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En convenio académico con la Facultad Regional Villa María

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA

Tesis de Licenciatura

THE PORTRAYAL OF THE ITALIAN IMMIGRATION IN THE FILM "GOLDEN DOOR": STEREOTYPES, DISCRIMINATION, PREJUDICE AND GENDER.

Tesista

PROFESORA CINTIA MONTELEONE

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Candidate

PROFESORA CINTIA MONTELEONE

Tutor

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“I came to America because I heard the streets were paved with gold. When I got here, I found out three things: First, the streets weren’t paved with gold; second, they weren’t paved at all: and third, I was expected to pave them.”

Foreword

As the daughter of an Italian immigrant, I have been surrounded by Italian customs and culture. I have been surrounded by many immigrants of different ages that came to our country to seek better lives. From their poor villages and towns in Italy they came (the ones I know were mostly from Calabria) often settling in places where their *paesani* had been before them. The transatlantic crossing for most of them was hard because of the conditions of the ship. Then once here, they missed their homeland and they started to gather with their *paesani* to keep on with their traditions, creating many Italian associations to venerate the same saints as in their homeland.

In the case of my own family, my grandfather was the first one to come to Argentina. He left his wife and his two children in Italy to try his luck in America. Then he asked them to come too and they had to leave all their relatives in Rombiolo, Calabria, to start a new life in Argentina. When they arrived, they also gathered with other *paesani* from the same town in Italy and built an Italian association called Rombiolese Association where there have been not only courses of studies but also different types of events and celebrations which have been organized to venerate their saints Saint Michelle and Saint Raphael for about 30 years.

I have been a member of this association since I was a girl and I have grown up inside its Italian culture and customs (the folk music, the food, the language). I have heard the stories of many Italian immigrants who left their land. I have heard my own family's story many times and I can always detect the sadness in their eyes when they tell their experience of their departure, the voyage and the arrival. I have always heard this part of the story, the one that belongs to the Italians who migrated. Seven years ago, I had the possibility of traveling to Italy for the first time and visiting the town of my origins and meeting my relatives in

Calabria. There my father's cousin, Lina, told me she also still remembered when my father, together with his mum and sister, left. Although Lina and my dad were both about four years old, she still could recall their preparations for the trip and the hard moment of seeing the ship moving slowly from the port. She had her eyes full of tears when she told me about those memories.

All these Italians' experiences have always made me feel proud of my origins. I deeply admire all those immigrants who had to leave everything to start all over again in a new land. When I had to choose the topic of my dissertation I knew I had to write about something that I really like and definitely my family's story of immigration inspired me to write and learn even more about Italian immigration.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to all my faithful family - here in Argentina and in Italy. Primarily, to the four most important Italian immigrants in my life: My "nonno" –grandad-, "nonna" – grandma – my aunt and my father. They came from Calabria many years ago and they did experience the hard process of immigration. They were the ones who transmitted not only the traditions and the love for Italy but also the respect and admiration for Italian immigrants. Then, it is also dedicated to my mother, who always insisted on me to study and write this paper to finish my course of studies; and my grandmother, who used to be proud of me and my studies.

I want to dedicate it to my husband too. He was always there for me, giving me his support and optimism. His unconditional loyalty encouraged me to go on whenever I encountered any difficulties in this long and hard but challenging process of studying and writing this paper. Finally, it is to the pillar of my life, my daughter Fiamma who was by my side all the time, first just sitting on my arms, then crawling near me and finally walking and jumping around me but always helping me to understand that finishing a dissertation with a 4 year-old-son may not be impossible…

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Through the writing of this dissertation I have realized that many people cared for me, and they showed it. Some of them did it straightforwardly, for instance, helping me to get the film. While some others just taking care of my file by saying "have you saved it?" when it was there in the computer or asking me how I was doing with my writing and giving me support to continue. To all of them, my most sincere and deepest thanks too.

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I should also like to thank one of my first great teachers, Silvia Gencarelli who many years ago stirred up my desire to study and become a teacher of English one day and who now has contributed with her profound observations and corrections so that I can improve my paper. I would also like to thank my colleague and friend, Dr. María Fernanda Del Rio for her support and help.

My sincere and long-lasting gratitude to my husband; he was the one who believed in me all the time. About a year ago, when I thought I would not be able to do this dissertation, he said I could reach any goal I set and here I am finishing my paper. My thanks for his unconditional love, for his patience, for helping me sit down and write while he was in charge of the baby and the many other things I could not do.

I must not only thank my daughter for her patience but also say sorry to her for all the times I said nervously “No, I can’t. I’m writing”.

Last but not least, my most heartfelt thanks to both my mum and dad, who when I was a little girl, even though I used to go crying, decided I had to continue studying English.

Abstract

From 1880 to 1921 thousands of Italians, most of whom were peasants from the South, emigrated to America. Italy was the only nation which sent that large number of immigrants in such a short period of time. Even though most of these Italians had the intention to return to their hometown, finally, many of them stayed in the USA. There are plenty of stories about immigrants that portray the hardships they suffered in Italy – poverty and unemployment– and the difficulties they experienced when they migrated to America. For them, migrating to the "land of hope" was their only choice to seek a better life. Crialese's film *Golden Door* (2006) is about Italian immigration. It tells the odyssey of the Sicilian Mancuso family who leave their small superstitious town to go to the New World. The sad departure, the hard voyage and passage are parts of the story of many immigrants' lives. This dissertation purports to explore some of the patterns of the Italian immigration to America that are present in the film (such as stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice and gender inequities), in order to determine the extent to which *Golden Door* is an accurate representation of the Italian immigration to America as has been reconstructed through historical research. For this purpose, content analysis is the research method used to elicit the relevant data to address the research question. Characters in the film are analyzed, compared and contrasted. Through this process, patterns of the Italian immigration such as stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination and gender roles in the character's behaviors, attitudes and beliefs are identified. This data is compared and contrasted with mainstream historical reconstruction of the Italian immigration to America in order to test the research hypotheses. The study concludes that, despite its poetic and fictional elaboration, *Golden Door* is an accurate representation of Italian immigration to America. The film portrays some of the patterns of immigration such as stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice and gender and accurately depicts the immigrant experience – the heartbreaking departure, the tough voyage and the traumatic and cruel arrival.

Resumen

Entre 1880 y 1921 muchos italianos, en su mayoría campesinos del Sur, inmigraron a América. Italia fue la única nación que envió un número tan grande de inmigrantes en tan corto tiempo. Aunque la mayoría de estos italianos tenía la intención de volver a su ciudad natal, finalmente, muchos de ellos se quedaron en los Estados Unidos de América. Existen muchas historias de inmigrantes que retratan la dura vida que padecieron en Italia – la pobreza y el desempleo – y las dificultades que tuvieron que enfrentar cuando emigraron a América. Para ellos, emigrar a la "tierra de la esperanza" era su única opción para obtener una mejor vida. La película de Crialese *Golden Door* (2006) trata sobre la inmigración italiana. Narra la odisea de la familia siciliana Mancuso que deja su pequeño pueblo supersticioso para embarcarse hacia el nuevo mundo. La triste despedida, el duro viaje en barco y el paso hacia el nuevo país son partes de la historia de muchas de las vidas de inmigrantes. Esta disertación se propone explorar algunos de los patrones de la inmigración Italiana a América que están presentes en la película (tales como estereotipos, discriminación, prejuicio y género) para determinar hasta qué punto *Golden Door* es una representación certera de la inmigración italiana a América tal cual la ha reconstruido la historiografía. Con este fin, se utilizó el análisis de contenido como método de investigación. Se analizaron, compararon y contrastaron los personajes de la película a los fines de identificar patrones de la inmigración italiana tales como estereotipos, prejuicio, discriminación, roles de género en los comportamientos, actitudes y creencias de los personajes. Se comparó y contrastó la información recopilada con las reconstrucciones históricas de la inmigración italiana a los Estados Unidos a los efectos de testear las hipótesis. Se concluye que a pesar de la elaboración poética y novelada de la película, *Golden Door* es una representación fidedigna de la inmigración Italiana a América. La película representa algunos de los patrones de la inmigración tales como estereotipos, discriminación, prejuicio y género y describe atinadamente la experiencia de la inmigración italiana – la partida dolorosa, el duro viaje en barco y el traumático y cruel arribo.

Key words

immigration, Italian immigration, Golden Door, stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice, gender, Italy, transatlantic crossing, homeland, America, a new life, departure, voyage, arrival, leave everything, hometown, USA, poverty, unemployment, difficulties, migrate, migrating, land of hope, better life, New World, historical research, immigrant experience

Palabras claves

inmigración, inmigración Italiana, Nuevo Mundo, Nuovomondo, estereotipos, discriminación, prejuicio, género, Italia, cruce transatlántico, tierra natal, America, una nueva vida, partida, viaje, arribo, dejar todo, Estados unidos, pobreza, desempleo, dificultades, migración, emigrar, esperanza, nueva vida, investigación de historia, experiencia de inmigrantes

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

Before the 1870s only few Italians had travelled to areas outside Europe. However, between the years 1880 and 1921 over four million Italians, mostly with a rural background, were recorded as entering the United States. There was no other ethnic group that had sent so many immigrants in such a short period of time. Most of the Italians that migrated to the United States were men from the south of Italy. They were Neapolitans and Sicilians from the various provinces of Abruzzi, Apulia, Basilicata, and Calabria. The majority of them had intended to return to Italy after making some money. However, many of these Italians eventually stayed in America (Daniels, 1990, p. 188).

Many authors have written about what immigrants had to leave behind at home in Italy and the suffering and discrimination they encountered in the United States. In their homeland Italians endured poverty, unemployment (or underemployment), high mortality, little or no medical care and schooling, poor housing, semi-starvation, rigid class structure, and exploitation (Mangione, 1969, p. 25). As Woetzel (2004) argues: "When Italian Unification provided the opportunity for emigration, by allowing freedom of movement to peasant families, then Italians answered the call for labor in abundance – especially to America" (p. 137). For these Italians migration was an opportunity for liberation; the hope for a better life. In other words, the United States was envisioned as the land of opportunity, "the New World" where the "streets were paved with gold."

The film from Italian-born but American-trained Emmanuele Crialese, *Golden Door/Nuovomondo* (2006), is a movie about the Italian immigration. It is an exploration of an immigrant's ordeals, adventures and dreams. Some version of this immigrant's tale – setting out from the old country, crossing the Atlantic in steerage, arriving at Ellis Island – is part of the family history of millions of Americans. The film is set in the late 1900s and the story documents the journey of Salvatore Mancuso (Vincenzo Amato), his mother, Fortunata (Aurora Quattrocchi) and his two sons, one of whom is mute, and a couple of women. They all decide to leave their hardships in a rural and superstitious village in Sicily to seek a better life in the United States. At a shipyard, the family meets an Englishwoman named Lucy (Charlotte Gainsbour) who patently differs from the typical image of an Italian immigrant woman (Morris, 2007, para. 4).

The film comprises three parts of approximately equal length: the first is located in Sicily and depicts the Mancuso clan's harsh but magical life in the mountains, their decision to emigrate and the leave-taking; the second part of the film is their transatlantic voyage in the slave-like confinement of a lurching ship, the passage to the U.S.A; the final section of the movie is the arrival at Ellis Island, which is known as "the Isle of Tears". It is the purpose of this dissertation to explore the Italian immigration to the United States as featured in the film *Golden Door*, with a view to addressing issues such as discrimination, stereotypes, prejudice and gender.

1.2. Research question and hypotheses

This dissertation is informed by the following research question:

To what extent is the film *Golden Door* an accurate representation of the Italian immigration to the United States of America as has been reconstructed by historical research?

Fictional and poetic elements notwithstanding, the film *Golden Door* can be regarded as an accurate representation of the Italian immigration to the United States of America as has been reconstructed by historical research.

Subsidiary hypotheses:

There are many patterns of the Italian immigration to the United of States featured in the story of the immigrants in *Golden Door* which have been reconstructed by historians throughout the twentieth century. The following research paper will address three main features of Italian immigration which have been accurately depicted in the film *Golden Door*:

1) discrimination and prejudice

2) stereotypes and stereotyping

3) gender inequities

1.2 Research methodology

Content analysis has been selected as the research method to elicit the relevant data to address the research question. Characters in the film *Golden Door* will be analyzed, compared and contrasted. Through this process, patterns of the Italian immigration such as prejudice and discrimination, gender roles and stereotyping in the characters' behaviors, attitudes and beliefs will be identified. On the other hand, historical reconstructions, theories and interpretations by different authors and experts in the field will also be presented, explained,

compared and contrasted in order to determine the extent to which the film *Golden Door* can be regarded as an accurate representation of Italian immigration to the United States. Finally, observations and personal critical comments will be given en route and the conclusions drawn by the researcher will be dealt with at the end of the study.

1.4 Organization of the present work

This paper will be organized according to the conventions of the genre. Following this introduction, the body of the dissertation will be organized in different chapters. Chapter 2, the Literature Review, is divided into sections and provides the historical background to the film and the relevant theoretical background for the research. The historical background will provide the reader with a general overview of different aspects of immigration: Reasons for emigrating, how Italians emigrate, and problems they face when they leave and go to the New World. Far from being exhaustive, this section will attempt to provide the reader with historical and social aspects that may have influenced the director of the film.

Following the literature review, the analysis of the film will explore the immigration depicted in the movie and the extent to which it maps onto the historiographical reconstructions of the phenomenon. *Golden Doors* will be explored in relation to the following concepts: stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination and gender, and will attempt to demonstrate in which ways such concepts are traceable in the main characters of the film. The methodology used in this section will be based on content analysis (Ari, Jacobs & Razaviah, 1996). The characters of *Golden Doors* will be analyzed, compared and contrasted in the light of the proposed theoretical framework. Through this process, the characters' behaviors, attitudes, beliefs and language will be taken into account to corroborate the hypotheses propounded.

The final chapter will summarize the findings of the analysis of the film, address the hypotheses laid down in the introduction, and state some of the limitations of the present study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Immigration

People have always moved from one country to another. They have sometimes sought places with more food or with better economic conditions. They have also moved in order to escape poverty or because they have been forced to flee from invaders who have taken control over their territory. According to the literature, human beings move from their homelands to live in a new country for two main reasons. The first one is that negative conditions in their hometown push them to emigrate. These are called "push factors." Poverty, religious persecution, or political oppression can push human beings to leave their native land or region. The second reason for migration is that positive conditions in the new land pull them to the new country, generally referred to as "pull factors." People usually move to new territories in order to seek opportunities which do not exist in their native lands. Push and pull factors are believed to work together (Burgan, 2005, p. 5).

Extreme hardship, war, or oppression can sometimes force people to flee their homeland. These immigrants to new countries are called refugees. Large groups of refugees might leave to new countries in search of better conditions during times of war or famine. From the earliest recorded history refugees have been on the move. Even today, groups of refugees are widely known as being forced to move from one territory to another (Burgan, 2005, p. 5-6).

2.1.1 Italian Immigration: General Overview

Many European countries have suffered large population losses. Italy is widely known as a country with a long history of emigration. Italian emigration was moderate compared to other countries in Europe until the 1870s. About a third of all emigrants from Italy stayed in Europe. As they did not dare the long journey across the ocean, they opted to move to neighboring countries.

The "Italian diaspora" is the term which refers to the Italian immigration phenomenon of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Italian diaspora concerned almost 26 million Italians and it is considered the biggest mass migration of contemporary times (Cohen, 1995, p. 114). According to Sori, (as cited in Cohen, 1995, p. 114) what was particular about the Italian migration was its variation over time in terms of types of migrations, modalities, volume, intensity, sources and destinations. This large-scale migration of Italians away from Italy occurred in several distinct periods:

The first period of mass migration (approximately half the total emigration) took place between 1876 and 1914 (Cohen, 1995, p. 114). By 1870, Italy was united under an Italian government. Independence and unity changed the lives of many Italian citizens, especially the peasant farmers of the southern region of Italy. With the new government, Italians of the south were finally free to travel. That legal freedom together with several other important factors seemed to have resulted in mass emigration over the following decades (Burgan, 2005, p. 28). The second wave, which was a period of low emigration, occurred between 1915 and 1945 (Cohen, 1995, p. 114). The number of immigration fell slightly primarily because of World War I. The war disrupted travel between Europe and the United States.

However, still, 1.1 million Italians travelled to America between 1911 and 1920 (Burgan, 2005, p. 42). The last wave of Italian emigration (the so-called period of renewed migration) ocurred after the end of the World War II. This last period was from 1946 to 1976 and it accounted for 25 per cent of the total (Cohen, 1995, p. 114). Many people dreamed of a fresh start in a new homeland after six years of war. Many of the Italians and other Europeans who came to America after World War II were called displaced persons or DPs because the war had displaced them or left them homeless (Burgan, 2005, p. 69).

2.1.2 Statistics on Italian Immigration

It has been reported that from 1876 to 1976, of the 26 million emigrants, some 52 per cent moved to other countries in Europe (13.5 million), 44 per cent to America (6 million to North America, 90 per cent of these to the United States, and 5 million to South America), 2 per cent to Africa and 1.5 per cent to Oceania, mainly Australia. More than half of the Italians that left their homeland remained abroad and did not return to Italy (Vecoli, as cited in Cohen, 1995, p. 114).

It is also believed that the high rate of return was another basic fact about Italian emigration. Although statistics are not particularly precise, in the period that comprised from 1905 to 1976, it has been stated that more than 8.5 million re-migrated. It is estimated that at least half of the number of all emigrants returned after shorter or longer sojourns abroad (Briani, 1970; Cerase, 1975 as cited in Cohen, 1995, p. 114).

2.1.3 Conditions in Italy

Between the 1850s and 1860s, Italians in the north and centre of Italy continued fighting to end foreign control of their homeland and they finally achieved it in 1870. The country was united under an Italian government. Independence and unity represented changes for many citizens in Italy, especially the peasant farmers who lived in the Mezzogiorno, the south of the country. Naples, Sicily and Sardegna were part of this region. With the new government, Italian people in the Mezzogiorno were free to travel, a lack of political restrictions which along with many other key factors, led to mass emigration over the next years (Burgan, 2005, p. 28).

2.1.4 Life in the South

Traditionally, the south of Italy had always been more backward and underdeveloped than the central and northern part of the country. For centuries, most of the Italians in the south of Italy had been tenant farmers, who raised crops on lands that were property of aristocrats. Most of these farmers were uneducated and finding better work was quite difficult for them. Their only chance was to remain peasants their whole lives. However, because the land was mountainous and rain was scarce during the summer and fall seasons, farming in their region was quite hard (Burgan, p. 28). By the turn of the century it was barely possible to subsist. Most of the land was owned by a few wealthy nobles who lived in the north of the country and allowed overseers to run their estates. In many towns in Italy water was a luxury and roads and streets were impassable in bad weather (Mangione, 1969, p. 27).

Although Italy had become a unified nation with a democratic constitution in 1871, the region in the south of Italy had not reaped any economic benefit from this development, which accounts for the fact that mass migration actually began in this part of the country. The government required young men to serve in the military and introduced new taxes (Burgan, 2005, p. 28). As taxes increased and nothing had been done to stimulate the stagnant economy of this region, the conditions had actually become worse. Peasants did not care the land properly, they failed to irrigate it and plant trees in order to stop floods and erosion. They did little to improve the quality of the soil too. As the land grew poorer so did the peasants (Mangione, 1969, p. 27).

