
Migration, Gender, and Writing: The Aesthetics of Rift in Syria Poletti's Work¹

ABSTRACT

An examination of Syria Poletti's work and the predominant aesthetics of rift therein may be approached from an introduction to her life and literary recognition, valid as a way to initially present the author but also from a socio-critical perspective in which much of her production has been read, positing her literature as deeply entangled in her autobiographical experiences and the Italian and Argentinian contexts and histories. In this respect, I draw on Susanna Regazzoni's essay *Italia Argentina [sic] una historia compartida: Syria Poletti [sic] inmigrante italiana, escritora argentina* to explain the position of in-betweenness or navigation between different cultures that relate both to her migratory experience and, as shall be shown, to her writing in a very broad sense. I will initially detail, therefore, such biographical data of importance concerning migration and (related) perceptions as a (woman) writer, by herself and others, as a frame to subsequently delve into my contention of a strong aesthetics of rift that formally and thematically characterize her work. Relying on Walter Gardini's also significant bi-cultural presentation, *Syria Poletti: Mujer de dos mundos*, for documentation on her life (where he subsequently presents an autobiographical reading of her work), I will additionally stress his account of the encounter with the author which perfectly illustrates her key concerns both in life and writing for the subject positions of migrants and women.

INTRODUCTION.

LIVING BETWEEN CULTURES: ITALIAN IMMIGRANT, ARGENTINIAN WRITER

This contribution aims to present the Italian diaspora in the transoceanic context where it first located and currently holds the largest number of

¹This article is part of a larger research funded by the Spanish Institution FICYT (Fundación para el Fomento en Asturias de la Investigación Científica Aplicada y la Tecnología) in order to complete a dissertation on Italian-American literature and culture within the Gender and Diversity PhD of the University of Oviedo. The same institution granted me funding to do a research stay at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of NY (Queens College) from October-December 2014. At a conference of the Institute during this period I encountered Professor Martino Marazzi, whom I wholeheartedly thank for having invited me to sit in his lessons in New York University and introduced me to the field of the Italian diaspora beyond the US and, particularly, the work by Italian-Argentinian writer Syria Poletti.

descendants, the South American continent.² It is investigated through Italian Argentinian writer Syria Poletti by offering a comprehensive reading of her work from an analysis of what I shall term aesthetics of rift out of the identification of pervading themes, motifs and formal devices to convey foreignness and division in much of the literary production. While used primarily to signify the most direct effects of migration, as in the portrayal of the striking dimensions of Italian exodus found in *Gente Conmigo* (1961),³ such aesthetics inform other key concerns of the author such as women's position, social class, immigration policies and issues of citizenship. The family division and feeling of foreignness (an autobiographical recurrence related to the experience of migration) is significantly transfigured as result of gender differences to denounce the patriarchal oppression depicted in "Horses," within the collection *Línea de Fuego* (1964),⁴ or the related weight of tradition of "The River," in *Extraño Oficio* (1971).⁵ Further dramas of separation and a rhetoric of abysm are involved in dealing with immigration laws addressing particularly aged people, the disabled, and women (restrictions for non-contagious physical deformities, and proxy marriages), or in describing the incorporated estrangement of Argentinians beyond the mere geographical displacement expected when migrating.

Born on February 10, 1917 in Pieve di Cadore, province of Belluno in Veneto, at the age of 6, Syria Poletti and her mother, two sisters and a brother moved to Sacile, in Friuli-Venezia Giulia. This was one of the poorest regions in the years of her childhood and actually motivated as much transoceanic migration as that better known of the Italian South. Poletti's father had already migrated to South America by this time and some years later her mother joined him; as there was no money for all the children's passage, she was forced to leave behind Syria and another daughter, the eldest Beppina, causing the greatest personal damage that she would never be able to forgive. Three years later, Beppina also had to leave for work to Milan and Syria definitely became the orphan for which her mother was to be forever blamed; reaching Argentina herself in 1939, she would never reunite with her family except for Beppina. It will be only with and through her grandmother, Elisabetta Pasquale, put in her care when the parents migrated, that Syria will find a sense of her place, both physically and existentially, in the world; as it will be later developed,

²Italian emigration to South American preceded that to the United States but was severely restricted at the turn of the century due to outbreaks of yellow fever in many South American countries" (Magistro 159); "Today about 70 million people of Italian origin live outside Italy, mainly in South America, where there are over 35 million Italian descendants in Brazil and Argentina alone. North America, mainly the USA and Canada have over 17 million" (Cappiello 51' 45")

³People with me (personal translation).

⁴Line of Fire (personal translation).

