

**GAZES OF RACE, IMMIGRATION, AND HEGEMONY  
IN *IO STO CON LA SPOSA* (ON THE BRIDE'S SIDE) AND *COME UN UOMO SULLA  
TERRA* (LIKE A MAN ON THE EARTH)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Voices opposing commonly-held perceptions of immigration, Europe, the Global South, and devastating border control policies are becoming more prominent and are challenging the mainstream narrative. Rigorous border control policies created by individual countries within Europe reflect a feeling of being threatened by immigrants from the Global South who invoke Europe's colonial past. Differences between the dominating hegemonic gaze enjoyed by Italy actively work to marginalize and silence voices presenting a different, less Eurocentric perspective. This paper traces Italy's background as a colonial, Fascist power to understand the modern-day foreclosed racial elements and postcolonialist sentiments manifested in immigration policies. They are designed to exclude and make Europe and its Southern Mediterranean border into a fortress. Films and documentaries created by Europeans and immigrants offer striking differences in their creators' points of view and possibly their biases. Comparing and contrasting Gabriele Del Grande's crowdfunded, award-winning 'road film' *Io Sto Con La Sposa (On the Bride's Side)* with Dagmawi Yimer's documentary *Come Un Uomo Sulla Terra (Like a Man On Earth)* allows us to understand the differing perspectives' the construction and manifestation of the other take as the issue of migration is observed from the South and from the North.

**INTRODUCTION**

Miguel Mellino's *De-Provincializing Italy: Notes on Race, Racialization, and Italy's Coloniality* uses Italy's conflicted postcolonial past to understand treatment towards immigrants crossing the Mediterranean. According to Mellino, Italy is a postcolonial state because their overseas empire once extended to Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. However, Italy has not accepted its postcoloniality, which is why it is still unable to confront the racial rhetoric enabling it to justify its colonial enterprise in Africa. This ability to foreclose, or exclude, racism from the national consciousness affects Italy's treatment of immigrants, which are generally excluded from the political narrative and subjected to stereotypes about their physical appearance, intelligence, and humanity.<sup>1</sup> Along with Spain, Italy's geographic proximity to North Africa makes it the country where most illegal immigrants arrive, their points of departure being Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Palestine, the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Senegal, among others. Italy is a transit state in most cases, as many immigrants, hoping in greater political and economic stability, prefer to move North to more economically favorable countries.

As Mellino explains in *De-Provincializing Italy*, most Italians fail to see the connection between having had a colonial empire and endorsing racially-charged border policies in the modern day. They do not believe their history and national identity affect views towards public policies designed to seal the Mediterranean's southern borders. However, policies like *jus soli*, surveillance programs like Triton, and even the term *mare nostrum*<sup>2</sup> are founded upon a sense of superiority and control resulting in geopolitical and economic divisions. This situation originates in part from the North/South divide produced after the 1861 Italian Unification. It endures through stereotyping the darker-complexioned Southern Italians as poor, dirty, unproductive, and lazy. These stereotypes have accompanied political discourse and rhetoric practices since the end of the XIX century, and they are still evident today, when social and economic policies have expanded to include (and subsequently exclude) those who do not 'belong' in the unified (read homogenized) nation. To borrow from Stuart Hall, race in Italy is a "floating signifier" – a notion changing to match the political and social context. Racialization is produced in a social system where

value and socio-economic status is relied on (and is attributed to) skin color. The signifier “floats” and is adapted to fit the contextual socio-economic model, and excludes whoever does not fit into it. The same notion of race used to distinguish and differentiate the wealthy and organized North from the unwieldy and incomprehensible South is utilized today to marginalize and discriminate migrants from Africa and Asia. Mellino acknowledges how relevant Italy’s colonial past is and challenges Italians to connect modern-day events back to the Italian colonial enterprise. He points to the fact that present racist attitudes are a result of Italy’s colonial past. He reveals how severely they impact today’s economic, political, and social reality.

### **RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, AND UNIFICATION**

According to Mellino, modern racism and xenophobia emerged in Italy immediately after the unification. In the late 1880’s and 90’s, the Italian government decided to follow the model of powerful European nations and develop an imperialist agenda to expand geographically into Africa. This colonial legacy was embraced by Benito Mussolini who dedicated tremendous military resources to secure territorial dominance in Libya, Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Despite the historical factuality of Italy’s colonial endeavor, Italians still deny the impact it had on the local populations. Mellino defines this as a “post-Fascist inability to mourn,” as Italians struggle to acknowledge their postcolonial responsibilities. Today, “postcolonial amnesia” is the largest obstacle for intellectuals, politicians, and Italians in general to overcome. Mellino challenges Italians to re-evaluate their colonial past and to confront present racist attitudes.