As other countries increased their production of wheat, the price of this important cereal fell in Italy. Falling prices meant less money for Italian farmers, who could barely feed their families. It is believed that a poor family only afforded meat a few times a year, on holidays. Their meals usually featured beans and some type of grain (Burgan, 2005, p. 29). The Italian peasants were not the only ones who suffered from the general poverty of the south. Skilled workers could no longer find employment either.

In addition, disease took its toll. During the 1880s cholera epidemic swept through Italy and killed more than 50,000 people. Natural disasters such as earthquakes and landslides also struck and destroyed some towns. As Italians' lives grew harsher and harsher, many of them decided to emigrate.

In general, people from the north of Italy dominated the government at that time. According to Lemay (2006, p. 75), the *mezzogiorno* (i.e. the south) was more traditional, more

backward, and poorer than the north. He also states that the *contadini*, the peasants, were at the bottom of a still largely feudal society. These contadini were oppressed and exploited by signori and *borghesi* and they were despised as *cafoni* (boors). They were described as illiterate, unschooled, lacking in self-confidence. The peasantry was preindustrial in culture and mentality, which did not seem to be a very good preparation for life in America's teeming tenement slums. Lemay also indicates that Italians from the south were often *sojourners* in their mentality, undoubtedly associated with the cultural and social background of the peasants, which differed from the background of the earlier Italians from the north (LeMay, 2006, p. 75). Most northerners did not like the uneducated and poor peasants of the south and did not support government policies which could help the region grow. Furthermore, southern farmers and their families were not welcomed in northern cities. As a consequence, southern Italians chose foreign countries when they had to seek for new economic opportunities. While some Italians moved to other European nations for work, a growing number decided to focus their attention across the Atlantic Ocean, to America (Burgan, p. 29).

2.1.5 Reasons for emigration

Different push and pull factors persuaded Italian immigrants to undertake the arduous uprooting immigration to America. Many Italians wanted to leave because of economic factors, escaping from the shackles of dire poverty. Some natural disasters, such as floods, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes plagued Italy and contributed to its bleak agricultural

outlook, especially in the south. That region was also hard hit by phylloxera, a disease that used to kill off agricultural plants on a scale similar to the potato blight of the 1840s. The south of Italy was further affected by frequent and severe epidemics of malaria. The compulsory military service made some Italians flee too (LeMay, 2006, p. 75).

The pull factors were far more important. As the steamship lines developed, the journey was cheaper, faster and easier. Relatives and acquaintances had glowing reports about the wealth of opportunities which made others want to leave too. The "americani" who returned, some of whom could make the trip back and forth, tended to have the amount of money not only to return to their homeland temporarily in search of brides or spouses, but also to attract many other Italians to imitate their success in the new world (LeMay, 2006, p. 75).

However, Erik Amfitheatrof (1973, as cited in Ames & Bennet, 1985, p. 63) believes that, although economic reasons were important, the main explanation for Italian migration from their homeland was "powerlessness". He explains that for the early Italian immigrants, America tended to represent above all chances for education and work. It seemed to mean escape from a feudal system of social injustice in a period that was bright and promising in a different land, namely, the United States.

Puleo (as cited in McCarthy, 2018, para. 8) also observes that the exodus of southern Italians from their villages at the turn of the twentieth century has no parallel in history:

> Of a total population of 14 million in the South at the time of national unification in 1860, at least five million – more than a third of the population—had left to seek work overseas by the outbreak of World War I. The land literally hemorrhaged peasants (para. 8).

It is also believed that organized crime and its role in the economic difficulties of southern Italy played a part as well. The

bestselling novel, *The Sicilian*, written by Mario Puzo, tells the story of Salvatore (Turi) Giuliano, the 'Robin Hood of Sicily' who fought a guerrilla war for both Sicilian separatism and freedom from Mafia control, and became a folk hero in the process. According to Puzo, Giuliano's murder in 1950 had a devastating effect on the Sicilian people because in the two years following his death, 500,000 Sicilians, who were mostly young men, moved to other countries and left behind a land of women, children and old people.

Internal political and economic problems were also a major factor. Following World War I and the conditions that resulted in Fascism, Italians left the country in droves. In a similar way, the devastation of the country during World War II caused the third major wave of emigration. Political hardship and the dream to return to their homeland with enough money to buy land were also factors in motivating immigration. Agriculture was the livelihood for 80% of Italians and many of the farming tools were inefficient and obsolete, which did not allow for prospects for improvement. The farmers often lived in harsh conditions, residing in one-room houses where there was neither plumbing nor privacy. What is more, due to a lack of roads in the country, many peasants were isolated. In addition, there was also lack of land as it became subdivided among heirs over several generations, a fact that caused major problem for rural populations too. Landlords ruled the land and they charged high rents, low pay, and provided very unsteady employment. Migrating to another country was an attractive idea because of the higher wages the workers received. For instance, in Italy an agricultural worker who farmed year-round would receive a meager 16-30 cents per day. Carpenters in Italy would receive 30 cents to $1.40 per day, which makes a 6-day week's pay $ 1.80 to $8.40. On the other hand, in U.S, carpenters who worked a 56-hour week would earn $18.

(Iorrizo & Mondello, 1970, p. 38.) In addition to the already unfortunate situation of many farmers in Italy, a 19th century agricultural crisis in the country led to falling grain prices and loss of markets for fruit and wine. Therefore, America was viewed as a nation with "abundant land, high wages, lower taxes, and interestingly enough, with no military draft." (Molnar, 2010, para. 9).

2.2 Italian Immigration to the USA

Italy came under foreign rule and broke apart into separate states when the glories of the Roman Empire, one the greatest empires of all time, faded. However, Italians remained proud of their past, even as they started to seek new chances and work in foreign territories. Italians were among the first people from Europe to explore North and South America (Burgan, 2005, p. 11-12).

At the beginning, only a few Italians settled in the colonies that became the U.S. But Italy was sending more immigrants to America than any other country by the early 20thcentury (Burgan, 2005, p.12). It is believed that between 1880 and 1921, 4.5 million of Italians arrived, more than any other group. As most of them were migrant laborers, "birds of passage" as they were dubbed by American immigration officers, the number of Italian migrants will never be precise (Ueda, 2006, p.115). Most of these immigrants were peasants without much education. As mentioned before, they were pushed from Italy by extreme poverty, while the promise of jobs and a better life pulled these immigrants to the United

States. Millions of immigrants found what they were seeking in America and stayed (Burgan, 2005, p. 12).

Italian immigrants usually faced prejudice (Burgan, p.12). Some of the prejudice seemed to be linked to the stereotypical perceptions that Americans used to have of the Italians. They were thought to be uneducated, dirty, religious people who tended to believe in superstitions (Loucky, Armstrong & Estrada, 2006, p. 317; Kraut as cited in Ueda, 2006).

As regards religion and superstitions, Kraut explains that within the Italian Catholic tradition, there were common practices that transcended regional divides. Italians often prayed for continued health or recovery from illness to particular saints and the object of the prayers tended to be the relic of a particular saint. For instance, Saints like Rocco, who protected devotees against illness and Saint Lucy, who guarded their eyesight do not appear in the Bible or other Christian writings, however, these deities were substitutes for old Greek or Roman gods and spirits of the forests or rivers (Williams, 1938, p.136). Many Americans were suspicious of their religious beliefs and practices (Burgan, 2005, p. 12).

In addition to this, immigrants from Italy tended to be very poor and live in cramped, crowded apartments, where diseases often spread quickly. It seems that this perspective on the Italians caused them to be stigmatized as disease carriers. For example, in 1916, Italians were responsible for a polio epidemic that some east coast cities suffered. Americans also leveled the accusations that the Italians spread polio during the 1916 epidemic (Kraut, as cited in Ueda, 2006). As a consequence, Americans liked Italian immigrants even less. Furthermore, as a few of Italians were involved in illegal activities, Americans started to associate them with crime and consider them to be in the "mafia" activity too. There seemed to be a persistent

image of the Italian as a criminal or gangster which was further encouraged by the print, television and movie world (Burgan, 2005, p. 87). Greenwood's 1961 report showed that during the 1950s the television series "The Untouchables", in which every criminal had an Italian name, popularized the stereotype of the Mafia mobster (as cited in Iacovetta, 1992, p.116). However, in fact, Italians were no more likely to commit crimes than members of any other ethnic group. Italians were widely known to work hard, save money, and try to become good Americans (Burgan, 2005, p.12). Iacovetta (1993, p. 118) notes that throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s writers and other observers described Italians as hard-working and family-oriented which made some positive portraits of immigrants emerge.

While trying to keep some of their old traditions, the Italians, like other immigrants, became Americans. Italian Americans usually were proud of their culture and heritage and their ties to their country once called home but they were also ready to accept their new country's heritage (Burgan, 2005, p. 12; Hickman & Cavalluzzo, 1999, p. 43).

2.2.1 Birds of Passage

The so-called birds of passage, men between the ages of 15 and 45, used to work part of the year in America and then either returned to their homeland or travelled to another warm climate during the winter (Burgan, 2005, p. 32). According to Yannella's description (2005), birds of passage were "temporary immigrants who came to US to earn money, developed few ties or loyalties, and returned to their native villages and cities, in the best- case scenarios, with their pockets filled with cash" (p.41).

These Italian immigrants also tended to send money home to their families in their country of origin wherever they worked. In some cases a man could return to Italy with a special purpose. He recruited other Italians to go to America. This man was called *padrone* (boss). The padrone used to promise jobs to the workers and collaborated with adjusting to life in the new land. He also tended to pay for the immigrants' voyage across the Atlantic. In return, he usually took a percentage of the money the workers earned and often took advantage of them in other ways. Workers were charged high interest on loans they made and were asked to pay fees for the bosses' collaboration in searching housing and rides to work.

In 1885, the padrones' treatment of many newcomers led Congress to pass a law which tried to put an end to the padrone system. However, the padrones usually found ways around the law and continued to take advantage of immigrants (Burgan, 2005, p. 33). These were the ones who seemed to care nothing for the poor Italian laborer and did them real injustice. It is believed that as Italians became more self-sufficient they could rely less and less on the *padroni* (Weibust, Capobianco & Gould, 1976, p.77). Some bosses, however, did provide real collaboration to immigrants who did not understand society in the United States (Burgan, 2005, p. 33).

2.2.2 Coming to America

By the late 1890s, the Italian ports of Genoa, Naples, Messina, and Palermo were great human expatriation centers as peasants travelled from small towns in the south of Italy to await passage to America. Between twelve and fourteen steamship companies had direct service

between Naples and New York City at various times. The Italian government did not allow the steamship companies to advertise more than the bare details of sailing dates to discourage crowds from gathering at the docks. According to The Dillingham Commission, a short time after the turn of the century, Naples became the most important European port in the number of emigrants travelling to America. As there was a heavy demand among Italian citizens for embarking for America, the price of the ticket increased from about fifteen dollars in 1880 to twenty-eight dollars in 1900, though the higher price did not do anything to slow the demand (Nelli, 1983, p. 33-34; Rolle, 1972, p. 3).

One Italian writer described the scene as peasants left their hometown in Sicily, bound for Palermo:

The locomotive whistled fitfully with a laboring hiss, but the disorder was so great that the engineer did not move the train. Despite the requests and the reprimands of the police, the crowd still clutched the train, embraced by the final grasps of good-bye. When the train moved, there was a heartbreaking cry like the anguished roar that bursts from a crowd at the instant of a great calamity. All the people raised their arms and waved handkerchiefs. From the windows of the cars the leaning figures of the young men and women strained; they seemed suspended in air and kissed the hands of old people as the train departed (Mosso, as cited in Schoener, 1987, p. 57).

Admittedly, this scene would repeat itself again and again in many small villages and towns throughout Southern Italy and might represent a decision of epic proportions by tens of thousands of Italian peasants, most of whom had never been more than a few miles from home.

A further aspect that facilitated mass migration overseas was the changes in transportation. As railway lines could reach further into the countryside in Italy, immigrants were able to reach the main port cities, such as Naples, Genoa and Palermo. However, the poorest Italians still relied on horse-or donkey-drawn carts to move them and their belongings to the docks (Burgan, 2005, p.30).

2.2.3 The journey

By the 1870s major improvements in transatlantic travel were also achieved when larger ships entered the trade and steam-powered vessels which were safer and outnumbered sailing vessels. Since most of the Italian immigrants crossed the Atlantic after 1870, their journey was now quicker than those who had travelled in the 1830s. The average crossing in the early 1800s was approximately forty days which could depend on the weather but the conditions aboard the ship were deplorable. By 1900 the average crossing could take a week. Conditions improved; however, it was difficult for Italian immigrants to travel (Mangione, 1969, p. 29).

According to Cunningham (2003, p.107), immigrants were considered another cargo, although human beings were more complicated to handle than cattle or wood. As a consequence, immigrants were overseen by the American Treasury Department until 1903, when they were consigned to the new Department of Commerce and Labor. Cunningham also explains that that steerage was in the very bottom of a ship, close to the furnaces that produced the steam power to drive the big ships and the steering mechanism which conducted the ship on a voyage. This was the place where cattle could have been herded aboard on an

eastbound voyage. The space was said to be scarcely fit for even a steer, and only lightly cleaned when the animals were guided ashore. Immigrants would replace them on the voyage to the West across the Atlantic Ocean. As they boarded the vessel and headed downstairs toward their accommodations, even the gentle rocking of the ship prompted forebodings of seasickness (p.107). Cunningham indicates that there were first and second class passengers, which are known as "cabin class" and who used to go topside. First class passengers boarded after all others were loaded so that they would be less offended by the mass of poor human beings. First class passengers were abounded by luxuries. For instance, food tended to be plentiful, tasty and planned to coax latent appetites into normalcy. As regards second class passengers, they usually had less luxurious accommodations; however, the food and the berthing were said to be good (p. 107).

Immigrants travelled in steerage which was the cheapest and worst class of service for passengers. The average steerage fare at that time was thirty dollars. The third class or steerage passengers spent most of their time crowded together, sleeping in the same clothes alongside their luggage because there was no room for it elsewhere. It usually was below the main decks in cramped, dark cabins. Whenever they could, the passengers tended to take turns to go out on deck for some fresh air in the small space they were allowed. They usually were provided with soup or stew. They had to wash themselves with salt water which sometimes caused skin irritations and infections (Mangione, 1969, p. 29).

Cunningham (2003) also notes that down in the steerage, passengers usually found want, tended to suffer a claustrophobia which they had never imagined in their homeland and learned of evils that were not known by them before travelling. In this part of the ship, they

not only slept in desperately crowded quarters but also used to eat little and sometimes they had strange food, bore children, conceived other children who would then be born in the new world, caught rampant communicable diseases, and saw how children and others died before their eyes. The dead usually were "consigned to the sea in perfunctory burials" (p. 107).

Fanny Kligerman (as cited in Cunningham, 2003, p. 109), a 13-year-old girl who travelled to America, was one of those immigrants quoted in Island of Hope, Island of Tears. She said that one of her lasting memories was the water that flooded the floors of steerage and she added that most of the children in the group caught measles. She described the omnipresent specter of death as follows:

> Some of them died and they threw them into the water like cattle. It was a pathetic thing that they couldn't ride with the bodies; they had to throw them into the water. It is something that I will never forget. And you can imagine how the women carried on. They took a child from them and they just tossed it in, nice and quiet. It was terrible (p.109).

Regardless the era in which newcomers travelled to America, food was a major problem. In the 1850s, when passengers used to bring their own food, there are records of immigrants buying and taking aboard ship stores to last for a period of about a month or more. The larder usually had edibles which were likely to last for a long time, such as beans and rice. Some passengers sometimes included some luxuries as lemons, figs, or spices (Cunningham, 2003, p. 109).In addition, some people bought barrels or boxes for the foodstuff and canisters for

the tea and coffee. They also had chamber pots, cooking utensils, a lantern, pots and pans, cheap dishes, and inexpensive cutlery. Passengers were supposed to cook such food as they could, which was often hard because of the crowds of would-be cooks and hungry people who were gathered around the stoves.

There was no entertainment whatsoever: passengers used to sit and listen to the groaning of the ship's timber, hear the howling winds of North Atlantic winter storm, or the shouts of sailors adjusting the sails. There were also some irrepressible young passengers who tended to push back moveable barrels and beds and dance or jig to the tune of a violin or concertina. Children and adults also played cards and dominoes (p.109).

There are many descriptions of the immigrants' experiences during their voyage. The following anecdotes are some of them:

Island of Hope, Island of Tears (as cited in Cunningham, 2003, p. 108) seems to give a concise account of accommodations in the worst part of the ship, the steerage:

> A typical steerage compartment consisted of a compartment, indistinguishable from any upper cargo hold, without portholes or any effective ventilating device, unpartitioned and six to eight feet high, crammed with two or more tiers of narrow metal bunks containing minimal mattresses. Men and women were separated, sometimes on separate decks, sometimes by nothing but a few blankets tossed over a line in the middle of the compartment.
>
> Toilet facilities were always inadequate; cleanup was almost non-existent; and the combined smells of the galley and human excrement nauseating. The food was both monotonous and

> poorly prepared – if prepared at all – and fresh water was usually available only up on deck. The chief kind of food provided described by many immigrants, was barrel after barrel of herring, the cheapest food available that might be relied on to keep the immigrants alive.
>
> Under those conditions, people got seasick and stayed seasick. They cried and kept on crying. Some people were even detained at Ellis Island later for suspected trachoma, when their eyes were simply red from continuing crying all the way across the Atlantic.

Edmondo DeAmicis (as cited in Schoener, 1987, p. 62-63) also emphasizes that life in steerage was grim, lasting from a minimum of two weeks to nearly a month. He notes that conditions were crowded, filthy, and uncomfortable. Lice, scurvy, and seasickness added to the misery of passengers. Italian immigrants used to bring along knapsacks full of cheeses and salami to supplement the wretched soup doled out to passengers by the steamship companies. The immigrants who could read tended to study books "guaranteed" to teach English within the time of the voyage; while others used to consult guidebooks with explanations about the strange American money system. DeAmicis reports that an Italian author, who wrote a firsthand report of the experiences of immigrants on board the Galileo, which was a ship bound for the United States, described the boarding scene in this way:

> Some sat down wherever it might be, dazed and exhausted; others wandered about vaguely, looking with uneasiness at all those unknown travelling companions who were as uneasy as they: and, like them, confused and frightened in this disorderly throng. Some who had come down one ladder, and saw others leading still on, down into the dark, refused to go any farther.

> Through the open hatchway I marked a woman with her head in the berth and sobbing violently I soon learned that her young child had died suddenly an hour or two before, and that her husband was forced to leave its little bod with the police to be taken to the hospital…It was an odd enough scene. The huge steamer, seen by most of them for the first time, must have been like a new world, full of strangeness and of mystery and yet not one looked about him or aloft, or paused to examine any of those many wonderful objects never seen before. The greater part showed nothing but apathy or fatigue. At last the sailors were heard shouting fore and aft, 'Chin non e' passeggero, a terra'—" All ashore that's going ashore.' These words sent a thrill from one end of the Galileo to the other. In a few minutes, a whistle sounded and the ship began to move. Then women burst out crying and bearded men hitherto stolid were seen to pass a hand across their eyes. A few were talking in low tones. From the forecastle a voice called out in a sarcastic tone, 'Viva L'Italia!' And looking up I saw a tall thin man who was shaking his fist at his native country.