⁵Strange Profession (personal translation).

the shared experience of loss and pain caused by migration, one for the absence of the son and Syria for her parents, are deeply connected to the use of writing as one of those sites through which reclaim belonging.

Writing becomes a clear means of reconciliation for the author and in her literary work, as we will see, yet it is at the same time the primary site of conflict in terms of her cultural allegiances. Indeed, as far as literary recognition is concerned, it constitutes a notable source of alienation that Poletti herself profoundly suffered until the end of her life. In Argentina, she passed from centrality in great critical attention and large readership in the 1970s and 1980s, to almost complete indifference and marginality within the contemporary literary canon, with a single critical study in 2000 by María Rosa Lojo to account for her presence. Furthermore, in general, Poletti's production is read from a gender lens solely (as representing a feminism of difference in her approach to maternity) rather than for its literary value (Bravo-Herrera). As for Italy, we find the reverse process but the one Poletti most painfully experienced as she was categorically neglected during her lifetime in the place she would have liked to have been recognized. If in Argentina she immediately won a few literary prizes and novels such as *Gente Conmigo* (1961) were translated to several languages, had 7 editions and even TV and film adaptations, in Italy only the past years have seen a recovery and appreciation of her work. While Poletti herself attributed such neglect to her determined, early choice of writing exclusively in Spanish, other critics explained it as caused by Italian general disregard for the phenomenon of migration, dismissed as nothing more than a aesthetics of mourning and lament, or as very possibly a combination of both: consequence of a linguistic and cultural extraterritoriality not only for Italy but even for Argentina as there coexisted, in what Renata Londero identified as a "terra di nessuno," always inbetween or "in bilico," "a persistent nostalgia for the lost country and the enthusiastic embracing of the new home" (qtd.in Bravo-Herrera 2 [personal translation]).

Renata Londero has also stressed how in Italy, for all of Poletti's desire and direct implication as in searching an editor for the Italian version of her first novel, *Gente Conmigo*, recognition only came posthumously, mostly thanks to the effort of Silvana Serafin, responsible for the critical study and reevaluation of Poletti's work with two monographs and other two volumes totally or partially dedicated to her production. Offering an updated list of other translations and publication of the rest of her work today in Italy, Londero has additionally recovered her poetry, never before translated in Italian nor critically considered; although marginal comparatively speaking (10 poems in her overall novelistic, children and short-story production), such small corpus of poetry proves important for its clear convergence in thematic concerns and dramatic effect with the rest of her work.

Several of the poems feature Poletti's main content and formal constants of the topics of gender inequality, poverty, disability and migration and the effects of seemingly insurmountable rift and indelible bodily marks.

"Las Dolomitas Otra Vez" (The Dolomites Again) presents the tired tone of an allusive return to that Italian landscape that is not remembered in the idyllic, exalted terms typical of migrant literature (Serafin) but with a disaffected voice that talks of lashing rain and gales, sharp rocks, wolves, abysses and "far, very far, the world"; "Fosforescencias" (Phosphorescences) reiterates a litany for "all the failures": "the initial defeat / the constant losses / the margination from the sun / . . . the unexpected crumbling of the towers / . . . the extinguished memories / the mutilations / the abandonments." And lastly, in "Empecemos de Nuevo, Madre" (Let's Start Again, Mother), the poetic voice pledges with all "the storms / the hunger / the blows / the abandonments / the impossible encounter / the fugitive embraces" but implores "only erase the departure for America / Don't conceive me into this exile, mother."⁶ All remembrance is covered in negative and menacing descriptions, with recurrent natural imagery that far from romantically or accurately recovered responds to an aesthetic fallacy in the poetic persona that the migration experience has shaped, a reinterpretation of the familiar and physical world through memory and imagination. Repetition through enumeration and anaphors, as well as the visual and phonetic rendering of descriptions of the homeland in abrupt, separate verses, reinforce the expressions of distance and detachment.

Poletti's condition as writer cannot be overlooked as this intersects in unique ways, or slips within her approach to the central identity issues of gender, migration and language. As Regazzoni properly established, Poletti is an Argentinian writer in that she fully assumes that her identity as writer is that of the new county. She sees the author's experience as migrant as "completely original due to the strong will to find a place for herself in Argentina, the reason why she chooses Spanish" (67–68 [personal translation]). Nonetheless, Poletti's own motivations are also expressed in that there is a major tribute paid to her host country as migrant but also practical, professional matters such as the fact that the writing in such similar languages may easily lead to minor mistakes or confusion of nuances. It is true, in any case, that more than simple adoption, it is a stubborn fight rather, plainly expressed in having made her biggest sacrifice of completely renouncing Italian, of "changing her language that was like changing her soul" (68, [personal translation]), and, above all, in her emphasizing her determinant objective of writing for the Argentinians.