Fascist ideology still influences political narratives on migration. Fascism advocated for colonizing in Africa primarily to bring Italian civilization to the continent, to “introduce them to Italian culture” and show “an example of a dominant race” (Lombardi-Diop 2013 n. pag). Fascism capitalized on Italy’s supposed cultural superiority and firmly aligned the country with European imperialism. Today, that same ideology separates Europe from Africa and affects all legislation on immigration. The Lega Nord, an influential political party founded upon discriminatory and anti-immigrant sentiments, utilizes racial rhetoric without restraint, sponsoring racially-charged migration policies designed to dehumanize and discriminate immigrants. Growing support for the Lega Nord and the Italian public’s reaction to its first black female minister Cecile Kyenge is very present in the Italian political and cultural narrative.<sup>3</sup>

Italy’s racism is expressed in state-sponsored policies and is embraced by a public opinion dominated by mediatic parlance. Both political and mediatic narratives maintain a strong hold on the way migration and all related issues are framed, represented, and negotiated. In the last few years, however, emerging discordant voices severely contrast the established rhetoric. Maaza Mengiste uses her work as a critical lens to examine intersections of nationalism, history, and race, proving that “Italy’s Racism is Embedded” in its past.

Amnesty International’s annual human rights report presents castigating numerical evidence of immigrants being refused human rights before the encounter with and later within Europe’s borders. 3,400 people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2013 alone and at least 4,000,000 people became refugees from the war in Syria. A *Guardian* article, “Refugees Don’t Need Our Tears. They Need Us To Stop Making Them Refugees” (author and specific date April 2015), challenges readers to re-examine their paradigms and think differently about refugees and the systems that produce them. Natanel Feleke’s smuggled “Letter From An Ethiopian Prison” asks the US Secretary of State to stop supporting the current Ethiopian regime. Many isolated voices asking for rights and agency surface again and again in the mainstream media. While these voices are important and need to be heard, documentaries, independent films, and docufilms like *Io Sto Con La Sposa* and *Come Un Uomo Sulla Terra* offer a more detailed representation of migrants and refugees’ experiences as they endure their journey to and through Europe. These narratives provide a much more realistic and individualized perspective that the one offered by media outlets, revealing what they ably conceal and denouncing Europe’s racist and xenophobic attitudes.

In the last ten years, several narratives have attempted, more or less successfully, to address the issues of immigration. Although aimed at providing a social commentary, their gaze is still European and

hegemonic. It is the case of Emanuele Crialesè's *Terraferma*, where migrants are still represented as voiceless, crippled, and needing assistance. A complex and ambiguous example is the docufilm *Io Sto Con La Sposa* (*On The Bride's Side*), which follows Syrian and Palestinian refugees on a dangerous journey across European state borders. The film's creators decided to make the docu-film a 'realistic' depiction of what was happening by selecting migrants already established in Italy to 'act' in a narrative that is both realistic and serious. Although described as a "damningly true story" in the trailer, it is still European voices that are speaking and producing discourse. Diametrically opposed is *Come un uomo sulla terra* (*Like a Man on Earth*), which chronicles the horrors of the journey from Ethiopia, through the Sahara desert, to the Mediterranean. It is important to compare and contrast these two narratives as they inevitably contain a different point of view: the first is a fictional account with narrating structures strongly in the hands of Europeans (Italians in this case), the second is a narration shared from the immigrant's perspective.

### IO STO CON LA SPOSA

Almost entirely crowdsourced, *Io Sto Con La Sposa* tells a story of "smuggling." Seven immigrants cross Italian, French, German, and Swedish state limits to expose how borders are still in place in Europe and how migrants are not allowed to cross them legally. The idea of the docu-film came from Italian journalist Gabriele Del Grande, who had covered the war in Syria. Moved by compassion for the Syrian and Palestinian refugees, he develops a ploy to "smuggle" a group of refugees to Sweden. He and a Palestinian friend divert suspicion from their activities and confrontations with police at border patrol by pretending to be accompanying a wedding party. Italians are prepared to explain to the police that they "are on the bride's side." Many conversations take place before the trip starts and later on the road, allowing the viewers to witness the (scripted) fears, hopes, and dreams that refugees bring to Europe. The group eventually crosses the border into Sweden, but the ending credits reveal that only 3 of the original 7 immigrants have received refugee status.