Nelli (1983, p.72) states that another immigrant viewed the voyage as an extension of the hardships he had experienced in his homeland:

> The passage across the ocean seemed to have been so calculated as to inflict upon us the last, full measure of suffering and indignity, and to impress upon us for the last time that we were the 'wretched refuse of the earth' and to exact from us a final price for the privilege we hoped to enjoy in America.

Paulina Caramando, (Todd, 2002, p. 6) who arrived in 1920 to America at the age of 8, described her experience on the ship as follows:

> I remember on the boat my mother and I were so sick … So in the morning the first thing my father would do was to come down below and take us up on the ship, where we'd lie out there on blankets half-dead. At least we'd have fresh air up there, you know…The first-class people, all the rich people, were way above. I'd look up at them, they were all dressed nice, and we were like a flock of sheep down below. Oh, it was terrible. Twenty-two days. And sick, so sick.

Boston, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; New Orleans, Louisiana; and San Francisco, California are the port cities where Italian immigrants arrived in America (Burgan, 2005, p.31). However, three-fourths of the immigrants who entered the United States between 1892 and 1924 came through New York. Ellis Island was their first stop in New York (Yans, McLaughlin &Lightman, 1990, p. 59).

2.2.4 Ellis Island: the Island of Hope, the Island of Tears

Located near New York city and New Jersey, Ellis Island immigration station, on a small island in New York Harbor, was the American government's main center for processing immigrants. It is also close to another small island called Liberty Island, where the statue of Liberty stands. It was originally suggested than an immigration facility could be built on

Liberty Island but there was some opposition from nativists that ended that effort. Nativists did not want the Statue of Liberty "tainted" by the immigrant masses (Yans, McLaughlin & Lightman, 1990, p. 59).

Although Ellis Island is small, it has played a very large role in the history of America. According to Kraut (as cited in Ueda, 2006, p. 113), Ellis Island, the flagship of immigration deports constructed in the busy port of New York, received the first immigrant to enter the United States through Ellis Island on January 1 in 1892. It was Anni Moore, a 15-year-old from Ireland.

It is estimated that more than 12 million immigrants came through Ellis Island during 1892-1924. It is almost three-quarters of all the immigrants who were entering America at that time. Nowadays, it is reported that more than 100 million Americans are directly related to immigrants who went through Ellis Island during its tenure as a federal immigration station (Staton, 2009, p. 4). Passenger manifest records show that more than 22 million people entered America through Ellis Island (Long, 2009, p. 116).

Staton (2009, p. 6-7) describes Ellis Island as "different". He contends that some people viewed it as an island of hope, but others called it an island of tears. There are many reasons for these opposite feelings. As mentioned before, immigrants seemed to have many hopes for their new life in America: they wished to find a better job, an education for their children, enough to eat, and an opportunity to have their own land. But the immigrants who arrived in America were also fearful of what could happen on Ellis Island. Many immigrants cried because they feared that the American government inspectors would deport them or someone in their family. They did not want to return because they did not have anything in their

homelands, as they tended to sell everything to pay for their trip. Some immigrants were also afraid of what they would find after they left Ellis Island. Most newcomers could not speak the language and they did not know how they would fit into a new country with a different language and different way of life from what they were used to.

2.2.5 End of the journey, the arrival

When they entered the New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty was one of the first things they saw. To these immigrants, the statue seemed to be a symbol of America and of the freedom and opportunity they were eager to find in the New Land (Staton, 2009, p. 4)

A man called Edward Corsi (as cited in Staton, 2009, p. 7) came to America with his family in 1907. He described his experience in his book *In the Shadow of Liberty: The Chronicles of Ellis Island:*

> The steamer *Florida*, fourteen days out of Naples, filled to capacity with sixteen hundred natives of Italy had weathered one of the worst storms in our captain's memory; and glad we were, both children and grown-ups, to leave the open sea and come at last …Passengers all about us were crowded together at the rail…Mothers and fathers lifted their babies so that they too could see, off to the left, the Statue of Liberty.

Staton (2009, p. 7) explains that in 1924 there was a change in American immigration laws. The U.S. government started to reduce the number of immigrants that were allowed to enter the United States. Ellis Island continued as an immigration station; however, it was mostly a detention station, where certain people were held by the government.

As the federal government required the shipping companies which transported the immigrants to begin the inspection process before immigrants entered, the shipping companies would prepare an accurate listing of each passenger along with information about each person, which had to be entered on a formal list before leaving Europe. This detailed passengers list was called *ship manifest* and was always used by the captain as a record of inventory of their cargo. It now became the document of record for all the people coming through Ellis Island (Long, 2009, p. 116).

Yans, McLaughlin and Lightman (1990, p. 59) point out that when the immigrants arrived in New York, a New York State quarantine inspector used to board the ship and had to approve the passengers before entering the city. Then an American medical inspector had to approve all native-born Americans as well as first and second class passengers. Later these people could move directly into New York. All steerage passengers were taken in barges to Ellis Island for processing. After the immigrants disembarked all their belongings, they were tagged with a number which designated which ship they had travelled on. The baggage room, where they were asked to check their belongings, was their first view of the inside of the building (Kraut, as cited in Ueda, 2006, p.113).

2.2.6 The medical Inspection

As previously mentioned, immigrants were lined up and they were thus quickly observed by medical personnel for any obvious deformities or medical problems. Kraut (as cited in Ueda, 2006, p. 113) describes that immigrants' hands, eyes, and throats were examined to check the effect on them of mild physical stress. As medical technology became better over the years, so did the diagnostic abilities of physicians. However, it is believed that the experienced clinical gaze of the physicians who scrutinized newcomers was always the best instrument. Kraut adds that throughout the peak era of migration the test that most intimidated new arrivals was the eversion of their eyelids to detect the tell-tale lesions of trachoma, a disease that if left untreated could render its victims blind. In addition, he also explains that immigrants' scalps were probed for evidence of favus, a highly contagious dermatological disease. Physicians tended to turn the heads of immigrants to better examine facial expressions. Medical experts usually thought that certain facial expressions were indicative of mental illness or insufficiency.

If a case aroused suspicion, examining physicians used to make chalk marks on the clothes of the newcomers whom they wanted to subject to further inspection. Each letter marked on a newcomer's clothing meant a suspected disability: L for lameness, CT for Trachoma, S for senility, G for goiter, H for heart, Pg for pregnancy, K for hernia, X for mental illness, and so on (Kraut as cited in Ueda, 2006, p. 113; Yans, McLaughlin & Lightman, 1990, p. 56). Kraut (as cited in Ueda, 2006, p.113) mentions that the individual examinations used to be conducted in relatively modest and respectful terms, segregating newcomers according to their sexes and making certain that female immigrants were examined by women physicians.

Kraut (as cited in Ueda, 2006, p.113) also describes the quarantine procedures that were gradually transferred to federal jurisdiction, but remained controlled by state officials in some states such as New York until the 1920s. However, once state quarantine inspectors determined whether there was necessity to quarantine any person or everyone on a ship because of an outbreak of infectious disease, the inspection of individual newcomers was performed by federal authorities. First and second-class ship passengers used to be given perfunctory examinations in their cabins, while those who were travelling third class or steerage stood the line inspection in immigration depots.

Immigrants also had to do tests to determine mental deficiency and insanity for this could be grounds for deportment. According to the Immigration Act of 1882, "any convict, lunatic, idiot, or person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge." was excluded. However, there were no easily administered tests to determine mental fitness. Drs. Henry Know and E.H. Mullan created block tests that were used with immigrants to weed out mental defectives. In a specified amount of time, immigrants had to place wooden blocks back in the right-sized places. Failing the test was taken as evidence of mental incapability (Kraut, 1994, p. 74).

Kraut (p. 66-67) reports that although fewer than 3 percent of those inspected on Ellis Island were not allowed to enter America, an increasing percentage of those excluded were denied admission for medical reasons, which could be deficiency of physical or mental health. He also notes that from less than 2 percent in 1898, the percentage raised to 57 percent in 1913 and 69 percent by 1916. This increase was due to the improvement of diagnostic techniques. In 1892, when Ellis Island first opened, the Public Health Service physicians diagnosed

tuberculosis (TB) by auscultation, studying with a stethoscope the character of the sounds that cavities in diseased lung tissue produced. By 1910, there was a routine use of X-ray technology for such diagnoses, as was analysis of residue from patients' lungs. It is said that only a slide showing the tubercle bacillus in a newcomer's sputum was sufficient evidence to prevent an immigrant enter Ellis Island for TB. In a similar way, the Wassermann test markedly could improve rates of syphilis diagnosis over observation and examination. In addition, Kraut (p. 68-69) explains that the physicians of the Public Health Service insisted that their job was diagnosis only and they did not accept to sit on boards of review which used to decide if a particular migrant would be admitted or deported. However, historians concur on the fact that the new medical technology largely improved the possibilities of diagnosing an excludable condition.

2.2.7 The legal inspection

As regards the newcomers who showed no signs of mental or physical deficiencies, they were then sent to be questioned by immigration inspectors. Staton (2009, p. 24) explains that as most immigrants did not speak the language, interpreters used to assist the inspector. The interpreters spoke English and another language and they translated the conversation between the newcomer and the inspector, so that they could understand each other. Many of the interpreters were immigrants who had already settled in America. In some cases, there was not an interpreter who could speak the same language as the immigrant. As a consequence, the newcomer and the inspector had to try to understand each other as well as they could. Legal inspectors asked a series of questions that had been already posed to the immigrants

by the ship's captain before they left their homeland. The inspectors asked the same kinds of questions to check if the answers matched. It is also known that the time period did modify the types of questions that were made by the inspector (Yans, McLaughlin & Lightman, 1990, p. 56). According to Staton (2009, p. 24), the typical questions that were asked by inspectors were about name, age, hometown, the type of work an adult had done, and where the person was going. Immigrants were also asked if they had money and a job. They had to be careful about their answers. Inspectors had to be sure that all adult newcomers could find a job in case they did not have a family, such as a husband, to support them. If a woman had travelled alone to America, the inspector had to make sure that somebody was going to meet her.

2.2.8 Being detained

Kraut (as cited in Ueda, 2006, p.113) explains that some detainees who required treatment used to be assigned to one of the two hospitals on Ellis Island. There was a general hospital with full surgical capabilities which handled cases of non-contagious illness or injury. Contagious diseases were treated in a separate facility on the island built on the pavilion style, in this way patients who had different infectious diseases were isolated from one another. For instance, patients in measles wards could be isolated from tuberculosis patients. Physicians had to re-gown and re-glove every time they left one ward and entered another. Kraut points out that as the immigrants were not yet American citizens, or even legally admitted, while they were on Ellis Island, they were not able to refuse medical attention, including detention. In addition, any protest could end in exclusion and a return journey.

As previously mentioned, going through Ellis Island could be a difficult experience for immigrants of all nationalities. There were some immigrants who had to wait weeks before they were allowed to leave the island, while government officials checked their background. Those immigrants who were sick had to stay at Ellis Island until their health improved. Families tended to become separated as one or more members could be denied admission during the questioning process (Burgan, 2005, p. 31).

2.2.9 After admission

The immigrants who were allowed to enter America used to take a ferry from Ellis Island to Manhattan, in New York City. As they arrived, family members or friends who had already emigrated usually greeted them. With the collaboration of those people, the newcomers could get jobs, find places to live, learn their first English words. However, life was more difficult for those immigrants who did not know anybody in the United States. Most of them were not able to speak English and they tended to arrive with little money. They left their tiny farming villages and they now faced a large, noisy, crowded city. As these immigrants used to be lonely, they accepted help from any stranger who was able to speak their own language, Italian, and offer help. Sometimes, the strangers in fact wanted to rob or cheat them, which usually added problems to the immigrants (Burgan, 2005, p. 31-32).

2.2.10 Settling in

Italian immigrants were not all birds of passage. Some Italians sent money back to Italy so that their families could afford to join them in the United States. Other immigrants returned to their homeland to find spouses and then went back to America to start families. They usually described their families in *Lamerica*, as Italians called it, whenever they returned to their country of origin. They told that life might be difficult, with low-paying jobs and harsh living conditions. As one professor of political economy from Columbia University observed in tenements in New York:

> Huddled together in miserable apartments in filth and rags, without the slightest regard to decency or health, they present a picture of squalid existence degrading to any civilization and a menace to the health of the whole community (Mayo-Smith, 1890, p. 133).

However, many immigrants returned to their country with more money that they had ever earned in their homelands. Historians argue that newcomers kept arriving to America because of the idea of newfound wealth in the new world (Burgan, 2005, p.33). Many of the immigrants used to go to cities where earlier Italians from their homelands had settled, a pattern known as chain migration.

2.2.11 The role of women in immigration

Because of the conditions in their own country, Italian males in search of employment had to lead the migration chain, seeking immediate work to earn money, improve their family's economic fortunes, and eventually return to Italy. Wives and mothers used to stay behind, managing both the family's domestic and economic affairs.

According to some sociologists, Italians did not travel to United States to have a home; they came to earn money to help their dire financial conditions at home. Many of them left their homeland with the firm intention of returning to Italy. However, when they were in America, many Italians did indeed stay (Park & Miller, 1921, p. 155). Once they were settled in America, men tended to send for their wives and children to join them. As a consequence, Italian women had to adapt to a new social and economic situation in the new world. Not only did family and community identity continue to play a central part in Italian social and economic life but also the basic tasks of raising children and providing for the family. Women could show flexibility and resourcefulness in meeting these obligations to work and family. The Italian household has been dubbed "father-dominated but mother-centered." Men used to dominate family affairs, demanding deference and respect from their wives while women were expected to be submissive and respectful of their husband. Women, however, usually made critical decisions about family strategies which could affect all members of the household, especially during the process of migration when the frequent, extended absences of husbands seemed to lead wives to make decisions by default. The powerful, emotional and important role allegedly played by Italian women in the household might be testified in the

following proverb: “If the father should die, the family would suffer; if the mother should die, the family ceases to exist” (Moss & Thompson, 1959, p. 38).

In addition, the head of the family protected women and girls very strongly, as a result of which women usually did not have much life outside their homes. However, inside their homes, wives directed the household and it was not unusual for them to take the lead in family affairs, such as the expenditure of money, plans for the children, or the choice of friends.

What is more, women not only played a crucial role in raising children but also in training them for adulthood. For instance, mothers taught their daughters how to perform household duties, decided if they should attend school and participated in finding them suitable husbands. Traditionally marriages were arranged for the marrying parties by the parents of the bride and groom (Beck, 1919, p. 24). In order to ensure that a daughter could secure a suitable marriage partner, the girl was strictly supervised when she started to be a teenager. Leavitt (as cited in Park & Miller, 1921, p. 155-156) explains:

> When a girl reaches twelve her freedom comes to an end; she is considered old enough to put away childish things. Until she is married she is not supposed to have any interest outside her home except school or work and with these two exceptions she is not supposed to be out of her mother’s sight.

As women tended to spend months with no husband, father, or brother at home because men followed seasonal employment opportunities, female social networks began to be an important part of women’s lives. These networks were usually rooted in cooperation between

family and neighbors and promoted the well-being of the entire community (Gabaccia, 1991, p. 70). As a result, married women's responsibilities usually kept them close to home among family and neighbors. While kin and neighbors formed the social world of Italian women, men inhabited a separate social sphere from their wives, and usually enjoyed more recreational time too.

According to Burgan (2005, p.51), as many of Italian citizens left to America, in some small villages, there were not enough men who remained behind to farm the fields which forced not only women but also children to do the work. It can be seen how in the struggle to survive, every member of the Italian family played a role in its economy. It seems that the precarious economic status of many Italian families required them to stray from the traditional patriarchal ideal in order to continue to live.

2.2.12 Films and TV shows about Italian immigration

There are a number of films and TV shows or series which address, directly or indirectly, the issue of Italian immigrants who decided to leave their homeland to live in America. A few well-known cases are illustrated below.

The Godfather, released in 1972, inaugurated a new round of gangster films that focused on the Mafia. *The Godfather II* was made in 1974, and the third *Godfather* movie appeared in 1990. The film, directed by Coppola, shows the workings of the Mafia and addresses larger issues, such as family loyalty and how Italian immigrants went to America and could succeed there. In *Godfather* II, it can be seen how the young Vito Corleone s at Ellis Island. These

movies boosted the careers of Francis Ford Coppola and several Italian-Americans actors, Al Pacino and Robert De Niro (Burgan, 2005, p.78).

Scarface, which is one of Brian De Palma's most famous movies, is "a 1983 remake of a 1932 film about a gangster" (p.75). "In the original *Scarface*, the lead character was loosely based on real-life gangster Al Capone." This movie also shows how an Italian immigrant goes to the United States of America. In the opening scene the main character, Tony is interrogated by Immigration Officials to check for any criminality in his past.

The TV show *The Sopranos*, which started in 1999, also depicts the experiences of some Italian Americans. With all their success in America, Italian Americans still seem to face prejudice from other Americans. This is linked to their lasting image of Italians as gangsters. *The Sopranos* portrays a modern Italian-American family who is associated with the Mafia. The main character called Tony Soprano is married to Carmela. They both face many of the same problems all Americans face: rebellious children and difficulties with their marriage. Although the TV show possesses touches of humor and deep emotion, it also contributes to the image of Italians as criminals. In the second season, episode 9 it can be seen how the Italian immigrants are compared with soldiers. Tony Soprano's monologue is about the experience of some Italian Americans who arrived in the U.S in the early part of the 20th century (Burgan, p.87).

The TV series *The Italian Americans* (2015) is written and produced by John Maggio and narrated by Academy Award-nominated actor Stanley Tucci. It chronicles four generations of Italian-American lives from the massive late nineteenth century to today. It "explores the evolution of Italian Americans" from "outsiders once viewed with suspicion and mistrust to

some of the most prominent leaders of business, politics and the arts today." From the importance of the family over an individual's personal inspirations, to their distinctive, circular migrations patterns, to the specter of the Mafia which still seems to plague Italian Americans today (Maggio, 2015).

2.3 Theoretical Concepts

2.3.1 Stereotyping

According to Chodorow (1979, p.57), a stereotype is "a generalized notion of what a person is based on that's person's sex, race, religion, ethnic background, or similar criterion". She also adds that "stereotypes do not take individuality into account." Stereotypes are "representations or impressions of groups". They are psychological representations of the characteristics of people that belong to particular groups (McGarty, Yzerbyt&Spears, 2004, p. 2). In addition, these authors define stereotype "as a set of constraints between knowledge about a group, the explicit use of labels about group members, and perceived equivalence of group members."

Yzerbyt, Rocher&Schadron (1997, as cited in McGarty, Yzerbyt&Spears, 2004, p. 64) state that, according to their "subjective essentialist theory of stereotypes", there seems to be "a strong relationship between perceivers' beliefs about the underlying essence shared by all group members and the features that are seen to characterize them." Whenever the group is not seen as being accidental, perceivers may begin "to search for those deep features that come with behaviors to some underlying characteristic that is common to all group members, stereotypic beliefs provide people with a subjectively valid understanding of the regularities"

which might be found in the social environment (Yzerbyt&Rogier, 2001; Yzerbyt, Rogier& Fiske, 1998, as cited in McGarty, Yzerbyt &Spears, 2004, p. 64-65).

McGarty, Vincent Yzerbyt &Spears (p. 88) also hold that:

> Stereotypes are meaningful beliefs about groups and can be considered explanations. Stereotype content reflects the way we explain and make sense of the stimuli we encounter. Given that there is generally more than one way to explain any stimulus situation, likewise there is generally more than one set of content that can meaningfully represent a group.