However, as much as Poletti pays respect and love, she again claims her language choice to be an instrument, particularly necessary to have a say in the country and be able to communicate. Hence, her Italian identity or past is not completely discarded, which is sufficiently evidenced in the

⁶All translations into English are mine, this one from Londero's poetry compilation in Italian and Spanish (33–36), as the rest to be found along the article of Poletti's work in Spanish. A statement should therefore be made about the lack of translation of her work into English except for her first novel *Gente Conmigo* (1961).

writing, occupying a centrality backed by the quantity of stories as well as the emotional charge and literary endeavor dedicated to that part of her identity. In addition, although the firm decision may reveal a voluntary adoption, the soul-change lament is proof of the contrary; in fact, we cannot forget either her position as migrant and therefore the ensuing realities of transculturation and language loss that have particularly characterized Argentinian immigration.

Notably, in relation to linguistic choice in particular, despite (standard and dialectal) Italian influence on Spanish language resulting in the popularly used as well as difused lunfardo and cocoliche, through tango and theatre respectively (Le Bihan), many immigrants finally abandoned and did not transmit their language of origin. Apart from intermarriage, the main reason was public policies in periods of intense nationalism such as the 1902 Law of Residence which not only allowed the expulsion of suspected dangerous immigrants without previous trial (Costanzo) but was strongly felt in schools with flag raisings, the singing of the patriotic Aurora song and other educational practices to ensure monolingualism or to correct linguistic diversity (Sardi). Argentinian modernization projects disregarded what they considered an undesirable migration wave from rural, poor Italian South and hence their dialectal language and even hybrid varieties became a stigma to be avoided or transformed through political and intellectual intervention such as grammar treaties on "the need of a truly Argentinian language and not what was spoken so different from Spanish" (Le Bihan 4 [personal translation]).

A final proof of the life-long linkage of Poletti and, especially, her writing to her immigrant condition is the encounter with Gardini ten years before her death. They first met on the occasion of a prize for a contest on stories connected to migration and she greatly influenced him for the novelty and deep sentiment on immigration problems of everything he had ever heard with her telling speech on "those who forget the past, give upon their future" (7). The second encounter, because of a conference on Italian migration, attests to the other indissoluble link or devotion of Poletti's writing, the cultural and social position of women. She denounces on this particular occasion their lack of visibility both in the conference and the histories of Italian migration and Argentinian society.

LITERARY AND HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS OF ITALIAN MIGRATION IN ARGENTINA

Reflections on being female, a migrant and a writer through Syria Poletti's work will be explored by analyzing an aesthetics of rift which proves to be rich and arguably resilient, in contrast to that aesthetics of nothing more than mourning and lament that Italian literary canon has long attributed to the work of their emigrants and hence neglected (Bravo-Herrera).

If something has served to revalorize the work by women writers, Poletti included, is precisely their perceived or supposed testimonial value to migration issues, their role in dealing with Italian and Argentinian cultural and historical relationships, particularly in documenting the fundamental process of transculturation ensued since the late 1800s until the mid-twentieth century. While previously overlooked, women's contributions through their writing in this respect has been received as a privileged lens in recent years through which to look at Italian Argentinian identity and the realities of both cultures (Regazzoni).

The figure of the migrant, on its own part, has also experienced a transition in narrative treatment. Until very recently, we find the comic archetype of the Cocoliche,⁷ ridiculed or considered evil in contrast to the 'true' *Argentinidad* widely diffused or represented through the literature of the end of the nineteenth century, known as *gauchesca*; the numerous Juan Moreiras and Martín Fieros who were created established the gaucho as main actor of Argentinian social reality and national identity, even when gauchismo as a social phenomenon itself was disappearing or transformed by modernization and immigration changes in the country (Sánchez). It was basically a constructed ideal figure and paradigm to define and promulgate a national identity, in the context of the first Argentinian nationalism and partly as a reaction to the migrant wave arriving in the cities, which in Buenos Aires tellingly surpassed 40% of population between 1880 and 1930.⁸