*Io Sto Con La Sposa's* docufilm-style narrative reveals the dominant Italian gaze. Docufilms are similar to documentaries as they are both non-motion pictures used to highlight a specific moment in time. With *Io sto con la sposa* Director Gabriele Del Grande created a fast-paced, emotionally charged 'road film' that communicates how multidimensional and encompassing the immigrant's experience is by showing the fears, emotions, and stories of migrants as they journey through Europe.

The docufilm's setup reveals how Italy views itself in relation to immigrants. When *Io sto con la sposa* starts, Gabriele and his Italian friends take great pains to communicate the illegality of this project to the group: "We are going to help you by smuggling you across the borders. This is a very serious crime but we are prepared to help you anyway. Hopefully, nobody will become suspicious if they think we are in a wedding party." (Del Grande, et. al *Io sto con la sposa*). The film's description IndieGoGo official crowdfunding site communicates,

*"When this film comes out, we could be sentenced to 15 years in prison for aiding and abetting illegal immigration. We are prepared to take this risk because we know what the war in Syria is like. We've seen it with our own eyes. And helping people to get out of that sea of blood makes us feel like we're on the right side".*

In *Io sto con la sposa*, the term "smuggling" refers to the illegal entry into the European continent. In many cases, the connotation of "smuggling" is "human trafficking." A report by the Migration Policy Institute estimates that in 2010 there were over 140,000 persons trafficked into Western Europe and that trafficking numbers have grown significantly since 1980 while Frontex, a European Union-sponsored border management agency, detected over 140,000 illegal border crossings during the same year (6). Additionally, there were an estimated 1.9 to 3.8 million undocumented immigrants living inside the European Union in 2008 (Shelley 6). Given such events as the war in Syria, instability in Middle East and North African countries resulting from the Arab Spring in 2010, and continuing human rights abuses in countries like Ethiopia and Eritrea, numbers of migrants into European Union borders are only increasing<sup>4</sup>. While it is not surprising to see that human trafficking numbers have grown along with human smuggling, the language on the crowdfunding website again utilizes generalized language and emphasizes its more negative connotations to increase the Italians' heroism.

Gabriele and his friends seem to be moved by a sense of superior ethical standing that is a real-life representation of the foreclosure and denial Mellino discusses in his essay. In fact, although *Io sto con la sposa* portrays the group of Italians as being railing against an unjust system, they resort to using the same rhetorical generalizations so dear to the mainstream media. For example, the narrative conflates the struggle of the Palestinians with the Syrians' situation, confirms Europe as a dreamland rather than a space of surveillance and control, and lastly provides an uncomplicated, homogenized gaze at the migrants, whose cultural and political situation is very different. The language used by Del Grande on his crowdfunding page is replete with such generalizations.

*"These people are not victims of fate or storms, but of laws...which is why we became traffickers for a week and helped five Syrian war refugees continue their journey inside Fortress Europe...The risk we're taking is crazy. We hope...that one day this sea will stop swallowing up the lives of its travelers and go back to being a sea of peace, where all are free to travel and where human beings are no longer divided up into legal and illegal. The people we met in our journey across Europe belong to it..., and so do the people reading this page. There are many more of us than we think, and this is the film we needed."*

Firmly relying on the rhetoric of compassion language generalizes immigration into something Italian audiences can understand. The director conveys at the same time a message of hope and solidarity with the people across the sea, but he is also making a conscious decision to use his European privileges. As they explain in the beginning, they are "becoming traffickers for a week," taking a "crazy risk," especially since they are all European citizens and their friends have already applied for the Italian or Spanish citizenship. While the language in the narrative categorizes all immigrants from the Global South as escaping "the war in Syria," three of the six protagonists are actually from Palestine. Following the stereotypical rhetoric, much of the trip is spent discussing lost loved ones, the emotions driving people to leave, and abstract concepts such as the freedom of the sea and sky than the specific nature of the conflict in the characters' respective countries.