Stereotypes can also be considered "erroneous generalizations" which are "based on distorted impressions" of people "in terms of group characteristics". Some researchers also believe that "stereotypes are not necessarily erroneous" but from the stereotyper's view might "represent valid interpretations of the social properties of group members" (Leyen, Yzerbyt&Schadron, 1994; McGarty&delaHaye, 1997; Oakes et al., 1994; Spears&Haslam, 1997, as cited in McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears, 2004, p. 92).

Furthermore, expectations are said to play an important role in the formation of illusory correlation, which might arise as a product of imposing sense on the stimulus situation. Illusory correlation can question the viability of distinguishing neatly between data-based and expectation-based illusory correlation at all. These two kinds of "illusory correlation" are often treated in separate ways because expectation-based illusory correlations are considered to be "explanations for maintaining stereotypes about socially meaningful groups" while data-based illusory correlations are viewed "as explanations for the formation of stereotypes" (McGarty, Yzerbyt &Spears, 2004, p. 107-108).

McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears (p. 154) argue that stereotype formation does not just occur once, "at the beginning of group life, or at the start of a perceiver's knowledge of groups." Instead it is "a provisional and ongoing process" that may be as a consequence "quite pervasive if the different degrees outlined above are representative."

Stereotypes usually form because people tend to "belong to groups, and they allow them to act proficiently as group members." In addition, "much of the texture and meaning of stereotypes" comes from "the way in which they are collaboratively managed across a range of social settings" (McGarty, Yzerbyt &Spears, 2004, p. 183).

McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears (p. 184) also point out that:

> Stereotype formation is not a process in which people develop personal (mis)representations of the world that they then resort to habitually and incorrigibly. It is a joint endeavour through which groups develop shared explanations of the world that allow them to represent social relations veridically and manage them appropriately, partly by orienting group members to ideologically-relevant goals. If those goals and relations are enduring stereotypes will be too (and they often are). But if they are not, collaborative work will ensure that stereotypes reform to reflect the group's new exigencies and to provide a platform for the new activities that its members need to undertake together.

These authors (p. 187) also explain that "stereotypes can only be said to have formed when there are interrelations between knowledge about social categories and perceptions of those categories." Stereotypes might not be considered as the explanation or something to be explained but "as the full set of constraints between knowledge, perceived equivalence and labeling."

Historical documents show that people tended to have stereotypical perceptions of immigrants who came from Italy. They were thought to be uneducated, dirty, religious people who also tended to believe in superstitions (Loucky, Armstrong & Estrada, 2006, p. 317; Kraut as cited in Ueda, 2006, p. 64).

2.3.2 Discrimination and Prejudice

Pettigrew (1980, p.1) explains that prejudice tends "to refer to bias, partiality, or predilection; in the law, to harm and injury." He also adds that it may "be thought of as irrationally based, negative attitudes against certain ethnic groups and their members."

Prejudice is also defined as "a general feeling of dislike for people based upon some characteristics they have (which may include race, sex, ethnicity, hair color, style of dress, etc)" (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 7).

Pettigrew (1980, p. 2-3) states that:

> Prejudiced attitudes violate two basic norms, one cognitive and the other affective – the norm of rationality and the norm of human-heartedness. The norm of rationality enjoins us to seek accurate information, correct mistaken notions, make needed qualifications and differentiations – in short, to be as rational as human limitations allow. Prejudice clearly vitiates this norm with its overgeneralizations, prejudgments, and a general denial of individual differences. The norm of human-heartedness enjoins us to accept other groups and individuals in terms of their common humanity, regardless of who they are and how different they may be.

According to Gordon Allport and John Harding (as cited in Pettigrew, 1980, p. 3):

> Prejudice against racial and ethnic groups is an antipathy accompanied by a faulty generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group. Thus, ethnic prejudice simultaneously violates two basic norms – the norm of rationality and the norm of human-heartedness.

Several other terms are related to this view of prejudice: *Prejudgment* is associated with "a premature cognitive fix on a subject prior to examining the relevant evidence; it constitutes a violation of the rationality norm." *Intolerance* involves "a rejection of outgroups because of their differences from the ingroup; it constitutes a violation of the human-heartedness norm." In a similar way, *bigotry* involves "a zealous ingroup devotion and consequent rejection of outgroups." *Xenophobia* might go further as it is linked with "a fear of and aversion to all who are seen as different and strange." *Ethnocentrism* refers to "the unquestioned belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group and the consequent inferiority of other groups." It is believed that "unlike racist notions of inborn, biological superiority, however, ethnocentric beliefs are founded upon notions of cultural superiority." "Biological and cultural explanations for group superiority and inferiority" tend to "merge", and the difference between ethnocentrism and racism does not seem to be clear (Pettigrew, 1980, p. 3).

Scholars generally distinguish two varieties of racism, individual and institutional. On the one hand, the former is similar to prejudice as it is a phenomenon of individuals. However, *individual racism* can include not only "prejudicial" but also "discriminatory behavior", and is based on "the assumption of the genetic inferiority of the outgroup." On the other hand,

institutional racism could be associated with "the complex of institutional arrangements that restrict the life chances and choices of a socially defined racial group in comparison with those of the dominant group." It seems to refer to "a society's social structure and not to individuals" (p. 4).

As regards discrimination, it is closely connected with this conception of institutional racism. Both of them are known to operate on the societal level. Discrimination tends to be "basically an institutional process of exclusion against an outgroup, racial or cultural, which is "based simply on who they are instead of their knowledge or abilities" (Pettigrew, 1980, p. 4).

Fundamental to the process of discrimination tends to be the construction of *difference*. Although the people, places, and the things that form the physical environment can differ in many ways, only some of these differences may be emphasized, treated as relevant, and then used by the society to not only justify but also perpetuate inequality. (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 6)

People "who wish to emphasize the complex and powerful nature of relations of subordination and domination, as well as the interlocking and self-perpetuating nature of discrimination as a process," often argue that "the term *discrimination* is itself too narrow and limited to do so effectively." They claim that "words like *racism*, *sexism*, and *oppression"* may be more appropriate. These terms tend to be used "to point to a complex and pervasive system of beliefs, policies, practices, and attitudes that interrelate with incredible intricacy, subtlety, and force." (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 6).

Rothenberg (1992, p. 9) also explains that when people's choices seem to limit the opportunities which are available to them because of their race, sex, or national origin, the problem of discrimination tends to emerge. He also adds that throughout history,

"discrimination against minorities and women was not only accepted but also governmentally required."

The most common understanding of discrimination seems to lie at the level of prejudiced individual attitudes and behavior. Although open and intentional prejudice continues, "individual discriminatory conduct" tends to be "hidden" and often "unintentional" (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 10). In other words, "whether it is conscious or not, open or hidden, desired" or not desired, the acts which are constructed and supported by prejudicial stereotypes, may "deny their victims opportunities provided to others, and perpetuate discrimination, regardless of intent" (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 11).

Discriminatory actions by individuals and organizations are pervasive and tend to occur in every sector of society and they are also cumulative with effects limited neither to the time nor the particular structural area in which they occur. As a consequence, this process of discrimination often "extends across generations, across organizations, and across social structures in self-reinforcing cycles, passing the disadvantages" that are contracted "by one generation in one area to future generations in many related areas" (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 15).

Although discrimination is maintained through individual actions, neither individual prejudices nor random chance may completely explain the persistent national patterns of inequality and underrepresentation. These patterns cannot be blamed on the people who are at the bottom of our economic, political, and social order. Overt racism and sexism as embodied in popular notions of white and male supremacy have often been repudiated, but the history of discrimination which was based on race, sex, and national origin has not been readily put aside. Past discrimination seems to continue to have effects on the present (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 15-16).

As stated above, the process of discrimination seems to be deeply and variously embedded in society. There is no single factor which can sufficiently explain it and there is no single means that will be enough to exterminate it. Rothenberg (1992, p.16) explains that:

> Such elements of our society as our history of de jure discrimination, deeply ingrained prejudices, inequities based on economic and social class, and the structure and function of all our economic, social, and political institutions must be continually examined in order to understand their part in shaping today's decisions that will either maintain or counter the current process of discrimination.

According to Rothenberg (1992, p. 7), *racism* can be defined "as any policy, practice, belief or attitude that attributes characteristics or status to individuals based upon their race." He also mentions "*sexism* as any one which does so according to sex."

As far as sexism is concerned, it is believed that although some women might not like men so much and tend to treat them unfairly, there are some women who can "be equally guilty of prejudice toward other women." "The balance of power throughout most, if not all, of recorded history" has allowed men to subordinate women to "maintain their own privilege". As a result, a woman who seems to treat "men or other women unfairly simply because of their gender" might" be *prejudiced* and may be criticized as unjust, but she cannot be guilty of sexism" (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 7).

Racism and sexism can "be conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional" (Rothenberg, 1992, p. 8). Pettigrew (1980, p. 5) explains that discrimination and institutional

racism “limit an outgroup’s opportunities and they are powerful and ever-present reminders that directly support prejudice and individual racism.”

There are categorization processes at play. These processes can be heightened, for instance, by language and labeling. There is “a personality dimension to the categorization phenomenon.” By using “dichotomous categories – the saved and the damned, the good and the bad, natives and immigrants-,” irrational distortions are likely to emerge, which may lead to prejudice. Human beings who are more prejudiced usually believe that two kinds of people exist – “the weak and the strong” (Pettigrew, 1980, p. 6-7).Stereotyping, which seems to be a main form of the cognitive distortions of prejudice, tends to derive directly from these cognitive means of simplifying and rendering meaningful what our senses record. Stereotypes can be defined broadly as the overgeneralization of psychological characteristics to large human groups, which might arise from the error and biases of what people think and perceive in common to everyone, rather than from any “faulty reasoning process” peculiar to prejudice (Pettigrew, 1980, p. 7).

Prejudice and discrimination tend to act together in order to protect economic and political interests. Negative group attitudes could emerge from competitive fears of marginal and vulnerable groups. They are often known to be “manipulated to reinforce the interests” of the people “who seek or are already in power” (Pettigrew, 1980, p. 19).

A closely related concept is *social distance*, which refers to “individual prejudice of varying intensities that joins with cultural traditions to prescribe certain kinds of interaction with the outgroup and to proscribe others. It has been measured since the 1920s by a paper-and-pencil questionnaire that asks people if they would willingly admit members of various groups: “to close kinship by marriage; to my club as personal chums; to my street as neighbors; to

employment in my occupation; to citizenship in my country; as visitors only to my country; would exclude from my country" (Pettigrew, 1980, p. 23).

Emory Bogardus (Pettigrew, 1980, p. 23) used this measure for the first time half a century ago to estimate the attitudes of about 2,000 Americans throughout the country toward 40 racial, religious, and nationality groups. He discovered a surprising consistent pattern of group preferences across the nation. He explained that:

> The least social distance was accorded the British, native white Americans, and Canadians; next came the French, Germans, Swedes, and other western and northern Europeans; then the Spaniards, Italians, and Jews and other southern and eastern Europeans; and finally, the greatest social distance was accorded blacks, Japanese, Chinese, Hindus, and Turks.

This pattern tended to vary little with the respondents' region, education, occupation, income, or even ethnicity and it was shared by lower-ranked groups "save for placing their own group at or near the top."

Pettigrew (1980, p. 26) also explains that:

> Every American ethnic group has its own story of hard times and difficulties in becoming established in the New World. Though sharpened by their retelling over the years, these stories contain considerable truth. There has, in fact, been widespread ethnic conflict throughout American history, with both prejudice and discrimination pervasive. Racial conflict has been the most severe, followed by religious conflict.

Rothenberg (1992, p. 8) describes that the concept of oppression as the pervasive nature of sexism and racism and shows "how it is possible to participate unintentionally in the continued subordination of women of all colors and men of color. He also holds that:

> When two groups exist in a situation of inequality, it may be self-defeating to become embroiled in a quarrel over which is more unequal or the victim of greater oppression. The more salient question is how a condition of inequality for both is maintained and perpetuated – through what means is it reinforced?" (as cited in Rothenberg, 1992, p. 14).

Stereotypes reside in the relation between groups and derive from the process of attempting to differentiate between groups. In other words, the group essences might show at some deeper level the nature of the relation between groups" (for the racist the sense of outgroup essence seems to be closely link with "the sense of otherness"). This can apply where there are minimal differences between groups. Stereotyping may help to understand "minimal group differences" and may make them bigger where there were no obvious differences before. (Hornsey&Hogg, 2000, as cited in McGarty, Yzerbyt&Spears, 2004, p. 156).According to Andrzejewski (1996, p. 56):

> Oppression exists when any entity (society, group, or individual) intentionally or unintentionally distributes resources inequitably, refuses to share power, imposes ethnocentric culture, and/or maintains unresponsive and inflexible institutions toward another entity for its supposed benefit and rationalizes its actions by blaming or ignoring the victim.

2.3.3 Gender

The use of the concept of gender to explain the social differences between males and females is a fairly recent focus in sociology. The differences between these two seem to have been ignored by sociologists and those differences were believed to be immutable biological facts which the social was powerless to change. Nineteenth-century and most twentieth-century theorists took for granted the presumed "natural" binarism of sex. For them, men were the main focus of sociological interest while women usually tended to appear in discussions of marriage and the family (Sydie, 2006, p. 247).

In the early years, researchers concentrated on *sex roles* instead of *gender* (Sydie, 2006, p. 247). Sex roles, also known as gender roles, are defined as "a collection of attitudes and behaviors that are considered normal and appropriate in a specific culture for people of a particular sex" (Crooks, 2005, p. 42). The notions 'masculine' and 'feminine' denote the overall behavioral roles socially attributed to males and females, respectively. Gender-role expectations are said to be culturally defined and they have variations from society to society. Furthermore, they depend on the era in which they occur. Men in charge of the caring for their children while women were working was considered ridiculous in the past. However, nowadays couples often share housework according to their needs without paying attention to "the preconceived notions of how men and women *should* behave" (p. 42). At present, there has been a significant redefinition of male and female roles. People who used to live subjected to strong gender-role conditioning are now experiencing how these roles that have formed their lives are trying to destroy their limiting influences.

According to Begley (2000, p. 160) "gender roles are defined by behaviors" while "gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity." In other words,

genders stereotypes are "beliefs about the psychological traits and characteristics of, as well as the activities appropriate to, men or women." Gender role and gender stereotypes are concepts which are usually related. When people connect a behavior with either women or men, they might overlook individual differences and exceptions and come to think that the behavior is inevitably linked with one gender but not the other. As a consequence, gender roles furnish the material for gender stereotypes.

As far as the social-learning theory is concerned, people can identify with a masculine or feminine role or a combination of both by being exposed to "the social and cultural models and influences" (Crooks, 2005, p. 43), when they are very young. Furthermore, even before babies are born, parents appear to have preconceived notions about how boys and girl differ and these ideas are shown by choosing the toys, the colours of their objects and clothes, sports and activities they should practice or do which influence children's environments (Sedney, 1987 as cited in Crooks, p. 52). According to Crooks and other theorists (2005), gender roles are produced by a process known as socialization. Children learn and adopt society's expectations for behavior (p.59). Parents, peers, school, television and religion are said to be agents of socialization which convey expectations to children.

Both parents are viewed "as influential agents of gender-role socialization" because of the different ways in which they treat boys and girls and the different expectations they place on each of them (Crooks, 2005, p. 59). For example, when girls cry, they tend to be cuddled, while boys seem to be taught that they must not cry (p. 49). Some parents may not have the intention of transmitting gender roles. However, some behaviors are "natural" and they occur unconsciously (Crooks, 2005, p. 59). As a consequence, boys' fathers might invite them to

do boxing, whereas girls seem to be asked to do housework. In other words, this differential treatment may guide children towards specific and different adult roles (p. 59). Lamb and Power also suggested that fathers tend to convey gender-role expectations more than mothers do (p.59).

2.4 Golden Door/Nuovomondo: Basic Facts

The film from Italian-born but American-trained Emmanuele Crialese, *Golden Door/Nuovomondo* (2006), is a movie about Italian immigration. This 118 minute-film is set in the late 1900s and it is an exploration of an immigrant's ordeals, adventures and dreams. The story documents the journey of the Mancuso family: the widower Salvatore (Vincenzo Amato) and his two sons Angelo (Francesco Casisa) and Pietro (Filippo Pucillo), his mother, Donna Fortunata (Aurora Quattrocchi) and two young women from the same village, Rita (Federica De Cola) and Rosa (Isabella Ragonese), followed by Pietro, whom everybody assumes to be deaf-mute because he never speaks. They all decide to leave their hardships in a rural and superstitious village in Sicily to seek a better life in the United States. They go through "a Dantesque journey between worlds" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 2), in which they seemed to be "illuminated" by an enigmatic English woman, Lucy, or "Luce" (Charlotte Gainsbour) which is the translation Salvatore gives to her foreign name. At a shipyard, the family meets this widow from England. Her full name is Lucy Reed and she differs from the typical image of an Italian immigrant woman (Morris, 2007, para. 4). She needs a male escort to be allowed on the boat and is trying to find someone who will marry her and enable her to land in America lawfully. In turn, Lucy, according to the meaning of Salvatore's name (The

Savior), may be "saved by the trustworthy protagonist of this collective pilgrimage" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 3).

The film is essentially divided into three distinct segments: The first depicts why and how they decide to emigrate and the leave-taking, which is the end of poverty stricken primitive peasant life in Sicily; the second follows the week-long voyage to the U.S.A and the immigrants' lives on board the ship; the third documents the arrival at Ellis Island (the golden door to this earthly heaven) and the rituals of inspection and sorting – with only one set for each. Crialese's division of the movie seems to be as much symbolic as dramatic: some "Dantean visual references" may suggest that these three acts of the immigrants' journey might be intended as "hell, purgatory and heaven" (Marshall, L. 2006, para. 4).

The main set is obviously the dreary cramped boat, where hundreds of people who are travelling in steerage, are stuffed into the hull. It is exceptionally dim as only enough artificial light is added to shoot with a reddish orange candlelight style hue. The director might have wanted "to show the texture, the lack of air." The audience may "feel oppressed when they are in the dark" and have to make some effort to see. Crialese created a dark and stark atmosphere as he wanted the audience to travel with Salvatore and the other immigrants on the boat steerage (Merin, 2007).

As regards the darkness in Nuovomondo, the film's director of photography, Agnes Godard has explained "the literal and metaphorical significance" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 13) of the lack of light in the film:

> My main concern on the film was the darkness, especially aboard the ship […]. The dormitories-one for men and one for women- were crowded like a sardine can. I wanted real

> darkness, a darkness made for rats, not human beings. That's why we never used lamps to justify light (Godard, as cited in Oppenheimer, 2008, p. 28).

What is more, Godard seems to be "constantly tracking and craning to not only show the multitude of little stories taking place at once, but also the various types of interactions which may be humans with humans, humans with the environment, the characters' hopes, dreams, fantasies, and superstitions." It can be said that "the dialogue is largely irrelevant" and most parts in the film were "conveyed through the camera capturing looks, glances, smiles in the face of suffering and despair" (Lorefice, 2008, para. 4).

According to Scorsese (as cited in Meyer-Caput, 2013, para. 4), Crialese's "economy of expression" deepens the "moving experience of hearing the Sicilian dialect and seeing the practices of an ancient culture […] and the bewilderment of the older people when confronted with the modern world." Scorsese also argues that the film poignantly represents personal memories of his grandparents and their generation.