Later, the *criollo*, rural worker descendant of *gaucho*, continued to be the opposing figure to the immigrant and ultimately represented a model of integration as a nationalist, apolitical and disciplined worker in contrast to foreign subversiveness and strike activity (Sánchez 212). Another common concern portrayed in narrative was the opposition between *criollos* and *gringos*, or 'old' Argentinians and the new migrants and their children, including the identity conflicts of those appertaining to both heritages, the *criollo-italianos*, forcing many to actually embrace *criollism* as a way to assimilate (201). Transcending literary realms, therefore, nativism was rampant as he was the "representative of a native 'race' that in the height of the migrant wave, started to be revalorised for his physical and working abilities" (206). However, in line with theoretical and critical approaches to the role of literature and narrative to "disseminate" ideas of nationhood and culture (Bhabha), or simply with more general agreements to both actively construct and be constructed by discourse or art's power to shape as

⁷Alleged real Neapolitan immigrant from whose 'imperfect' language would emerge the homonym hybrid speech of Spanish and (dialectal) Italian and who was transformed into a popular theatric character by the Podestà brothers in 1890 (Sánchez; Sorrentino).

⁸See Silvana Serafin, "*Algunas reflexiones sobre la novela de la emigración italiana en Argentina*" for a list of the numerous novels in the very early period of immigration that were based on the negative figure of the immigrant poor by Porteño bourgeois writers with the aim to counteract such a perceived invasion (273). *Zibaldone. Estudios italianos* 3.1: 271–79.

well as reflect reality, just as much as writing contributed in Argentina to diffuse or create such myths, it also changed them (Serafin); it is through literature that the immigrant figure is constituted as well as *transformed* from criminal through comic until progressively accepted and integrated in society despite a simultaneous affirmation of a distinctive ethnicity or cultural identity (173–74). In particular, migrant literature contributed to change those images of unlawfulness and ignorance that opposed ideas and expectations of migrants to the national ideal embodied by the gaucho. Firstly, the prevalent assessment of criminality was replaced by a touch of humor to mitigate such threat; the comic *cocoliche* thus represented a relatively more accepted figure that could be integrated into society. Later, especially second-generation migrants further destabilized any clear-cut notion of home and (national) identity; there are steps to affirm or recover the dignity and social function of the migrant, while at the same time emerges a possibility to conciliate identity positions, a desire to fully embrace or at least explore both Italian heritage and the host country.

Thus, only at the end of the twentieth century did different migratory stories enter the literary landscape, bringing the revalorization of the migrant figure as key to recover Argentinian national identity. As a matter of fact, late interest in this migratory past has also brought due attention to writing by immigrant women, signaled by a monographic study in 2004 where Poletti herself is highlighted as the first woman writer on Italian migration (Regazzoni). *Gente Conmigo*, actually, constituted a literary exception in the treatment of the migrant figure at the early time of its publication, from threat to subject of narration. In doing so, Poletti is praised for surpassing the personal and familial story, testifying to a social phenomenon and therefore for her anticipation of a sensibility more characteristic of contemporary approaches, as well as for delineating a female migrant past otherwise completely overlooked in both historical records and literary accounts (*ibid.*).

“PRODUCTS DESTINED FOR EXPORTATION”:

EFFECTS OF MIGRATION ON ITALY AND ON THE REALITY OF ARGENTINA

Poletti’s first novel *Gente Conmigo* (1961) is by far the text that most deeply engages with the history of migration by mainly emphasizing not only its sheer large dimensions but also the brutal consequences. It is a first-person narrative by Italian immigrant Nora Candiani, who opens her account in an Argentinian prison because she has forged some public documents, although she cannot remember when or any possible reasons for doing so; she only has the intuition that it is not for a particular fact but a succession of them, and by the end we discover she is right. She keeps with her a diary that becomes the narrative thread to reconstruct what hap-

pened, together with other facts of her childhood, youth and emigration that will prove to be the sequence of events leading to her imprisonment.

Nora begins by mentioning her "extraño oficio" (strange profession) of writing for others, inherited from her grandmother, although it soon stops becoming a choice or mere job; she begins writing letters for the people in her village, mostly women whose families have migrated, and will continue to witness the consequences of migration in Argentina when she works as a translator and gets involved in her clients' affairs. Therefore, since her childhood and throughout her existence, the lives and all the suffering of the people she assists become an inevitable part of her too: "the truth is that my memories do not live by themselves. Through any cranny the lives of others invades me, as a curse" (34).

Being unable to live as an autonomous being as a result of having "s[een] too much" (33) or being "saturated with humanity" (1), involuntary or even a curse by her own definition, this is one of the reasons why when she meets Renato, he immediately and fundamentally represents that possibility of living only for herself. More precisely, he is the culmination of her intense search for love and affection which stems from the two greatest events that mark her life: the departure of her mother to Argentina, leaving her and her sister Bertina behind, and the shattering incident at Trieste, the "rejection in red ink and seal" (112) to migrate because she has a physical deformity.