Following the write-up, the film's objective is to convince Italian audiences that there is a problem in Europe, which Gabriele characterizes as a Fortress, unwelcoming towards immigrants and indifferent to the many lives who have been swallowed up by the Mediterranean. If much of the narrative is dedicated to mourning the victims, the authors of the docu-film do not focus on Europe's responsibility in creating and enforcing the laws that transformed that body of water into a mass grave.

*Io Sto Con La Sposa* responds to the pleas of the immigrants as they long to come to Europe. In many conversations during the journey, they express their life-long desire to come to "to visit Paris," a city that becomes one and the same with their desire for a new existence on the continent. While their kind, funny, and endearing personalities bear heart-wrenching tales of desperate survival Gabriele and his friends are intent on helping them, showing the 'noble' heart of a continent that is in reality still at war with giving migrants the right of free mobility. Furthermore, the narrative relies on a romanticized vision of the immigrant as someone who is at the same time in need to be saved from dangerous and threatening situations in her home country and on the other as someone dreaming of a new life in a welcoming "promised land": Europe. Their actions are atypical in a continent that is growing more and more xenophobic, yet their representation, as good, even heroic Italians, seems to subconsciously parallel patronizing colonialist attitudes.

Language is a powerful tool for communicating ideas. The dominant gaze silences, alters, or simply ignores other voices running counter to the main narrative. The well-meaning people who edited *Io sto con la sposa* show audiences specific conversations casting Italians into a positive light and immigrants into a conciliatory one. Gabriele's character out-reasons Tasnim's articulations for not leaving Syria as soon as the situation became unsafe. Her intentions for leaving Syria are muddled and unclear, as well as her desire to eventually return. Immigrants' conversations with each other are somewhat affected by the presence of the camera, as the protagonists are self-conscious, more guarded, less authentic in their emotional expressions. *Io sto con la sposa* is built around exchanges among and conversations with immigrants as they are driven throughout Europe. Careful editing shows the gamut

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of emotions that characterize the journey, anger, frustration, fear, despair. Manar's father silences his son several times with, "stop saying those things! We're on camera! Be quiet!" In many scenes, the immigrants react freely, unrestrained, but the narrative remains firmly in the drivers' hands.

Yet another revealing element of the Italian gaze in *Io sto con la sposa* is music. To accompany the journey the choice has fallen on traditional Arab melodies that are nearly always in the minor key and have long, drawn-out notes that sound exotic, foreign, and similar to wailing to Western listeners. The instruments most heard in *Io sto con la sposa* are drums, tambourines, strings, and wind instruments. They play while people are in motion, especially as they get into cars. The soundtrack is string-based and more ominous only twice in the docufilm. When Gabriele, Tasnim, and Khaled are in the cave after crossing the Italian-French border and openly confront the notions of race and border. And when Mona shares her desire for her children to have a "nationality" in Europe.

When the immigrants sing, they need no instruments to accompany their voices. 12-year old Manar uses his rapping talents to issue a plea "Fii Arabii" ("In Arabic") to view Palestine more compassionately. The audience is first introduced to his talent in a dim French café, where Manar breaks into "Fii Arabii" after being goaded on by Del Grande, Tasnim, and Khaled. He performs one last catchy song right before the credits and after the characters' future is revealed to the audience. Other immigrants sing in the car, as they climb mountains, and in cafes. Their songs express patience in light of struggles, nostalgia, or great joy. Through difficult moments, climbing the French Alps, for example, they sing songs longing to "join the beautiful maiden" and a desire that "she should look upon me." After driving past the border, they sing Palestinian songs or reprise the maiden song. The greatest emotions are visible when the seven immigrants, Del Grande, and his Italian friends crossed the last border into Sweden. Their bodies' joyful dancing needs no sound.

It is possible that the Italian editors chose to correlate Arabic music with the movements of the immigrants because it emphasizes differing cultural identities. Most Italian audiences are not accustomed to Arab music which, do to its low tones, automatically sounds different. Since the immigrants and the Italians all resemble each other (dark eyes, olive skin, dark, thick hair), music can clearly separate the two groups and bring the migrants' otherness into focus.