The movie is a mixture of the magical and the simplistic. The director may have tried to give it the epic mythology and folklore feel of being told by uneducated but yet imaginative and dreamy people. It can be considered a blending of "hope and ignorance" (Lorefice, 2008, para. 5).

De Grandis (as cited in Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 8) points out that Crialese "subsumes his film of migration in a compound neologism that integrates the old and the new", which creates a truly different dimension of the migratory condition.

The opening scene presents "an almost primeval picture of life in the Madonie Mountains of northern Sicily at the beginning of the 20th century" (Marshall, 2006, para. 6). Life is difficult

and peasants are poor. The terrain is beautiful but harsh. The movie starts in jarring, silent blackness. Then two sad-eyed men, Salvatore and his elder son Angelo, wearing tattered clothes and bare-footed appear in daylight climbing a steep mountain with stones clenching between their bleeding teeth to pay as a token to the holy place. They fight their way up to a crucifix mounted on a hilltop. They drop on the shrine at the peak – thus giving them the right to ask God about whether or not they should emigrate. He is then shown a series of postcards (based on authentic historical models) from his younger son showing America with money growing on trees, gigantic carrots and chicken that are ten times bigger than normal, and takes this as a sign from above to depart for the new world. These postcard images are later translated into a series of dream-visions involving giant carrots and rivers of milk, which keep the tone from becoming too somber – though they are used once or twice too often. This is an important element in the film as it develops and begins an imaginative world that these people are about to plunge into. The imagination of the new world from Salvatore's perspective will lead the movie and open the doors to the audience's imagination as to what these immigrants thought about America. This is the skeleton of the movie. The director also seems "to separate the old world from the new one not just by an ocean but also by the inextricable immersion in ancient superstitions and beliefs". Nuovomondo "expands the creative potential of migration by capitalizing on the tension between the historical, the real and the surreal" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 9). Nuovomodo seems to represent "the part for the whole while it seems to establish a relationship of contiguity between a mass diaspora, a historical event of gigantic proportions such as the great migration at the turn of the last century, and one specific story, a minuscule point of a large, pointillist image." In this manner, the journey of Salvatore and his family may be seen "as a private story", which, like

many other stories, might construct public history by "intertwining the real and the hyperreal in the style of a cinematic pointillist image" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 16-17).

What is more, what can first seem to be "a disturbing stylistic incongruence" could derive "from Crialese's (and Godard's) foremost intention of telling a story and refiguring history from the point of view of the interface between reality and dream, voice and silence-that" may define *Golden Door'*s protagonists. At the very centre of the authors' view does not seem to be just "the unspeakable fear of the unknown", but also "the story of a deception" (Crialese, as cited in Midding, 2007, p. 35).

After much discussion and heart-searching, Mancuso applied to travel to America. When leaving their village, Salvatore brings with him his mother Fortunata who is the village healer and has certain powers she can use against curses, his two sons and two other women that are to be married in America. The movie depicts marvelous detail of their preparations for the voyage, their buying clothes and the families at the wharves to bid them farewell.

"Fantasy sequences are layered in the gritty realism of the location shots" not only in the rocky mountains of northern Sicily but also in the dark interior of the ship. For example, the scene in which Salvatore and his sons, Angelo and Pietro, hike through the harsh countryside to take Fortunata before sailing off, Salvatore sees children carrying gigantic carrots and apples over the fields (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 22).

Crialese justifies the use of "the recurring long shots" in the first part of the movie. He argues that the protagonists of the magical rituals that the audience sees when the film begins "can follow and enact these ancient traditions" due to the fact that these people are so inherently connected with their land: "These people are a part of the land and soil on which they live"

(Crialese, as cited in Midding, p. 35). On the contrary, in the rest of the film, the sky is scarcely visible. As Crialese emphasizes, the immigrants' journey has a literal and a metaphorical meaning at the same time. During the trip the characters became "subjects of modernity". This is a radical development at the end of the 19th century. These people leave a rural society to go to an industrial one in a very short period of time. While they tended to work on the farms with their whole body, in the new world they are transformed into "a mere link in the chain of production" (Crialese, as cited in Midding, 2007, p. 35).

The second part of the film is the voyage. The re-creation of the boat and life on board seems to be sometimes exciting but at other times hard with the crowding and the nervousness of people who do not really know what lies ahead of them. It is so detailed that viewers tend to feel that they are there with the passengers sharing the trip. Upon arrival, at a shipyard, Salvatore and his family wait with what must be the rest of Sicily to board the ocean liner to Ellis Island. While waiting, a mysterious English woman, Lucy, appears and acts as if she travels with them. She is a widow from England trying to find someone who will marry her and enable her to land in America lawfully. Although she has nothing to do with the Mancuso family, Salvatore is enchanted by her beauty and therefore acts as if she really is part of the family. During the dream-like trip, Lucy becomes "a wild card", who crosses "the rigid social and sexual divisions that apply on board" (Marshall, 2006, para. 9).

After a descent into hell, the abyss of the steerage on the steamship whose allusive name is Dante, the immigrants in the movie appear to "experience a gradual ascent to a purgatory of pseudo-scientific purification during the internment at Ellis Island" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 3). To put it in another way, the final section of Nuovomondo is the arrival in the United

States. While they watch the statue of Liberty in New York's harbour, they land at Ellis Island, the point of entry to America for so many of the migrants.

As mentioned earlier, this third part of the film depicts the migrants' "rite of passage" at Ellis Island, foregrounding" the historical and psychological burden of the medical and mental investigations to which the immigrants are subjected" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 12). They are herded into overcrowded (and segregated) quarters, interrogated in a language they can hardly understand, they are prodded and poked for disease or anything that would prohibit their entry. As one of the men is mute, the other members of the family go to great lengths to help him enter.

It is interesting to note that "while this historically grounded part of the narrative" takes place on Ellis Island, "these scenes were shot in a former immigration hotel and train station" in Buenos Aires city, Argentina (Godard, as cited in Oppenheimer, 2007, p.26; Genovese, 2005, p. 38). "Thus, the realistic, on-location feeling of these sequences is, in hindsight, suspended through the choice of the setting. The realism of this section seems to be more dependent on the light of the shooting than on the location itself."

At the end, the Mancusos face the audience, as the scene fades into total whiteness that anticipates the conclusion of the film. In a surrealistic transition, the white background is converted into a river of milk; Lucy Reed's head, then Salvatore's, Angelo's and Pietro's appear out of it, as the family seems to be swimming in this river of milk. At the same time, and as the final titles descend on the screen, with Nina Simone's voice singing the spiritual and strong "Sinnerman", the camera pulls back and one, two, ten, hundreds of migrants can

be seen swimming in the same river of milk which might represent “a membrane between the old and the new life.” But the emersion cannot be regarded as “a moment of purification”; there does not seem to be judgment to grasp “but only confusion and hope” which are manifested in the migrants’ look. When they eventually begin to swim, the audience can follow them with a feeling of understanding in their heart, as if they knew where the river ends, as if they were their own family, as if they could explain certainly that America is the correct orientation (Rinelli, 2015, para. 9).

In addition, in this last scene of Nuovomondo, where the protagonists tentatively swim in a doubtful milky ocean, the liquid dimension that Crialese’s “magic realism” literally “emerges” can propose an uncertain arrival. This arrival may be also a departure toward an unfamiliar “new world made of reality and dream, real and hyperreal”. Nuovomondo’s conclusion reflects “in high-angle the same coincidence of arrival and departure” toward and unexplored “new world of human tolerance that ended Crialese’s previous film, Respiro, through the final underwater sequence in low-angle” (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 30).

The protagonists in Nuovomondo can symbolize “migration as an existential condition suspended between worlds, identities and, in this specific case, cinematic styles”, the film’s swimmers may transform into “creatures of the inbetweenness, floating between the real and the hyperreal, the referent and simulacrum” (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 35).

Chapter 3: Analysis

3.1 Stereotyping in the film

Iacovetta (1992, p. 105) explains that Italians had long-standing stereotypes which regard the inferiority of the Italian race and the alleged inability of Italians to practice the rules of democratic government or conform to middle-class standards of conduct. They were depicted as "hot-blooded" and "culturally back-ward" peasants too. As usually happens with most stereotypes, the popular images of Italian immigrants always had contradictory strains. There are patronizing portraits of Italian peanut sellers and barbers as child-like innocents who perform their jobs happily. However, this contrasted sharply, for example, with the hot-tempered, stiletto-wielding punk. Iacovetta adds that it was the Italian peasants from the south who provided the source for most of these negative images. She also argues that they were portrayed as "stocky, dark skinned, and suffering from malnutrition and poor levels of education"; southern Italians were thought to be among the least capable of adapting to the industrial economies of the new country.

A key source to explore the stereotyped perceptions of the Italians and other poor immigrants in America is an early 1890 publication of photojournalism by Jacob Riis: *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (1890). This work documented the squalid living conditions of immigrants in the New York slums, making them visible to the otherwise unconcerned middle and upper classes and shortly inspiring many reforms of working-class housing. In *How the Other Half Lives* (Riis, 1890, p. 41) Jacob denigrates Italian immigrants. The Italian immigrant, he argues, follows his natural bent of "destitution and disorder. The Italian comes in at the bottom, and in the generation that came over the sea

he stays there". Riis also explains that the Italian is "ignorant", "learns slowly, if at all" and is "hot-headed", but he condescendingly comments that the Italian is "lighthearted and, if his fur is not stroked the wrong way, inoffensive like a child" (p. 41-45).

As far as the movie is concerned, the director appears to have worked with stereotypes. When the viewers watch the film, they can find stereotypical perceptions of Italians, especially of Sicilians. For instance, Mancuso and his family are shown to live in the Middle Ages and they are separated from nearly every manifestation of modernity. The Mancusos and the other immigrants on the ship seem to be quite rustic. For instance, in the scene in which a group of Italians are talking about their home town origins, one man expresses that he has never been surrounded by so many foreigners before. It is an exciting moment but reflective of how much change was required to take this typical stereotyped farmer stock from the fields of the Old World to the metropolis of America. In the same scene, when Salvatore establishes conversations below decks, he is startled to learn that people from other villages speak the same language. As regards the language, the director maintains "a truthful report of the travelogues of those characters that inhabit his tale, as to both their long journey and their cultural background in Sicily; in keeping a faithful use of Sicilian dialect", in order to evoke "an extreme closeness to his characters who in their language express their identities" (Rinelli, 2015, para. 3).

Amato creates a brooding Salvatore, a dark-eyed maelstrom of a man and with a powerful expression of his sculpture. As far as the forcefulness of the actor's facial expressions, the director notes that "it spoke to the deepest richest idea of the film: the immigrant's desire to

retain his singularity while becoming part of a new whole" (Godard, as cited in Oppenheimer, 2008, p. 24).

The Mancusos are viewed as illiterate, innocent and superstitious too. They live in a peasant world with a preternatural instinct for magic and mysticism. Salvatore seems to have a wary innocence. He is first enticed to embark on the journey by crude postcards depicting giant hens and overgrown fruit in the endlessly fertile Land of the Free. In other words, the photographs describe the United States as a place where giant coins grow on bushes, where onions are as big as donkey carts and chickens as big as donkeys. In addition to this, when he must make that decision, Salvatore climbs a craggy hill with stone in his mouth, laying it down at the shrine of their patron saint whose supernatural counsel he seeks. This is a mysterious scene which seems to be steeped in both historical and cultural distance. Furthermore, by placing the characters on top of a mountain and then tracing their progress to the sea, the beginning of the film can give the story the aura of a legend, a characterization that may express the director's feelings too (Kazan, 2009, p. 220). Moreover, Salvatore and his family are portrayed as rather naïve in thinking that they would have no difficulties in finding Salvatore's brother, who left to live in the New World many years before, because they are almost identical. This is despite the fact that, as almost every classic immigrant, neither of them can read nor write and they do not have any idea where he is living in the United States.

Crialese's composition of characters highlights their credulity and inborn innocence, which matches the contemporary depiction of the Italian immigrant produced by Riis (1890), for example, who reproduces this stereotype: "The man is so ignorant that, as one of the sharpers who prey upon him put it once, it "would be downright sinful not to take him in".

In terms of appearance, the Mancuso's are shown as untidy. At the beginning of the film, Salvatore and his elder son wear tattered and dirty clothes. Then, in the following scene, Fortunata and one of the girls are shown to be unkempt too and when the mute boy takes off his hat for them, some snails slip off his head. Furthermore, before the trip, as the Mancusos were very poor, Salvatore has to sell their only possessions (two donkeys, goats and rabbits) in order to finance emigration. He uses some of this money to buy some clothes to travel. Don Ercole sells them appropriate clothing and shoes – some clothes that belonged to a dead baron– and tells them not to bother putting on their shoes until they go to a city. The characters do not wear shoes in the village so they were not used to wearing them and the film shows their discomfort when they actually have to put them on. Don Ercole also gives them instructions to board an ocean liner as third class passengers because they were not used to travelling either. As regards tidiness, there is also an interesting scene where the immigrants are brushing out their hair desperately and they try to "assemble a veneer of cleanliness" to arrive at Ellis Island (Heath, 2009, para. 10).

What is more, as mentioned before, Italians were superstitious people. Nelson (2005, p. 1006) explained that "the Roman Catholicism of almost all Italian immigrants has led to their being stereotyped as people predisposed to exotic superstitions." For example, the veteran Italian actress Aurora Quattrocchi gives one of the film's strongest performances as Donna Fortunata, a character who seems at first to represent the pagan backwardness of the old world but gradually grows in authority and arguably becomes the film's moral anchor. Fortunata is the village doctor in her town and uses certain powers against curses. At the beginning of the movie, Rita, one of the girls, is tormented by a feeling like she has "a snake in her stomach" and has so ever since they were approached by local merchant Don Ercole

(Filippo Luna) to be mail-order brides for established men in America. The squirming of the snake in Rita's belly produces restlessness, discontent and anxiety. Fortunata performs a piece of folk magic, a sort of fake exorcism, affecting to tug what looks awfully like a joke-shop serpent from inside her. In addition, the peasants' lives are influenced by superstition to the point one of them uses garlic to prevent her from crashing over the side of the ship.

Furthermore, Steiner (as cited in Cosco, 2003, p. 79) "individualizes and humanizes the Italians" but he also "stereotypes and exoticizes" them. Italians are not all alike, yet all smell of garlic and are easily the dirtiest immigrants. All Italians are not anarchists, but all quarrel and gesticulate wildly, and many are law-breakers." Italians have long faced an association in some segment of the public's mind with criminal activity. This common belief became a stereotype within a stereotype: all Italians had a propensity to commit crime, and all Italian criminals made money from their illicit behavior. Such suspicions usually followed Italians especially those who came from the South of Italy.

As regards the film, the surname of the family, "Mancuso", seems to be popular in mafia families. Furthermore, when the Mancusos and their charges reach their city of embarkation, it can be seen a bustling, filthy dive full of cheats and criminals and some decent and helpful folk too.

The Italian's ignorance, gullibility and propensity to incur in deceitful or delinquent acts is depicted in several parts of the film, For example, when they are about to embark, one man tries to cheat on the Mancuso family forcing them to buy some useless medicine which was first supposed to be to cure muteness. However, it was for a toothpaste for bad smell, products that the family Mancuso and other Italians from the south of Italy had never seen in their lives.

- “Can you take us to the doctor?
- Yes.
- So take us there!
- Are you ill?
- We’re going to America.
- Any rashes? Stomach ache? Any itches? Let me see your tongue. Got any fleas? Any itching? Are you blind, deaf or mute? How do you feel? Got a fever? He’s not speaking. Is he mute? This one’s mute!
- No, there’s no mute here.
- They repatriate the deaf mutes.
- What do they do?
- They send them home.
- Where?
- I can sell you a cure I’ve invented. It makes the dead talk.
- That’s rubbish! I’m a healer. I know about doctor things.
- Maybe you do, maybe you don’t but this cure for mutes is something you have to buy. Let me see if you have fleas. Stick your tongue out. Come on! Move on! Move on!
- Get out of here!
- Where are you taking that?
- To America.
- You have to pay.
- What?
- You have to pay for it.
- What?

- It only costs two cents.
- Two cents?
- Two cents.
- Why?
- Because it's for sale.
- What is it?
- Medicine for the teeth.
- For the teeth?
- He said it was for the mutes!
- No, it's for teeth.
- We don't need it, then. Let's go."

In this part of the script, the Mancusos are depicted both as ignorant and as squalid, two stereotypes regularly associated with the Italian immigrants huddled in the New York tenements described by Riis (1890).

What is more, Italians were not used to taking pictures either and when they are prepared to board they are asked for a photograph. They seem to feel odd in that situation. As they pose behind a painted set, Lucy, the Englishwoman, walks into the photo as though she were part of this peasant family. In contrast with the Mancusos, she seems to be used to having photographs taken. As regards gesticulations, Italians are seen to gesticulate much throughout the movie.

The family played an important role in most Italians' lives (Burgan, 2005, p.43) and Riis (1890, p. 41-45) states that Italians are known to be lighthearted. As far as the movie is concerned, it can be viewed that making the decision of leaving the family and town is not

easy and many Italians tended to feel guilty for thinking about the idea of emigrating. They also seem to "refuse to leave behind their own magic," a refusal that may "present difficulties in breaching the "golden door" of its English language title." The film, "like its characters, seems to "straddle Old World and New, its style might blend the sparse, hushed intensity of European masters with a distinct impetus, a refusal to retreat into hopeless circularity or narrative impasse, as befits a film about determination and hope" (Heath, 2009, para. 5). In one of the scenes of the first part, Salvatore, who is torn between the ties of the past and the promises of the future, is seen suffering. As Fortunata does not want to leave the spirits of their relatives, she refuses to depart. He pleads with his mother for his right to leave behind his ancestors' plight of misery. In protest, Salvatore digs a hole in the ground and almost completely buries himself in din dark, rich soil demanding to know what is so good about this arid, poverty stricken, backward place they live in. He seems to feel bad because he does not want to leave his hometown and family but he also knows that going to America will be the only way to survive. Unexpectedly, his face is "captured in extreme close-up and almost submerged by dirt, is inundated by a rain of gold coins, which mysteriously fall from a money tree, producing metallic, crystal clear, festive bells'sounds" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 21). The pouring of these coins might signal "both the promise of riches and the certainty of death" (Kermode, 2007, para. 5). As regards the rain of gold coins in this disconcerting scene, Salvatore's imagination could have "been forever marked by the pictures that Pietro showed him at the summit of his pilgrimage to the Christus figure: an image of a tree bearing gigantic gold coins" which may be seen "as biblically tempting fruits, and a girl and a man standing next to an overwhelmingly tall chicken" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 22). As Crialese explains, "the postcards of gigantic edible animals, fruits, and vegetables, of trees bearing

disproportionate gold coins are historical documents in the archives of the Ellis Island Museum of Immigration." They were the first pictures of America with which the peasants from the South of Italy, who were mostly uneducated, "associated their longing for freedom from poverty." Crialese also comments: "I think my film mirrors the power of images of a fictional world on a different world" (Crialese, as cited in Midding, 2007, p. 35). "This power of images of a fictional world may have constructed the dream of America as the promised Land (p. 35) throughout the history of cinema." According to Crialese, people are today "still under this influence, which he defines as "the hypnotizing power" ("die hypnotische Macht") of the American dream. The postcards might not be photographs, "based on the principles of imitation or reduplication of reality." They can be rather, according to Jean Baudrillar's definition, "simulacra, simulations that replace the real or the referent with an image or a sign". As a consequence, "the journey into modernity" that the film's protagonists seem to undertake can allude to "the disappearance of the referent" characterizes postmodernism. Simulation could erase the referent as "it is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 2). It seems, indeed, that "this hyperreal-suspended between the magic and the factual-that defines Crialese's postmodern tale of migration" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 23).

