talks with that accent that, I mean, I don't think to have that accent, you know, in addition. And:: low class, very low class. We feel very far from the stereotype of the films, the one which is impersonated by actors like- there is Kevin Kline who has done a film, that's it, that one right? "The godfather", the same, it is far. Both of them. Then there is the stereotype, I think, of the Italians, I mean, of the Americans how they see Italians. .. here. I feel different even from those ones. Again I think because- why are we different also from those ones? From- [From

ALE: [Which  
stereotype? [How do you] feel that you =

LIS: [ you know ]

ALE: = are seen?

LIS: I had the feeling ... as soon as they see you they say ho: Mafia, I mean they have the- this- if you think about it, as soon as you say- ho: Italian ho: Mafia, immediately!

VAL: It's true! .[. It happens to me as well.

LIS: [so, this immediately bothers me because I come from a region in which there is absolutely no Mafia, there has never been, it never penetrated in Modena at all.

VAL: Hu hu.

LIS: And in Emilia. Thus this really annoys me. Then the other thing they know about Italy is that there is this ridiculous political situation. [. that-

VAL: [It's true, lately everybody asks me , but why, but how comes, (how is it),

ALE: Yeah, [they ma[ke articles on the New York Times.

LIS: [Yes

VAL: [It's bothering me a bit this thing too.

LIS: To the point that, then the Italians are considered to be approximative people,

VAL: hu hu.

LIS: That does things *paying something for each arm length*<sup>147</sup>, instead I am a mathematician and, apart from the fact that you see my home in a me[ss, I am a precise person.

ALE: [But then, you know, maybe this is true, maybe this is true of all the stereotypes, after all

LIS: Of course, [I mean.

ALE: [One makes himself the stereotype of the Swiss, then he meets two hundreds Swiss people and there is not even one like the stereotype.

LIS: The stereotype in itself- is- is like this, but in particular for me, I feel- I mean like, for example, if you tell me the stereotype of the Emilian woman, I do- I do fit in it completely. I mean the one- the one a bit *fatty*<sup>148</sup> who thinks only about eating,

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<sup>147</sup> I really do not know how to translate this in English, since it is an idiomatic expression. I welcome suggestions. It is supposed to give the idea of indeterminacy. Instead of saying, for example, 1\$ for 30 cm, which would be an exact measure, we say "something for an arm length".

<sup>148</sup> Here I am translating an Emilian term, which I suppose I understand.

right? You know, to go out, make a fun mess. This stereotype, right? The- the *Risdora Mudnesa*<sup>149</sup>, like we say, who passes her time eating, cooking, I can see myself in it, even if I am not passing my time- if you think about it. On the contrary this one of the- I mean, I think that they capture, the image of Southern Italy. .. When (at the cinema) because they say Mafia, approximative stuff, the whole, the- Italians, they only think, like, to have fun, to avoid work, they are idle, I don't know, Ale<sup>150</sup> come on. ... I have heard people, I swear, people in my department who told me "the heck, I thought that the Italians were like this, then instead I met you who are an intelligent person, I didn't think". I mean .. they made me a compl- I mean they made me a compliment and a non-compliment to- to all the rest of Italians.

VAL: Hu hu.

VAL: Something you said before that was interesting to m- to me is that you, for example, when they make you the stereotype of the Emilian woman who eats always , you feel you fit in it,

LIS: Yes.

VAL: But in this stereotype here you [don't] feel you fit.

LIS: [ N:o ]

LIS: No, becaus[e I think

ALE: [(They make you) ( )

((someone enters the hall))

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<sup>149</sup> An Emilian term. I am not sure of the translation this time. "Mudnesa" means probably "Modenese", namely, from the city of Modena.

<sup>150</sup> Shortened form for the name Alessandro.

VAL: Where are they going?

ALE: Well there is the room [to make the laundry.

LIS: [to make the laundry.

LIS: Well, I think because here they capture the Southern man, and I feel nearer to the Americans that to the Southern men.

VAL: Hu.

LIS: This is (like) like (if) [( )

VAL: [you feel nearer to the Americans that [to the pe]ople in the South? [This is an- very strong =

LIS: [Yes yes ] [a complet-]

VAL: = as a statement.

LIS: No: but it is for sure!

VAL: The Italian Americans, how do you see them? I mean, have you ever thought about them like?

LIS: See, we have had some friends, right Ale?

ALE: Mina.

LIS: Mina.

ALE: Mina.

LIS: Who else? Let me think, we met someone else too?...