*Io sto con la sposa's* cinematography presents altered and dramatically simplified perceptions of the immigrants to native Italian audiences. Italians created a narrative of compassion, solidarity that forecloses any reflection on the past and on the responsibilities Italians have vis-à-vis the present situation in Africa and the Middle East. Their gaze is still a privileged one, able to choose the strategies that best fit the narration of their story. It is a gaze that glosses over collective wrongdoing and is situated safely behind state policies separating Europe from non-Europeans, geographically, socially, politically. In *Io sto con la sposa* Europe narrates itself as supportive, paternal, and generous as she 'takes care' of immigrants who need her help. On the other hand, Dagmawi Yimer's narration in *Come Un Uomo Sulla Terra*, urges us to look at reality from the immigrants' perspective, which forces the viewers to critically link the past with the present and to recognize, behind the media and political jargon, Europe's oppressive border control policies.

### COME UN UOMO SULLA TERRA

In *Come un uomo sulla terra* Ethiopian immigrants recount a seldom told story of racism, violence, and suffering by focusing, more than on the crossing, on what happens before, on land. Their stories reveal that far-reaching efforts to "control and limit" migration are at work well before immigrants attempt to cross the Mediterranean (Segre, et.al, *Come un uomo sulla terra*). Their stories denounce Europe, which is no longer portrayed as a safe haven and denounce its selectiveness in the protection of human rights.

Director Dagmawi Yimer's subdued narration in *Come un uomo sulla terra* contrasts *Io sto con la sposa's* narrative as it presents a reality that intersects politics, racism, human rights with the colonial past, exposing Europe's unwillingness to confront its racist core. Although Yimer acknowledges to his Italian wife Chiara that it is sometimes difficult to share his story with people who did not have his same experiences, he describes speaking, also, as therapeutic. Sharing the fear, pain, horror of the violence

heals the soul, while the body still carries the scars. The narration includes footage from Yimer's arrival to Lampedusa in 2006 and gives space, unedited and unaltered, to the voices of the immigrants, whose words repeatedly question and challenge the dominant gaze and its simplistic, oblivious story. Immigrants' voices in *Come un uomo sulla terra* re-claim agency and a participation in the narrative that goes beyond simple existence or objectification.

Unlike the immigrants in *Io Sto Con La Sposa*, who burst their stories after long periods in the car or after encountering anti-immigrant graffiti, Ethiopian protagonists in *Come un uomo sulla terra* share their experiences after Yimer says, "tell me about what happened." Yimer welcomes and affirms the Ethiopians' voices. Most importantly, he does not shy away from what they say. He credits immigrants with telling their stories: "It is not good to remember," he says, "but I needed to, and I want to." The Ethiopians' tone often varies: it is usually fast-paced with anger and indignation or quiet when acknowledging the suffering endured. Their physicality is not hidden as the camera captures hand motions, sleeves rolled up to show rope burns, and still shots of eyes looking away into the repository of memory.

The documentary reveals the extent to which the dominant gaze extends beyond physical boundaries. A fitting example is the 2008 border-control agreement between Italy and Libya. Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi signed an agreement with Libyan leader Muammar al-Gadhafi to "control illegal immigration" from Africa into Europe. Throughout the documentary, the audience is able to piece together the immigrants' experiences in Africa as a result of these agreements. Most journeys start with paying exorbitant transportation fees to Libya. Immigrants are crammed into vehicles and driven across the desert without food or water, and women and girls are usually raped or molested. Since many immigrants are unable to provide European-approved documentation for travel, the Libyan government views them as illegal and detains them for unspecified lengths of time. Yimer traces their journey on the map as immigrants are taken to the makeshift prison of Al Kufrah, located at the border between Egypt and Chad. Some return to Al-Kufrah 7 times before they can afford to pay for the trip across the Mediterranean. Europe, they conclude, believes in the "survival of the fittest," as it accepts only the survivors. *Come un uomo sulla terra* shows how migrants encounter significant animosity when coming to Europe. By sharing their experiences in Libya, Yimer and the Ethiopian migrants show the audience there is more happening in Europe than narratives like *Io sto con la sposa* suggest or are willing to admit. *Come un uomo sulla terra* exposes the mechanisms and policies that are being deployed to control migration as dehumanizing techniques aimed at silencing the voice and destroying the existence of the immigrants. By giving the immigrants a voice, *Come un uomo sulla terra* recovers the agency the hegemonic narration has unjustly appropriated.