In the morning, Fortunata resurrects him, emerging from the hut to tug his hand from the earth, and soon the whole rag-tag clan is making their way towards a seaport. This scene may symbolize "the two worlds, the brown soil and the golden coins", it derives from "the interconnected presence of the real and the surreal" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 21).

The close-knits typical Italian families are seen in the scene of the departure. The mise en scene of this part evokes the separation of families, which involves sadness and guilt (see pictures one and two in appendix).

Morrison (2007, para. 3) writes that:

> After the Mancuso family has arrived at the dock and their ship is about to depart, there is a moment when the screen is filled with an overhead shot of hundreds of people who pack the film frame. A few moments pass, and very gradually, a schism on the diagonal appears on the right side ... a thin white line which slowly expands, splitting the crowd (and shot) into two. This abstraction is startling.

The audience might assume "this is another fantasy sequence", however, it soon becomes apparent that "the crowd of people is really two crowds: on the left, the passengers who are on board the ship; on the right, the people on the dock who are seeing them off" (Morrison, 2007, para. 3). The shot of the ship leaving the dock in Sicily in an echo of the wider separation to come seems to be fantastic. The highlight appears to be "a great bird's eye view of a mob where the earth suddenly left behind, a visualization of societal and soon cultural divide" (Lorefice, 2008, para. 4). In addition, the heartbreaking shot when the ship departs introduces us to the second act. The director, Crialese, seems to put the camera, and the viewers, "at a dangerous, canted vantage point way up" (Morris, 2007, para. 6). He "raises his camera high above the masses so that they, at the beginning indistinguishable in their commonality", seem to be "torn apart as the ship leaves the dock" (Rinelli, 2015, para. 6). Then it slowly starts to move with thousands of passengers watching their loved ones on the

dock. But only when it heads to the left of the frame the full emotional gravity becomes apparent. No longer can one distinguish the passengers from the folks they are leaving behind. One side seems to be peeled apart from the other, "again with agonizing slowness, as the ship itself moans and groans" (Morris, 2007, para. 6), which may create a void between them. Then the void created may be "filled with agony, hope and thunderous silence, broken only when the sound of the foghorn goes off" (Rinelli, 2015, para. 5). Then, everyone looks up. That is where the camera is present, too. The combination of the camera lens and camera angle creates "a perspectival illusion that they are all on the same plane." It seems that in this economical but effective way, Crialese, has found a striking metaphor for the chasm opening up between those members of the families who go and those members of the families who stay behind. This scene which seems to be one of the most stunning and memorable parts in the movie can also represent the old which separates from the new (Morrison, 2007, para. 2). Furthermore, as regards this scene of the departure of the ship from the dock, Morrison (as cited in Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 26) argues that the "hyperreal" dimension, which has been mentioned before, also characterizes this powerful sequence of the narrative. He also explains that "in a startling crane shot", the camera, which was placed on the highest deck of the ship, looks down from a first-class point of view at passengers who are travelling steerage. "The frame composition graphically renders a speechless, anonymous mass of dark heads, hats, and cloaks. Slowly, a schism on the diagonal appears on the right side" (Morrison, as cited in Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 24), "and the crowd and the shot gradually split, a cell that is duplicating itself, with unseen gazes uniting for the last time those immigrants who embrace the unknown" and those people "who cling to the known" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 24). What is more, the director declares that that image, that metaphor was his "point of departure"

when he started to write his script. That moment had to "look as if the earth were diving. The distance between ship and harbor is like a wound that opens up." A part of culture and tradition disappears; another part remains (Crialese, as cited in Midding p. 35). "In the eerie silence of the opening wound, the abrupt sound of a ship horn breaks the metaphor, and the travelers turn in unison toward the off screen source of the sound and, at the same time, toward the camera" (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 25).

When the long journey starts on the boat everybody sees it leaving the coast of Sicily. Everyone seems to be nervous, sad and worried simultaneously because they leave everything they have and know (family, home and the land they work) to go to a world that they have only heard about. During the boat trip the audience may feel compassion for everybody on the boat as though they are a big new family going towards the same goal instead of separate people following their own personal journey. This unity among the third class poverty seems to be interrupted by an upper class travelling to America and Miss Lucy. The dissonance of the upper class travelers might appear in many cases towards an interest in Miss Lucy, who has attracted everybody's attention due to her beauty and tactful dressing. Poverty and squalor are regularly associated with the Italian immigrants, as the nineteenth-century account by Riis (as cited in Turley, 2016, p. 147) underscores. Indeed, the Mancusos are depicted as extremely poor, with few or no personal belongings. Their clothes are in bad conditions and they live in misery. There is a scene in which the Mancusos enter in their cart and they are seen very gradually disappearing behind the stone wall of their village, as their fellow villagers look on; at the last instant a mule bucks across the screen. This quality, but overly art filled film seems to show the audience a different side of the immigrant story. It shows their poor living conditions and the lack of resources for travelling too. They leave

from a rural Sicily, a land where there is no electricity, running water or other conveniences in life to a go on a giant steal monster – their boat. This story seems to throw the characters from one strange new world to another.

In connection with national stereotypes in Italy, Tsuda (2006, p. 181) points out that:

> One often hears that southerners are "warmer" that the inhabitants of the North, who are characterized as aloof and arrogant. This generalization usually pervades immigration politics in the form of public reactions to illegal migration. In the North, anti-immigrant social movements have received regular support. Southerners view the absence of these movements in the South as a proof that they are "less racist." Moreover whereas Northerners have often reacted strongly against migration, southerners are perceived as more sympathetic to illegal migrants due to the importance of emigration in the history of southern Italy and the region's relative property.

Iacovetta (1992, p. 105) reports that Southern Italians were considered to be not only hot-blooded but also highly emotional, temperamental, and lacking inner discipline.

In Nuovomondo, the members of the Mancuso family are portrayed as innocent, however, they are also tough and shrewd and they seem to "refuse to act like victims, even if it hurts." The Mancusos, especially the men, tend to be warm. Salvatore seems to be quite emotional and reserved too. For instance, during the trip, Lucy, the English woman, starts to become interested in Salvatore as opposed to the other men who keep bribing her by saying that they

will find her a husband, apparently in return for sexual favours. When Salvatore hears the other men speak of Lucy, he becomes protective of her as if she really is travelling with his family. In other words, he defends her showing he is a real "hot-blooded" and quite temperamental too. What is more, as he gathers his grandmother, his son and his brother along with the two young mail-order brides from the village, he does his best to protect them all on their journey, demonstrating his paternalistic side.

According to Nelson (2005, p. 1007), "Italians have long been associated with hearty appetites for food" and "they have also been associated with great romantic passion and sexual energy". In *Golden Doors*, when immigrants are about to board, they are offered to buy some food that is associated with Italians too. Peppers and garlic are typical vegetables that are usually consumed in the south of Italy and most immigrants continue eating them in the countries where they emigrate with their families. Italian immigrants are also shown eating their own typical food in the film. As far as romance is concerned, Salvatore is described to be enchanted by Lucy's beauty. Although there are many rumors spread throughout the boat about this English woman who is travelling alone, this does not stop the way Salvatore feels about her.

As far as Lucy is concerned, with her vivid clothes, "her extravagant red hair, her clipped British vowels", her moneyed tone and "empathetic understanding of the ways of the common people", she seems too often not only to have escaped from the set of the film Titanic but also to be in striking contrast to the stereotype of the rest of the migrants (Kermode, 2007, para. 7). "Lucy's ashen skin is the extreme light in grade of colors set with marvelous mastery" by Godard, Nuovomondo's director of photography, "against the bronze of the Southern peasants." It was "neither white, nor black, rather "olive-skinned" was the

definition given to those coming from southern shores of the Mediterranean" once they arrive at Ellis Island (Rinelli, 2015, para. 4).

As regards Italian immigrants from the South, their emotional and festive nature is also a recurrent feature of their peasant identity. The scene in the movie where the third class of humanity struggles with dramatic bravery against claustrophobic conditions and a storm that leaves everyone almost dead is followed by a marvelous music performance where the *tammorra*, a large drum used in many folk musical traditions in the South of Italy, is employed to convey feelings and emotions.

In sum, *Golden Doors* accurately portrays the most salient stereotypes regularly associated with the Italian immigrants. These social perceptions were developed by the local Americans in New England to categorize the newcomers, usually in a negative light. The historical records usually portrayed Italians as uneducated, dirty, superstitious people, who could be easily manipulated by their own fellow-countrymen in the United States or by other unscrupulous conmen, On a more positive note, however, Italians were also generally regarded as warm, peaceful and hard-working, with a strong sense of community and solidarity ties which enabled them to survive in an otherwise hostile context.

3.2 Discrimination and prejudice

Italian immigrants seemed to be victims of oppression and discrimination. Italians faced prejudice from many Americans. Some of the prejudice were linked to their lasting stereotypes. Americans used to call them "dirty" names like "wop", "guinea" and "dago" (La Bianca, 2010, p. 57).

Stereotypes can actually be self-fulfilling prophecies (Snyder, as cited in McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2004, p.10). Stereotypes might affect the ways that members of one group could treat another and that in turn might lead to modify the behavior of the stereotyped group. For instance, when it is perceived that the members of some group are violent and dangerous, it may lead to hostile treatment of that group which may in turn lead to a violent response from the stereotyped group (McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2004, p.10).

In Sharon Begley's view (2000), stereotypes usually present a trap into which many people are likely to fall. In 1995, Steele and Aroson conducted a study in which they report how the existence of negative stereotypes usually affects people who are members of the stereotyped groups. They also claim that people are frequently threatened in situations in which they believe that the way they perform could identify them as examples of their group's negative stereotyped traits. This situation is called "stereotype threat" because the presence of the negative stereotypes may threaten people's performance and their self-concept. The threat of being identified with a negative stereotype might be an ever-present factor which can place people in the spotlight and cause not only tension but also anxiety about performance (Steele&Aronson, 1995, as cited in Newsweek, 2000).

The history of oppression in America as experienced by Italian immigrants who came to the United States in pursuit of the American dream is well-documented. Immigrants seemed to encounter discomfort, rejection, even persecution because they arrived as "foreigners" with different customs, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs.

The four million Italian immigrants who arrived in America between 1891 and 1920 were not so welcomed (Amfitheatrof, 1973, p. 169; Coppa, 1976, p. 128). Feagin (1997, p. 23-24) explains that as foreign, Catholic, often poor, and numerous, Italians were shunned by white,

Protestant, middle-class Americans. Italian and Italian Americans faced overt discrimination from organizations such as the American Protective Association and the Ku Klux Klan and from legislative immigration restriction and quota facts. Likewise, various stereotypes of Italians flourishing within the American culture compounded the discrimination they faced. The most common of these stereotypes maintained that Italians were inherently ignorant, dirty, and violent (Riis, 1890, p. 91-95; Higham, 1983, p. 66).

When the World War I ended, Americans started to turn inward. The nativist grew along with a mounting hysteria that came to be known as the Red Scare. Immigrants began to be suspect of having communist sympathies and any person who has a foreign sounding last name was a candidate for discrimination and possible deportation. The press tended to feed into this frenzy by informing the "large" number of immigrants who came to America from war-torn Europe. However, statistics do not support this claim (Daniels, 1990, p. 281). There were also strict guidelines that were enforced and restricted the kinds of people who were allowed entry. First claims were given to parents of citizens and then to skilled agriculturalists (Archdeacon, 1983, p. 175).

In the Congressional Record, there are some speeches made by Congressman Johnson, the chief author of the 1024 quota act. In 1927, as he was justifying the passage of the act, he stated:

> Today, instead of a nation descended from generations of freemen bred to a knowledge of principles and practice of self-government, of liberty under the law, we have a heterogeneous population, no small proportion of which is sprung from races that throughout the centuries

> have known no liberty at all…In other words our capacity to maintain our cherished institutions stands diluted by a stream of alien blood, with all of its misconceptions respecting the relationships of the governing power to the governed…(Daniels, 1990, p. 203).

As far as the movie is concerned, there are many parts which depict how the Italian immigrants suffered from racism. For instance, the audience can see how the immigrants travelled. One of the usual features of the journey was overcrowded and segregated sleeping quarters. There are also scenes of people who are being herded like cattle through a dehumanizing selection process which may set many alarm bells ringing. For instance, they have showers which offer pre-echoes of the Holocaust and the cell blocks which seem to house incomers like prisoners. The discrimination against these marginal immigrants becomes particularly conspicuous when compared to the differential treatment given to middle or upper class passengers, usually from a white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant background.

When the immigrants approach Ellis Island, it is covered in fog, which clouds any opportunity for the passengers and the audience from seeing what would come ahead of them, the New World. America remains unseizable. The characters have arrived in their dream-land, but they seem to be completely helpless about what to do. It takes them a while to figure out that they have to swim. Then, when everyone comes off shore, they are separated and put into different groups. They are clearly segregated. The authorities start differentiating them on the basis of their alleged individual level of intelligence, education and usefulness. Through this social-Darwinist natural selection process, the government of the new world reveals its bio-political side, eliminating those who have biological (both mental and

physical) features that do not fit with the preordered model. The differentiation is enforced to determine whether they are good enough to enter and live in America, as the authorities believe that intelligence is spread genetically. As a consequence, the newcomers are subjected to the demeaning indignation of the physical and psychological weight of the medical and mental investigations. There were entrance tests and discriminatory interrogations which were meant to determine who are “fit” enough to become American citizens. In heart-rending scenes of Golden Gate, the eugenics policies adopted by the US immigration authorities are illustrated by the dehumanizing tests the newcomers are subjected to, for example, arranging differently shaped blocks in a rectangular tray (which does not seem inherently more rational than carrying a stone up a hill in your mouth). Any person who does not pass the tests is sent back to the old country, while the people who are deemed “worth it” or needed remain in the United States.

When Salvatore Mancuso is taking the mental test, he shows “the inherent intolerance of the pseudo-scientific approach of eugenics towards a different logic.” For example, the border officers who examine Salvatore confront him with a problem that he is not able to solve according to the way he sees the world, a world “plagued by hunger and misery” (Heyer-Caput, 2013, para. 12).

> Immigration officer: "You are on a boat with two sacks. One full with bread, the other with gold. There is a storm: Which one do you throw away?"
>
> Salvatore (who seems confused): "Gold ... I can't throw it away. Bread ... I eat the bread.... So, I don't throw anything. Right? ... Right?"

The film shows how Lucy wittily challenges the officer and how the latter replies automatically the eugenics credo: “It has been proven that lack of intelligence is genetically inherited, is contagious in a way…We are trying to prevent below average people from mixing with our citizens [...].” “What a modern vision ...” answers Lucy, who appears to embody the epitome of modernity.

Throughout the tests, Lucy also reveals her identity as an English woman, and is threatened by the authorities who tell her that it is very uncommon for a single English woman to travel with Italians. This is a clear example of the deep-seated prejudice against Italians and the stereotyped differences with other ethnic groups. Indeed, very little is known about Lucy, who opts to go in steerage with immigrant farmers when she should be in first or second class as the narrative tends to illustrate. Moreover, as the motive for her connection to the Mancuso family is never explained, her attachment continues a cheerful component in the film and the other passengers, although the officials could not understand this mixture of classes.

Two of the members of the Mancuso family, Pietro and Fortunata, resist the tests. Pietro, who is deaf and mute, is also threatened to be discriminated and deported because of his handicap, as the Ellis Island authorities feel that he may somehow transmit his disability. He fails to carry out the orders issued by immigration officials recognizing them as meaningless acts of sequence.

As regards Madre Fortunata, she refuses to accept and participate in demeaning procedures which she finds irrational. She questions the examining immigration official to define a worthy human being, a power which she does not credit men with, and she expresses her

refusal to be catalogued as an object. As Rinelli (2015, para. 7) accurately points out: "Basically her skepticism brings to light what narratives and discourses celebrating America, as an open-armed sanctuary for everyone, obscure".

Pietro's and Fortunata's charged "failures problematize the so-called intelligence tests to which the immigrants are subjected." They also question the process of choosing future American citizens on the grounds of culturally biased questions and answers. These cognitive tests forcefully collapse people's lives, emotions and characters into meaningless and insignificant identifications. Such authoritative efficiency fails to judge Pietro's or Fortunata's actual intelligence, while Fortunata's determined character and pre-modern wisdom are recognized as defects instead of advantages (Kalogeras, 2012, p. 91). Eventually, in the final scenes, the authorities speak to the family and announce that Pietro and Fortunata would return to their home country because they have been classified as mute and feeble-minded respectively. Only Salvatore and Angelo are allowed to enter America. The audience may also resent the script's claim that American immigration staff in the early years of the century applied Nazi-style eugenics to the selection procedure, which rejected the unfirm of mind and body as "undesirables". However, the scenes of humiliating physical examinations and aptitude tests seem to be "apparently based on extensive research in the archives" (Marshall, 2006, para. 3).

A part of the script of the movie shows the travelers, after the occasionally life-threatening struggle of crossing the Atlantic, detained for questioning and examination. The immigrants ask about the shapes immigrants are written when they arrive on the island. These scenes show how the agents in America discriminate the newcomers and the oppression they seem

to push on the Italians by ordering them to do the tests or else go back, leaving them no other option.

- "What is that stuff? All those stars and crosses?
- She wants to know what all these shapes are, sir.
- Does she think we're going to harm her?
- MAN 2: Madam, do you think we wish to do you harm? What do you want from us?
  MAN 2: What do we want from them?
  MAN 1: Them who?
  MAN 2: Who do you mean? Everyone from the old world. All the folk who came over from the old world. Would you explain to her that we want to know if they're fit enough to enter the new world? Madam, we want to know if you're fit enough to enter the new world.
  - And you think you're God? Who are you to decide if we're fit or not to enter this new world of yours? Who do we think we are, God, to decide who's good or not good to enter the new world?
  - If she wants to enter the United States, she's got to accept our rules. If she refuses to take the test, she will be deported.
  MAN 2: Madam, if you wish to enter the new world, you must accept its rules. Sit here and take the exam, or we'll deport you. We'll send you home."

Some immigrants were deported and others were detained on the island too. LaGumina (1999, p. 249) describes the detention of immigrants on Ellis Island:

> A number of prospective Italian immigrants were detained on Ellis Island in New York by immigration officials when the validity of their passports was questioned. In their desperation, they appealed to one of the few Italian-American Congressmen for assistance.…We on bended knees pray to you who are of Italian descent and a representative of Italian-Americans citizens to visualize the untold hardships we martyrs of Italian parentage are forced to contend with.
>
> From a telegram signed by thirty-three Italians and sent to Congressman Vito Marcantonio, March, 1935.

Pictures three and four (see appendix) show how the American authorities examined the immigrants to select those who would be admitted to the country. This can be the tidiest, most realistic part of the movie, a part devoid of fantasy. It also emphasizes practicality, efficiency and rational selection of the fittest by a state apparatus that bases its selection on presumably scientific data. The film also brings into question the so-called scientific selection process that reflected nativist anxieties about the Americanization of possibly "unclean and unhealthy" new immigrants.

The mise en scene of the part of the movie that is reflected in the pictures three and four (see appendix) provides important details about the information value of the scene too. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2004) the concept of informational value refers to the ways in which the placement of elements reflects "specific informational values attached to the various "zones" of the image. They also argue that often the elements placed on the right represent the "problematic, contestable, the information at issue" (p.181). A close examination of

picture three shows that the immigrants are placed on the right and they can be the problem and the relevant information throughout the film.