ALE: M:: [ w e l l : , Nata]lia if you want.

LIS: [I do, yes, I have met]

LIS: No, not Natalia, not Natalia, she doesn't count.

ALE: Yes yes.

LIS: Hum::: I know also two boys, who are with me in the Ph.D., but:: I do not consider them Italians, the Italian Americans.

VAL: Hu hu.

LIS: Right Ale they are not;

ALE: Well, Mina, which is the only one I have known, .. she was a girl that:: has grown up, I don't know, maybe also b[orn here

LIS: [maybe she is born [here, yes

ALE: [She is born and grown up here. His family at home would talk Italian, so she talks Italian very::

LIS: Very wel[l but with an acce]nt, she has some accent.

ALE: [ V e r y well ]

ALE: Though she went to school, she went to college, like all the Americans, she had her dates like the Americans, she ate American, she saw American films and ... she is American by culture, but, she has this myth of Italy, she, [Italy, she =

LIS: [Yes (she wants) to live- yes that's true

ALE: = saw Italy only in holiday and she sees it as a very beautiful country, very picturesque, in which everybody- I mean a bit- ... she saw Italy as a tourist,

VAL: Hu hu.

ALE: She never really lived it.

LIS: Yes, and also she has this myth, she says "I want to go in Italy, I want to work there, live there", and: the impression she was making on me is that she wasn't neither meat or fish<sup>151</sup>, can you see it? Because we are Italians, there is nothing to do, maybe

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<sup>151</sup> Another idiomatic expression, to say that someone or something is not clearly defined, does not have a defined personality or trait. It is used often to indicate children, because they haven't still reached a definition of themselves, typical of adulthood.



we can feign to be Americans, maybe even ask the green card, but we will remain Italians there is nothing to do. She, instead, is born from Italian parents here, and then she made the life of an American, but she didn't do, I mean, you understand, she made only half step, she didn't ma- because she refuses this culture, she would say that "the Americans, disgusting", Hum::: [not ( )

ALE: [Well she- she even told us once, one evening  
she op[ened] herself =

LIS: [yes ]

ALE: = she told us that she ... is- was- was a little::- well she felt refused from both of them.

## APPENDIX E

**List of the Ital-English terms found in the analysis of the recordings:**

The Ital-English terms are shown first, followed by their English (sometime Spanish) derivation and by their Italian counterparts.

<u>Bisne</u>	shop,business	negozio, azienda
<u>Bossa</u>	female boss	padrona, capo
<u>Busse</u>	autobus	autobus
<u>Klino</u>	I klean	pulisco
<u>Carro</u>	car	auto, macchina
<u>Ceccap</u>	check up	controllo, check up
<u>Compiuri</u>	computer	calcolatore elettronico
<u>Cosa gli passa</u>	que passa (Spanish), what's the matter	che c'e'
<u>Eleventori</u>	eleven-thirty	undici e mezza
<u>Esaminazione</u>	exam (in school)	esame
<u>Farma</u>	farm	fattiria
<u>Free</u>	free (code-switch)	gratis
<u>Frisato, Frisata</u>	frozen, ice-cream	gelato
<u>Iarda</u>	yard	giardino
<u>Ileventory</u>	eleven-thirty	undici e mezza
<u>Liste!</u>	listen!	ascolta!
<u>Lunce, Lonce</u>	Lunch	pranzo

<u>Markete</u>	Market	mercato
<u>Miri, Miti</u>	meeting	riunione, incontro
<u>Norseri</u>	nursery	vivaio
<u>Nada, Nata</u>	(Spanish), nothing	niente
<u>Orangiusse</u>	orange juice	succo d'arancia
<u>Passo</u>	passo	lasciapassare, permesso
<u>Pipa</u>	pipe	sistola, tubo
<u>Real (rial) Esté</u>	real estate	beni immobili
<u>Sanguicce</u>	sandwich	panino, sandwich
<u>Signor Siti (city)</u>	senior citizen (center)	centro per anziani
<u>Site! Side!</u>	sit!	siedi!
<u>Stoppe di Luce</u>	street light	semaforo
<u>Tankesgivi, Tenkesgivi</u>	thanksgiving	ringraziamento
<u>Tappo Sorlain</u>	top sorlain	filetto
<u>Ticce</u>	teacher	insegnante, maestro
<u>Tomata</u>	tomato sauce	salsa di pomodoro
<u>Turco</u>	turkey	tacchino
<u>Viski</u>	whisky	whisky
<u>Vegetable (il)</u>	vegetable	la verdura

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