While *Io sto con la sposa's* narrative allows editors to control information, Yimer's documentary actively challenges authorities to declare their responsibilities. A telling scene is Yimer's interview with Ikka Laitinen, director of Frontex<sup>5</sup>. The organization has been charged with border control but, as the documentary exposes, is also heavily involved in, to use Mezzadra's term, externalizing the border.<sup>6</sup> Frontex projects Europe's policies into the Mediterranean Sea and enables barriers to Europe to push far past its borders.

Cinematographic differences between Del Grande's *Io sto con la sposa* and Yimer's *Come un uomo sulla terra* lend insight into the construction of different perspectives and why there are differing accounts of what is happening in the Mediterranean right now. The issue of the problematic gaze is starkly illustrated when conflated with Italy's separationist border policies and the racial undertones that create the Italian narrative. Even in its creation and portrayal of immigrants, *Io sto con la sposa* actively edits, alters, and suppresses the "other's voices and links any agency immigrants have to their Italian protectors. The Italians' gaze in the film presents them as noble people, guided by higher moral standards to break the Italian law. On the other hand, the migrants long for Europe's protection and magnanimity as they become dependent on their European neighbors. With *Io sto con la sposa* the representation of a perpetually Eurocentric and extremely insecure, aid seeking immigrant is corroborated and strengthened.

Conversely, *Come un uomo sulla terra* reveals a less frequently spoken of reality, that of European border control, of national and supranational assemblages that are operative well beyond the geographic borders of Europe. In *Come un uomo sulla terra*, migrants use their voices, the same voices European policies and mediatic language deny them, to tell their stories. They share their traumatic experiences to remind the European community of its ethical and political responsibilities, of the duty of solidarity. The reality behind these narratives is not seen on television and in the mainstream media. These stories remind us that people's lives are in danger, that bodies are vulnerable, and that voices need to be added to the monotone conversations of our political agents. As I have tried to show, *Io sto con la sposa* and *Come un uomo sulla terra* re-construct or recover the migrant reality in different ways, communicating it from different, indeed opposite cultural and political locations.

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<sup>1</sup> The events occurring in the village of Ciociara on May 18, 1944 provide an interesting layer to consider when assessing Italy's view of the "other". The Allies, through the French's "Goums Marocains", or irregular colonial soldiers from Morocco, crossed the seemingly unpassable Aurunci Mountains, and proceeded to rape over 700 women and 800 men out of the 2,500 inhabitants. *Marocchinata* is a term used to refer to the women who were raped by Moroccan soldiers. The term draws images of an entire country, culture, and society for the crimes committed by soldiers in 1944. Hundreds of the 'Goums Marocains' were executed without trial for their crimes.

<sup>2</sup> The term *mare nostrum*, or "my sea", was originally used by the Romans and later used by Benito Mussolini as a propaganda tool. Today, *mare nostrum* refers to a 2013 mass planned search-and-rescue program created by Italy to rescue immigrants off the coast of Lampedusa. Other European countries criticized Italy's 'lenient' attitude towards immigrants because it legitimized migratory behavior. Around the same time, the Italian government claimed Mare Nostrum was an "emergency operation" and dissolved it in 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Ever since her appointment to integration minister in 2013, Kyenge has endured racist and sexist remarks including, but not limited to "Zulu", "Congolese monkey", and "the black anti-Italian". Bananas were thrown at her during speeches. Kyenge has responded with composure, affirming "I am black, not colored, and I say it with pride", and finding solidarity with Laura Boldrini, newly elected speaker of the Lower House. Boldrini referred to the attacks against Kyenge as "racist vulgarities" and admitted to receiving daily death threats and sexually violent images through email.

<sup>4</sup> According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees's 2015 Subregional Operations Profile for Northern, Western, Central, and Southern Europe, in the first seven months of 2014, more than 87,000 people arrived in Italy by sea, mainly from Eritrea and the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria).

<sup>5</sup> Frontex was established in 2004 and was given more agency after Italy's *Mare Nostrum* program was dissolved. Their primary role is to regulate European Union (EU) borders and provide relevant information on movement into Europe, including data and statistics on migration from the global south.



Frontex was presented as an alternative, less intensive program to replace *Mare Nostrum* but its initiatives are less empowered and do not deal as directly with immigrants. In November 2014, Frontex launched Joint Operation Triton, a border security patrol and intelligence-collecting operation under Italian control.<sup>6</sup> Brett Nielsen and Sandro Mezzadra, *Border As Method*. Duke University Press, Durham and London. 2013.