Framing is also relevant in this scene. *Framing* is the system defined as "the presence or absence of framing devices (realized by elements which create dividing lines, or by actual frame lines) [which] disconnect or connect elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense." (Kress & Leeuwen, p.177). In the case of the scene under consideration, the immigrants are represented all together, with a high degree of connection with each other, as they are in one shot in almost every picture in this scene. Kress and Leeuwen also state that:

> In film and video a similar effect can be created by the choice between showing two or more actors together in one shot, or editing between individual shots of the actors in which each is isolated from the other by frame lines. The more the elements of the spatial composition are connected, the more they are presented as belonging together, as a single unit of information. (p.203)

In pictures three and four (see appendix) the immigrants are captured in the same shot on a line. Framing, in this case, is achieved by an actual line of all the immigrants together, performing the same movements and action, showing their hands and being examined by the officers. Subtle though these visual choices may be,, they enable the audience to see the immigrants as "belonging together, as a single unit of information," belonging to a world they share – but old.

According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), the concept of *salience* involves the ways in which the different elements are portrayed in order to attract the audience's attention. Salient is "the most eye-catching element in the composition…" (p.176). This is achieved by means of: "placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrast in tonal value (or color), differences in sharpness, etc." (p.177). Furthermore, Corrigan and White (2004) indicate that the proximity of the frame to its subject determines much about the point of view of a shot and contributes to a great deal to how we understand and feel about what is being shown" (p. 86).

Corrigan (2004) also considers that "high angle shots suggest oppression" (p. 64). In picture three the viewer is positioned closer to the immigrants ("medium shot") than to the officer ("long shot"). The audience seems to be most centrally involved with the newcomers. There are also many medium close-ups on the immigrants when they are being observed by the officials, one of the most controversial moments in the film. As Corrigan and White explain (2004) medium close-ups "capture the emotional expression of the character…" (p. 87) allowing viewers to feel empathy for the people depicted and become thus attracted to them.

As regards the examinations and the processes of admission, the director appears to insist on the racist processes and exams. They demonstrate the American public's tension that concerns new immigration, revealing the actualities of exams that maintain the fantasy of American superiority. Ellis Island is portrayed in the movie as a place that pathologizes the immigrants and categorizes them upon entrance as low-status laborers at best. Salvatore's speech in the penultimate scene before the final decision of the authorities refers to this process:

> How can they be a problem? How are my mother and son a problem with all that land and work you have here? Because he doesn't speak? It's for the best…This way, he won't bore anyone. He'll never complain. And my mother, look at her. She's like a young girl. True, she talks a lot, but I'll keep her indoors and won't let her out. We've come all this way to be parted now?

Salvatore, arguing against officers afraid of dependency on the State, stresses his son's potential contribution as a future worker, and his mother's restriction to the privacy of the home. Therefore, Salvatore's speech, despite its humorous effect, alleviates what officials identify as "diseased" and tries to standardize his family inside an American social context. He suggests a structure whereby the men work outside the house and the women attend to the men's needs at home. In other words, he categorizes his people as laborer and supporters to patriarchal values, typical characteristics found in the stereotyped Italian immigrants (Kalogeras, 2012, p. 92). This last speech differs strongly with discourse units from the beginning of the film, in which the Mancusos introduce themselves as members of a semi-pagan society with Fortunata, who is in authority among them, depicted as an intelligent old woman who completely comprehends her position as a religious specialist. Salvatore's reply does not close the movie. In the development from the real world of Ellis Island to the old world illusion, Fortunata implicitly resumes her role as the head of the family.

The Ellis Island sequences obligate the new arrivals to be subjected to a scientific "baptism" by which science follows the racist assumptions of a state system. At this point, the movie

makes a close comparison between science, racism, modernity and the controversial nature of whiteness (Kalogeras, 2012, p. 92).

The last scene of the movie, where the immigrants swim in the river of milk, diverges ironically with what has happened before: the selection process, the intelligence tests and medical examinations, the reliance on quantitative assessments that are automatically assumed and understood. The racist, bureaucratic efficiency of modernity is weakened and differs from Salvatore's dream of America "as the land of milk and honey". The new immigrants are metaphorically "baptized" in this imaginary place and are "white" washed in an allegorical and ironical way. In the final analysis, this does not seem to be a fantasy of pluralism as one may deduce by the cultural diversion that can be found in the crowd that swims with the Mancusos; it is a delusion of ethnic reorganization and redefinition stimulated in and imposed on the imagination of the immigrants by the real world they found on Ellis Island (Kalogeras, 2012, p. 93).

The song "Sinnerman", which is played in the last scene, gives an important though confusing touch. This black religious song may be an indicator of not only apocalypse and millenarianism, but also slavery. Moreover, with its spiritual background the song might affirm a pre-modern perception of the land and can act as a contradiction to the last part of the film which stresses the neatness and logic of a contemporary state. However, on a more materialistic and historically particular level it could perform another role in *Nuovomondo*. The antiphonal and apparently incoherent exchange between song and image can be interpreted as a correct closure for the movie given the Ellis Island sequences that follow. The use of "Sinnerman" might not indicate difference between Afro-Americans and the newcomers; instead of this, it may allude to the closeness of ethnic lines and affairs that relate

the newcomers with Afro-Americans at the beginning of the century (Kalogeras, 2012, p. 93).

Italians immigrants in the movie are also discriminated because they are unfamiliar with the language and the customs. For instance, they are not used to taking pictures and this can be reflected when the family Mancuso stick their faces through the holes of an aristocratically themed carnival cutout. The only one who seems to be used to it is Lucy.

As regards Lucy, there is some prejudice and discrimination against her too. Although she may have some air of almost aristocratic refinement which stands in striking contrast to the Italian immigrants' rough rusticity, she also suffers from prejudice. People on board wonder why this delicate, entitled creature should be joining the wretched refuse and this does not seem to be explained. In one of the scenes, an American immigration official does note that it is unusual to find an Englishwoman in a boatload of Italians. She walks through the introductory scenes in a cloud of mystery and the rest of the passengers do not understand what she is doing there. "Her vivid petticoats, red hair, and moneyed air are a beacon amid so much drabness". She may look "like the sort of woman who is heading all that way to sit for John Singer Sargent" (Morris, 2007, para. 4). However, there seems to be equality between Lucy and the Mancusos. Throughout the film, she "has to sleep and clean herself in the cramped bunks in steerage with everyone else, but Gainsbourg does not pay the price". Lucy eventually manages to handle "the claustrophobic conditions better than some of the Italians do" (Morris, 2007, para. 8). Her role as a woman is not the usual one and she does not seem to have a passive role.

Moreover, due to her appearance, she calls the attention of everyone on the boat and she becomes disliked by most of the women and men in the third class. There are many rumours spread throughout the boat about this young lady who is travelling alone. However, as mentioned before, this does not stop the way Salvatore feels about her. For example, at a certain point in the film, when Salvatore hears the other men talking about Lucy he reacts protectively, as though she was travelling with his own family.

It can be concluded that the film depicts the real Italian migratory experience in America, the relocation in the new world, the hostile reception of the alien, the trials of later generations of Sicilian families that wanted to live in the USA and their rich ethnic culture. More importantly, the film succeeds in vividly portraying the debasing discriminatory practices enforced by the immigration officials, which built up on an embedded eugenics policy that sought to preserve the purity of the developing American nation by excluding all forms of otherness. In this regard, the film voices a staunch criticism of American immigration policies and undermines the so-called American ideals as the melting-pot of opportunities for all newcomers regardless of their background. The film appears to approach Italy's history as a nation of immigrants and it depicts the trauma of a nation of Italian emigration in the early-twentieth century. It reflects the climatic moment of transition from being a Sicilian peasant to an American modernist urban center and the shock that such a process can entail. To put it in another way, it sarcastically depicts "the metamorphosis from the ancient man to the modern man" (Nuovomondo Interview, 2006, as cited in Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 272). The movie would remain faithful to the conventions of melodrama without attenuating the prejudices experienced by the new immigrants upon arrival.

Etienne Balibar (1991) defines the immigrant complex which also tends to be reflected in the film:

> a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but "only" the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of lifestyles and traditions. (p.220)

In the movie the "immigrant complex" may be given a complex treatment. The middleclass Anglo-Saxon woman, who joins the Mancuso family in the port city of Palermo, eventually promises herself to Salvatore Mancuso in order to enter the United States of America. As previously mentioned, at the beginning of the twentieth century, unaccompanied emigrating women were not admitted to America. The film evokes a particular American immigration law to validate Lucy's decision. In addition, Nuovomondo does not let the immigrants move beyond the immigration officers and Ellis Island. Entering the USA can be allowed exclusively if the family is separated and inclined to abandon their original culture and family structure as it was determined by tests and medical exams. For that reason, Ellis Island is characterized as a dire place, as a testing room where immigrants are converted into American citizens, provided that they do not fail the obligatory tests.

3.3 Gender

The roles of men and women at the time of the Italian immigration, as mentioned before, remained quite traditional and Italian family continued to be "father-dominated but mother-centered" (Illick, 2013, p. 82). The males typically dominated family affairs, and women were expected to be submissive and respectful of the male figure. In addition to this, the head of the family usually protected the women and girls very strongly; as a consequence women did not use to have much life outside their homes.

According to Beck (1919, p. 24) marriages tended to be arranged for the marrying parties by the parents of the bride and groom. What is more, in order to ensure that daughters could secure a suitable marriage partner, girls usually were strictly supervised when they began their adolescence.

As far as the movie is concerned, the gender roles are rigidly defined and a woman's position in particular is depicted as in need of a man to be able to survive. A woman without a man was considered to be nothing but a questionable character. Furthermore, not only Sicily but also the boat could be a depiction of a place of female oppression (Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 270). For instance, a refined and somewhat weird marriage market is featured, where bachelors who have established themselves in the United States offer themselves – and legal status – to women from back home.

As regards Salvatore, he is shown dominating the family and in full charge of them. He also sets the patriarchal model of a family whose "first responsibility is to provide for his family monetarily and his emotional contribution is rarely seen as of equal importance (Chodorow,

1979, p. 179). He conforms to the "macho" stereotype, "strong, virile, and dominant" (Crooks, 2005, p. 62). He gathers his grandmother, his son and his brother (who cannot speak and may not be able to hear) along with two young women from the village who hope to land husbands somewhere along the way to be accepted in the new world, where there may be no place for single-handed intrepid women. Salvatore does his best to protect them all on their journey to America. In the film, it may also be seen that not having a second partner is strange, if not dangerous. Lucy Reed is portrayed using her wiles to pick and choose a man who is committed and will not ask questions about her to pass through immigration. Indeed, the dynamic English-speaking heroine Lucy, who apparently interprets the Sicilian antipode, is a character that acts as a foil to the underprivileged Sicilian female condemned to be the recipient of prejudice and insult. She also represents a modern woman capable of speaking two languages, wearing clothes worth more than the other passengers' savings, and mannerisms that seem to confuse Rosa when they first settled in the boat.

Fortunata Mancuso is a widow, with a grown son, two grandsons, and the fear of the new world and with strong traditional roots to her homeland. She appears to project kaleidoscopic representations of the *Siciliana* of the times: destitute but wise, resilient, and determined. She represents the old order. At the beginning of the film, Fortunata gives the impression of being strong, as she is shown to perform traditionally male activities in the countryside. In contrast with the view of women, she does not suggest the need of having a man to survive. She has indeed a dominant role in the family and she works hard in the country. However, as is customary in her culture of female confinement and docility, Fortunata is not asked about

the life-changing decision to migrate to America. Her son and grandson decide to leave and prepare everything for the voyage.

Later, they tell Fortunata the news. When they announce their decision, it is received with the matriarch's furious refusal to leave: "the spirits won't let us go". Women in the film tend to stick to a culture that honors magic, motherhood and inner strength. For an emotional and wise woman like Fortunata, it is the cultural bond with her arid land the most important reason not to abandon her country. What is more, through Fortunata's resistance, Crialese emphasizes the old woman's insecurity. The director expresses "her fear of uprooting and transplantation, the loss of the collective identity". In contrast, Salvatore, who has the appearance of being more rational, objects to the indigence of a meager life in the hometown, and the argument represents a symbolic fight between reason and emotion. It is assumed that it graphically depicts "the immigrant dilemma and the trauma" that first-generation immigrant women frequently experienced. For the Sicilian woman, separation from her homeland and the subsequent relocation in a country that is unfamiliar sounded impossible, even if the old lady carries the past and traditions with her, as her son, Salvatore, proposes. What finally becomes the driving force behind Fortunata's departure to leave Sicily is what her culture orders. In other words, her role as a mother and the centrality of this role for her culture and her decision to leave her hometown appears to show that she is a strong-willed woman whose maternal role – or poverty – does not repress all the other needs and feelings that the stereotype may have. She also trusts his son. She respects his clear leadership and although she does not like the idea of leaving her hometown, when she eventually accepts to go to America she can be seen to be always displeased at the end of the film. With the

heroine's rejection to enter the United States, "the ethnic cultural pull" demonstrates "to be stronger than a materially better life" (Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 267).

It may also be noted that the bright local culture tends to survive in stories like the ones of Fortunata, "irrespective of the assimilationist tactics imposed or the improved living conditions". Several interesting aspects about this heroine are worth mentioning: her astounding behavior, her unexpected refusal to enter America, and her conscious decision to return to Sicily. For Crialese, the surprising ending and Fortunata's unusual behavior could give the chance to use the film to challenge the unproductive beliefs and to reformulate the cultural icon of traditional women (Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 272). As regards the other young Sicilian women, Rita and Rosa, they are shown as more dynamic and realistic in their preparation for the transatlantic voyage. The future mail-order brides, who are promised to wealthy bridegrooms of Sicilian origin in America, are determined to leave their homeland..

The Italian-American immigrant women are also depicted as radically different from the traditional representation of Northern European female. During the journey, Fortunata is viewed heartbreakingly confused most of the time. For instance, in the scene where Lucy and the old lady are having a shower (see appendix picture 7), Fortunata appears to be surprised when the water falls over her body. She keeps watching over the water falling. She does not understand how it falls in that way. This part of the movie reflects that she is not used to showers. Moreover, when she is examined by doctors it can be seen that she is not used to medical treatments either. The script of this scene is included below:

-Lie down, madam. Lie down on your side, please. Like this, with your head here. What's she doing? Get your hands off. What are you doing?

- Calm down. It's procedure.

- Get your hands off me!

- I don't want anyone touching me!

- Excuse me. Madam, this lady is not used to this kind of examination.

This part of the film also illustrates the ill-treatment of women onboard. The agents who controlled them did not seem to consider the circumstances in which these women were travelling. They did not tend to care about the reasons why they had to leave their homeland and their families. In addition to this, they did not appear to know that most of those women had never visited the doctor before in their whole lives. Furthermore, in another part of movie, upon arrival on Ellis Island, when the elderly of the family is performing the tests, the interaction between Fortunata and the port authorities insist on particular results, is quite bittersweet. It shows the blending of the realism of Sicily with the extensive control which conducts life in America. Fortunata looks as if she were unwilling to collaborate with the immigration officers and be allowed to enter America. She does not reply to the questions; she reacts against the marks of chalk, and she does not pass the intelligence tests. As a consequence, the agents with the rigid rules for admission label her as feeble-minded and her application to enter America is rejected. According to Yiorgos Kalogeras (as cited in Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 272) this is a symbolic exclusion of the pre-modern

ways and folklore from the modern America. However, Patrona (Arapoglou, Kalogeras& Nyman, 2016, p. 272) interprets the movie in a different way. She considers that the wise woman fails to pass the test voluntarily. What is more, Fortunata, who is *medica*, knows how to deceive the scientists, which demonstrates once again her intelligence. She is determined not to enter to their "paradise" and intends to return to Sicily when she has obtained her son's secure entrance to America and Salvatore's reunion with his twin brother. This is powerfully evoked in the "magical" moment in one of the last scenes where Fortunata relinquishes her voice and transfers it magically to Pietro, the mute deaf. In this sequence, he turns to his father and brother and begins to talk only to express the old lady's desires to return to their homeland, though he wants the rest of them to stay in America. Kermode (as cited in Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 272) states that Fortunata's refusal to enter America should be contrasted to the fixed cultural imagery of destitute immigrants who strive to be admitted in America at all costs.

It could be added that the tests may have changed Sicilian people's perspectives. In particular, Fortunata has apparently the most difficult time exposing herself to the rules and laws of America. She might have felt violated rather than treated respectfully. It is suggested that where their dreams once gave hope and optimism for what that New World would provide, the reality of what the New World demanded seemed to be not only disparaging but also offensive. As a consequence, it can be said that Fortunata's dreams do not appear to be in America. At the end of the film she takes her grandson's blasphemy of being deaf and lets him tell his father that she wants to return because she does not probably encounter the United States a world where she may belong.

As far as the treatment of women in Golden Door is concerned, an important part in the film depicts one woman lurching blearily and carrying her dead baby around the deck and dropping it overboard. The audience cannot see the baby dropped but the mother is seen to collapse like dishrag. It was indeed common to drop the dead bodies to the sea during the voyage. However, in the movie it is the body of a small baby and the mother is certainly not treated properly. As men are not supposed to express their feelings, they do not show affection for this lady openly and they do not explicitly demonstrate any passion concerning the dead baby and her mother. Nobody considered her fatal situation and the mother was expected to take this situation as a “natural" one. Once again, a woman is not taken into consideration.

Lucy is a key female character in the film, whose role as a strong, beautiful woman allows us to examine some of the prejudices against women. There are some scenes where agents and men on the ship do not treat Lucy properly either. For instance, at the beginning of the film when she is about to board, an officer questions her and talks to her disrespectfully. The script of this scene is included below:

- Are you English, miss?
- Yes, I am.
- You came with Italians?
- Yes, ma'am.
- Is your husband traveling with you?
- My fiancée. He's supposed to meet me here.

- It is highly uncommon for an English lady to be traveling with Italians. You'll be questioned about that.

There is also another scene where some men gossip about Lucy and consider her a prostitute:

Anyone can have her.

- You just have to pay.

- Pay? With all due respect, you shouldn't talk like that. Miss Luce is traveling with me, and no one is to disrespect her. Leave it at that.

Through the use of the men's advances and indecent propositions to the unescorted Lucy, Crialese shows the two roles for women that could be identified in Sicilian society and by the strict Roman-Catholic Church: a woman may be "either a prostitute, or a mother". Sicilian men are seen to connect her to the first role as the British woman does not seem to fit the role of mother. However, Salvatore, who as previously mentioned, is a "savior" not only by name but also by his attitude, intends to save her by marrying her and wishes to change her. He does not want her to be an object of lust. He does not want her to be regarded as a prostitute. He wishes to transform her into "an object of worship", a mother-wife (Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 272). Moreover, every time the other men on the ship talk about Lucy, Salvatore claims for respect saying that she is travelling with him.

A marriage broker ceremony is also shown in the film. The viewers may feel it like an auction block and young women are depicted as depressed when they are joined with overweight middle-aged men. This is the only way women would be admitted in America. If for men it was hard to travel to pursue their fortune, it was twice as difficult for the women. Unmarried

women were not permitted to travel alone across the sea and had to be either engaged to be married or under a guardian's protection. This was apparently to prevent the risk of prostitution (Kalogeras, 2012, p. 90).

Once on the journey, Lucy and the other single women are faced with the inevitability of trying to find a match in order to enter America. Vincent Schiavelli plays a marriage broker who travels on the ship seeking out young single women for his clientele of older rich American men looking for a match.

This sequence of the film creates a painfully rigid climax in which the women of the party are arranged in their miserable tries to look like brides with veils and good dresses, in order to be given to their matches. In this part of the movie, where the brides meet their future husbands for the first time, the two young women, whom Salvatore is responsible for keeping safe, have different approaches when they are introduced to their future husbands. Rosa seems to be frightened like a child and refuses to look up after slightly seeing that he is not anything similar to what she imagines. To put it in another way, Rosa reprimands hers for not matching his description of himself, but anyhow resigns herself. However, Rita is resistant and swears in a loud voice at the man for being short and aged like her father. She may feel that she abandoned her home, leaving the warm sun, and her family to be with a stranger who assured only a home. Both ladies are, especially Rosa, wearing bright colors, with white lace head scarves which can be a symbol of their virginity and obedience to their new husbands, "a cultural icon" that carried from Italy, the Virgin Mary to her new husband (Say0chan, 2012, para. 4).

As far as the mise en scene in this part of the movie is concerned (see appendix picture five and six), there is soft lighting, which could suggest a hypothetical romantic atmosphere of meeting one's fiancé for the very first time. However, the tone may serve as an unknown force that the immigrants and Americans would have to face: accepting the person in front of her as her ticket to freedom and, for him, accepting a womb to serve as a cultural link to the "old country". The room is enclosed but for one window which is shining light upon the group of men and women segregated by an invisible line formed by the American worker in charge. He represents the eye of America, who is watching upon the groups with cold efficiency that neither men nor women could see their traditional courting customs observed by their religion or homeland. The pallid room everyone is in stands as "a reminder that they are not in a religious sanctuary" but yet "another obstacle to press through that stands between them and the dreams of a new world of milk and honey" (Say0chan, 2012, para. 3).

What is more, whenever each character is shown on screen, the camera has different close-ups. When Rosa appears, the camera centers on her face which shows full cheeks and a more youthful, if not immature look, that contrasts deeply with her prospective husband whose face the audience do not have a close up on. Rita's face is also seen up close, especially when she is angry. The two emotions contrast one another despite being from the same town. Rosa and Rita's two husbands stand one after the other, dressed in shades of black and gray. Instead of a close up, the camera is far from their faces and focuses on their supple and stout bodies. While this may prove America's bounty, it does not probably do anything to hide their age. Then when each man gives their bride flowers, there is no movement of giving the flowers to her but tossing the tiny bouquet; not even the camera moves to capture the flowers on the

floor, except for Rita who picks them up and tosses them over her lap again which might signify her deep disappointment in leaving her homeland for a man who is as old as his father. Furthermore, the fact that the man throws Rosa her flowers or he limply tosses them can possibly mean a doubtful future which could be plagued with infertility. Rita's husband throws his flowers with disappointment because he could also feel embarrassed that a belligerent woman talked rudely to him in front of his American brethren (Say0chan, 2012, para. 5).

No sound can be heard and the absence of this heightens the mise en scene which is likely to amplify the muteness of courting ballads and serenades to charm a maiden into marriage. Instead of this, the audience are likely to feel that the couples are in a courtroom, devoid of merriment, with no music. "This scene is longer than Lucy and Salvatore's courtship scene in the courtroom" (Say0chan, 2012, para. 7).

In contrast with the other women, when they arrive at Ellis Island, Lucy asks Salvatore to marry her. He immediately replies to her by saying that it would be an honour for him. However, she explains to him that she does not want to marry him because she loves him. Lucy only wants to marry him in order to gain entry to America. Salvatore makes clear that he understands the arrangement and that he would marry her anyway. He replies to her statement by making the case that theirs would not be a union of love as these things usually take time to grow. Salvatore is so enthusiastic about helping Lucy out that he employs the powers of magic by cutting a lock of her hair in order not to lose her when they arrive in America.

Lucy created for the immigrants the idea of perfection from an appearance point of view and simultaneously she breaks their perfect marriage, rules and cultural standards which many of the Italian immigrants have grown up with and live by. As she does this right before leaving the ship, the audience may get the idea that the new world may not be as perfect as everyone believes and the culture that one came with would start an immediate "mutation". What is more, in spite of "her putative romantic status and her key role" in the extraordinarily arranged mass-marriage, which seemed an absurd ritual, her character might "exist more as a sop to the English-speaking audience than as an organic part of the unfolding drama" (Kermode, 2007, para. 7).

This strange couple appears to contrast with Rita, Rosa, and their future husbands. Lucy is seen to sit indifferently, but with intensifying anxiety waiting for Salvatore to finish his processing. Luigi and his prospective boyfriend are waiting to grab her when she becomes furious. Salvatore is there to do anything and more for Lucy, even if he does not understand why he should write forms to state why they should be husband and wife. The frame shots of both Lucy and Salvatore are the same. There are no full face shots or distant body shots. Instead of throwing flowers, especially for a man of the Earth, Salvatore tosses his hat, "a crown that flies" which might represent his enthusiasm to move forward to modernity and to accept her on her terms. Lucy takes the hat and puts it on her head, with a full facial shot which seems to reveal her admiration at this illiterate man, taking his humorous announcement in front of everyone.

In order to demonstrate "the general lot of immigrant women of this era", Crialese, the director, has Lucy's vigorous image "shattered under the force of male patriarchy", which is

exemplified in the movie by the Sicilian men. The fact of a woman travelling on her own horrifies passengers and at the same time they are captivated by Lucy's beauty and independence. Her disobedience appears to them incompatible with the presumed female behavior they have been familiar with all their lives. As previously discussed, the Italian women from the South of Italy tend to believe that "social identity is an extension of her connections" with relevant men from her family, namely, her father, brothers, husband and sons (Berkowitz as cited in Arapoglou, Kalogeras & Nyman, 2016, p. 270). Women who deviate from this iron rule can allow for dirty play on the part of the men presuming possible female promiscuity. In other words, women who are outside the family structure can be rejected as deviant from the established order (Barolini, 1999, p.153). The movie illustrates that Italian women who had to survive in the Old country and cope with the inhospitable background in America would never think of living without male protection. In addition, Lucy is the object of unlimited, mostly offensive, speculation by the Sicilians and other people onboard. However, she keeps tight-lipped, making tenuous friendships with Rita and Rosa. Throughout the trip, the tall and slim red-headed Lucy with her fashionable way of dressing and attitude appears to be objectified and observed by not only all the women on the ship, to whom she may come to be a female role model in terms of style and elegance, but also male travelers. During her innumerable hours of isolation on the ship, Lucy tends to receive all the gazes from the men she seems to consider as her social inferiors. With this character, the director casts under the spotlight all women regardless of their ethnic and socio-economic background. Lucy becomes a symbol in the movie, for the rest of the characters she represents the passage that allows them to discover what the new world would hold for

them, while the audience understands why the immigration is happening and what the rest of the characters desired to be.

As far as Fortunata and the Mancuso men are concerned, Lucy incites Fortunata's wrath when she disapproves of the matriarch's permanent negative murmuring and being an appropriate lust-object for Pietro and Angelo. The latter is shown sneaking about the cabin during the night, inhaling the odour that is coming from her. However, Salvatore acts in a different manner. Every time he meets her on the ship, he admires and bows with respect fascinated by her appearance. When his son tells him of the rumors that she is married to a prince, he expresses with fascination: "Perhaps she is a queen." For the Sicilian man, she might be something more. Salvatore daydreams swimming in a river of milk that rumor has it flows in California. There, he is next to her and struggling to float by getting hold of a big phallic carrot, but only after helping Lucy. For Salvatore, she could be a perfect fantasy partner for a new fantasy world.

To conclude, the film develops the female ordeals and double barriers that these migrants, not only the Southern Mediterraneans but also women in particular, seemed to confront. The film's heroines, Fortunata Mancuso, the superstitious Sicilian grandmother, Rita and Rosa, the courageous brides and the mysterious Anglo-Saxon Lucy Read, can be considered symbolic protagonists of a real story of female migration. Moreover, Sicily, the character's home country, and the ship are regarded as areas of oppression for women of the era in this movie. Finally, America, the land of dream and hope, ironically does not seem to be much different when they first encounter it. This underscores the fact that patriarchal discrimination of women, though in slightly different degrees and with varying nuances, is a common

denominator both in the rural, backward context of the Southern Italy and in the modern, flourishing New World. The immanence of women and their inherent subordination and subservience to men is a trademark of the gender roles at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

The overall aim of this dissertation was to determine to what extent the film *Golden Door* is an accurate representation of the Italian immigration to the United States of America as reconstructed by historical research and reviewed by the secondary literature. The specific research objective was to examine some of the patterns of the Italian immigration to America which are recurrently mentioned in the literature, such as discrimination and prejudice, stereotyped representations of the immigrants and gender inequalities, and examine to what extent they have been accurately depicted in Crialese's *Golden Door*.

Historians agree that the Italian immigrants were victims of oppression and discrimination (La Bianca, 2010, p. 57). Italians had to face prejudice from Americans who tended to hold stereotyped representations of the newcomers. Italians were called "dirty", "wop", "guinea" and "dago", among other derogatory labels. *Golden Door* skillfully features scenes in which the Italian immigrants suffer from racism and are subject to discriminatory practices. The conditions of the ship in which they travel, the way Americans treat Italians during the journey, how the immigrants are subjected to humiliating physical examinations and

discriminatory aptitude tests designed to exclude "idiots, imbeciles or morons and other mentally deficient persons" and to determine who were "fit" to become American citizens, to name but a few, are eloquent examples of the discriminatory and racist treatment of the Italian immigrants. In particular, the final part of the film clearly depicts how a dehumanized state forces the newcomers to be tested. The scene shows that once the newly arrived land on Ellis island, the American authorities chose the immigrants who could be admitted to enter the country by forcing the immigrants to perform humiliating and arbitrary tests that would confirm their able-bodiedness and whether they are healthy and intelligent enough to be granted access to the land of opportunities and material progress. (Galusca, 2009, p. 137).

Italian immigrants in the film studied are also discriminated because they are not familiar with the language and the customs in the new world. Furthermore, Lucy, the Anglo-Saxon woman, is also a victim of some prejudice and discrimination, based on her condition as a single woman travelling on her own and on her close attachment to the Mancuso family. American officials and Italians who travel to America do not understand why this young single lady is doing the journey on her own and on a ship in such dreadful conditions.

A number of historical sources highlight the stereotyped perception of immigrants settling in the New York and New Jersey area at the turn of the century. A case in point is the well-known photographic report by Riis: *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (1890), which documented the squalid living conditions of immigrants in the New York slums, and provided stereotyped descriptions of the different ethnic groups living together in the slums. Riis denigrates Italian immigrants, depicting them as "ignorant" and

prone to be abused and deceived by unscrupulous swindlers, "slow to learn" and "hot-headed", but also a relatively meeker than other ethnic groups like the Irish.

Historical accounts based on primary evidence tend to confirm the negative stereotyping attached to the poor Italian immigrants in America, thereby calling into question the alleged openness and egalitarian principles of the American democracy. According to Loucky, Armstrong and Strada (Kraut, as cited in Ueda, 2006, p. 317) immigrants who came from Italy were described as uneducated, dirty, religious people who usually believed in superstitions. Iacovetta (1992, p. 105) adds that they were also "hot-blooded, "stocky, dark skinned, and suffering from malnutrition". Burgan (2005, p. 43) states that the family was very important for most Italians and they were used to playing folk music. Burgan (p. 87) reports that they were associated with the "mafia" too and the print, television and movie world has encouraged this persistent idea of the Italian as a criminal or gangster.

As discussed above, *Golden Door* accurately portrays the stereotypes of the Italian immigrants. The Mancusos are a very tight-knit family and they are depicted, together with the other Italians on board, as illiterate, superstitious, wearing tattered clothes and walking with no shoes. A clear instance of stereotyping is offered in the first scene of the film. Uneducated Salvatore and his son climb up bare-footed and in rugs to a spot where there is a small cross stuck in the ground. After removing the rocks, which are clenched between their bleeding teeth, they place them, among others that are already beneath the cross, apparently as offerings to God. Salvatore asks God for a divine indication that his family should emigrate from their ancestral home. This part of the movie reflects not only Italians' faith to religion and culture but also the desperation immigrants feel in their homeland. The

old country is well depicted in the film. It is seen as extremely backward and as what the immigrants leave behind is not compatible with the future they conjure up, they decide to travel to the new world.

Golden Door succeeds in portraying the most salient stereotypes regularly associated with the Italian immigrants, both as recorded in early twentieth-century sources and as reconstructed by later sociological and historical studies. These social perceptions were developed by the local Americans in New England to categorize the newcomers, usually in a negative light. As most instances of social categorization, some perceptions of the Italian immigrants were rooted in true facts; however, these labels were later attached indiscriminately to the whole outgroup, which came to be regarded as potentially upsetting to the values, beliefs and idiosyncrasy of the native White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans. The historical records usually portrayed Italians as uneducated, dirty, superstitious people, who could be easily manipulated by their own fellow-countrymen in the United States or by other unscrupulous conmen. On a more positive note, however, Italians were also generally regarded as warm, peaceful and hard-working, with a strong sense of community and solidarity ties which enabled them to survive in an otherwise hostile context.

As regards gender, at the time of the Italian immigration the roles of men and women were quite traditional. According to Illick (2013, p.82), Italian families were "father-dominated but mother-centered." While men were in charge of family affairs, the females tended to be submissive and respectful of the male figure, which could be their father, grandfather, brother or husband. However, women played a key part in the domestic affairs and embodied the spirit of the family as well as the customs and traditions.

In *Golden Door*, the gender roles are eloquently portrayed. Women are generally depicted as needing a man in order to survive, regardless of their ethnicity, level of education or background. *Golden door* depicts four different women characters, Fortunata, Rosa, Rita and the Anglo-Saxon lady Lucy, who do not perform the same roles in the immigration process and do not behave exactly the same in the "male" world. Despite their differences, all women are in one way or another dependent and subordinate to the patriarchal order that ultimately determines where they should live and how, and makes sure that they are not allowed to remain single or suspiciously independent so that they do not risk destabilizing the status quo.

Evidence collected in the analysis of the film clearly demonstrates that some of the patterns of Italian immigration – stereotype, discrimination and prejudice and gender – appear in the story of the immigrants in *Golden Door*. The director focuses on the importance of gender, class, racial stereotypes and portrays the discriminatory and humiliating practices to which the Italian immigrants were exposed, thus denouncing the strictly race-structured American society.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it may be assumed that the movie under consideration, *Golden Door*, is an accurate representation of Italian immigration to the United States as reconstructed by historical research. The close examination of the characterization of the main protagonists and relevant visual and textual elements validate our research hypothesis. The director does not only work with some of the patterns of immigration, which have been reconstructed by historians through archival research, but he also manages to do a good job depicting the journey of one of the many Italian families who risk everything, leave the land where they belonged, their extended family and a few belongings to go to a new land. He

was able to transmit the emotional drain on the immigrants when they depart from their loved ones. He shows the feelings of isolation that Italian immigrants encounter on board and how afraid they are of the new land where they are not familiar with the language and with the customs of the people. In other words, the "immigrant experience" is accurately portrayed in the film as it vividly and convincingly describes the nervousness and enthusiasm, as well as ignorance, which illiterate and poor Italian immigrants display before migrating to America. The journey to America and the intake process which the newcomers at Ellis Island have to undergo are also depicted with jolting realism. The film shows the boat ride as dull, which surely was the case most of the time, and the quarters where the travelers sleep are described as extremely crowded, with beds spaced four or five inches from one another and lacking light and air, which was also likely the case below deck.

In conclusion, the film succeeds in representing the real-life experiences that many Italian immigrants had during their sad departure from their hometown toward the unknown, their hard and heart-breaking crossing and their deceptive and traumatic arrival on Ellis Island. In this respect, the film adopts a documentary narrative and the audience certainly manages to feel that a piece of history is being unfolded before their eyes. *Golden Door* does not just describe a deeply moving story it also provides a touchstone for the audience to re-visit the history of each person they know who has Italian origins.

Even though the film portrays the Italian immigration to America along accurate historical lines, the impressionist director Crialese has also used his fictional imagination. He artfully combines the "documentary" element of the film with pictorial scenes of swimming through rivers of milk and other dreamlike sequences which not only add excitement to the story but also give the audience the possibility to appreciate the magical experience this film is called

upon to entice. This art work makes the viewers reflect too. It compares and contrasts the hard reality of struggling to cultivate arid land with escapist fantasies of arriving in a new world, “a magic kingdom” where people could lay under money trees or swim in milk rivers holding human size carrots to float. Immigrants tended to have these fantastic ideas of what America was like (Lorefice, 2008, para. 2).

In other words, *Golden Door*, as all movies, is fictional but manages to blend elements of magic with historical realism. There are some imaginary scenes which are full of extraordinary texture, for instance, when Rita is “exorcised” by Fortunata, pulling from her belly what looks like a joke-shop serpent; when travellers on the boat are flung about by a storm like laundry in a washing machine; when the following day they stumble out battered upon deck, an exhausted young lady is seen bumbling with her dead baby, dropping it over the side before she collapses; when Lucy goes walking on the deck, she catches men’s attention and exchanges quizzical teasing glances with Salvatore who reverently follows her, with her hair shimmering in the sun; Salvatore’s visions which are full of humor and fantasy; when the immigrants brush their hair and try to clean themselves for their arrival; when passengers dance furiously and exuberantly; and when they arrive at the foggy Ellis Island and catch a glimpse of the highest frosted panes at the station which force immigrants to climb in order to get a first view of the city (Heath, 2009, para. 10). To conclude, it can be safely ascertained that Golden Door is a historically faithful portrayal of the Italian immigrants’ real experience interspersed with magical and highly metaphorical visual and symbolic elements.

4.1 Implications and limitations of this study and suggestions for further research

Crialese's motion picture is beyond doubt a landmark of seventh art portraying the Italian immigration to the United States of America. It would be slightly overambitious to believe that the present study may fully answer all the questions arising from *Golden Door*. The present dissertation has only attempted to address the research question presented in the introduction and was limited to the exploration of some patterns of Italian immigration to the United States of America –stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice and gender. This study has not fully engaged with some other interesting aspects of Italian immigration to America which could be further explored and researched, for instance, life in the New World, Italian immigrants' jobs in the United States, the various problems the newly arrived had to face in the new country. Consequently, further research could be conducted to investigate how Italian immigrants continued to live in the new world, though most of these aspects are not the main focus of Crialese's film, which revolves around the departure, sea-voyage and admission to the US. The historical framework of this dissertation was reconstructed by close examination of the secondary literature on the patterns of Italian immigration in the US and a few first-hand sources contemporary with the Italian immigration waves. A more thorough research of the Italian immigration experience would also incorporate first-hand reports from immigrants describing their own experiences drawn from major specialized databases like the Gjenvick-Gjønvik Archives. This would enable us to better assess the extent to which Crialese's film accurately depicts the traumatic migration experience as embodied by the protagonists themselves. Furthermore, *Golden Door* could also be compared with other films about Italian immigration. Likewise, the scope of this dissertation is limited to the Italian immigration to the United States of America but Italians left to many other countries as well.

As a consequence, for instance, film productions addressing Italian immigration in South America could also be studied in order to draw meaningful parallels.

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Appendix

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4

Picture 5

Picture 6

Picture 7