Then, trying to remember why she is in prison with the help of her diary, she unfolds the story of three other characters through which we learn in fact Nora's own life, reinforcing that idea of inseparability from "la gente" (the people), and also through which the dramatic experiences of migration are exposed: firstly, Prince Zedir, former musician Antonio Croatti, whom Nora falsifies his date birth so that he can get the pension and so pay for the treatment of tuberculosis. Next, Valentina, a teenager who only wanted to arrive in America and now feels trapped by a proxy marriage. Finally, Rafael, a child also left behind because of physical infirmity. Nora will help his parents to bring him over and eventually will modify his passport so that he can travel, as an Argentinian consul did for her the second time she tried to migrate after the Trieste denial. This last character parallels her being labelled "not apt" and hence her intertwined story of abandon, migration and marginality, condemned to be excluded from motherly, rightful and romantic love:

I go over the story that comes now, that of Rafael, and I see me once again in the port of Trieste, in a night of wind, cast backwards, marked by a rejection in red ink and stamps. I can't help it. It is useless. I am part of that legion of exiles on whom the laws made indelible marks. I only tried to become allies with the laws, turn them into docile instruments: conciliate with them. And they turned against me. (112-13)

This is the clearest and explicit realization of the interconnection of the narrator with the suffering and lives of the people affected by migration to which, as I explained by way of the premise itself of the text comprised in the title, she is obliged to document or give a voice. Still, beyond her personal immigrant experience where she understood her physical deformity as a condemnation that meant separation from her mother first and foremost (impeding further love from a man), it is important to remark the treatment of migration as a literary theme. In *The Writer as Migrant*, Ha Jin reflects on a common assumption of a direct relation between writing and the subjectivity of a writer as migrant, a position or experience whose impact on the profession and literary skill very often has a misunderstood or very circumscribed analysis. Jin discusses how the migrant experience shapes and thus helps understanding a writer's life and work. In particular, his section on the "spokesman and the tribe" foregrounds such testimonial value, that is, the creative text as document and the role or duty of the writer to their culture. *Gente Conmigo*, however, shows clear signs of creative or literary worth, as in the full circle reached by the end of the narrative where the improbable overlapping of time condenses meaning and is precisely the ultimate generator of the fiction. Because of this device, the narrative may assume other crucial concerns that are not necessarily circumscribed by the concrete experience of migration. While this is a topic "deal[t] with obstination" (Serafin 158–59), the circular structure invokes another kind of journey, for instance, the search of self and/or female emancipation (Serafin; Bravo-Herrera).

In the end, the official reason why Nora is imprisoned nevertheless is not any of those negotiations she cannot avoid, but the forgery of passports of people who cannot enter the country for political reasons or smuggling. We discover she did so under the influence of Renato. He left her to marry a young, bourgeois woman and convinced Nora to abort the child she is expecting; overcome with pain and confusion, she is forced to sign the forged translated documents. Remembering this in prison she suffers a hallucination and she re-experiences both her abortion and her rejection in Trieste, portraying the overlapping of events and intersectionality of oppressions: male doctors and inspectors, the abuse of men at large, the lack of ethics and the injustice of laws against the powerless (Poletti 123). And so the narrative comes full circle and Nora's only redemption comes by putting herself completely at the service of others while at the same time finding her own voice, thus envisioning herself next to her grandmother and fully assuming her destiny / inheritance, the *extraño oficio* of writing.

Apart from a detailed psychological depiction of personal crises, in Nora's familial and love relationships, migration is one of the main topics, in which the former entangle though. Poletti gives a very dramatic picture of the dimensions of migration in Italy, using, among others, the image of the Vishnu god to show the global impact as, in addition to the high nu-

meric proportions, Italian migrants have characteristically been scattered throughout the whole world:

My village was like the centre of the universe: generator of artisans that irradiated in all directions. A village like Vishnú, I said, out of simple imaginary relationship, as I had seen that Vishnu had plenty of arms in a single body. It was a breeding ground for young men apt for everything: to excavate ditches in Africa, dynamite the mines of Belgium, melt steel in Germany, build skyscrapers in NY and cut down trees in the Chaco [Argentina]. They were the chosen ones by Progress. Or its slaves. That is why women had to be solid good breeders of children. (12)

Besides the suitability of the image of the male god for such a varied dissemination of migrants, the choice additionally foregrounds the distinct and painful gendered migration that is one key concern in the narrative. Poletti also represents the intertwining subject positions accompanying that of the migrant based on age, ability and gender and which greatly affect the realities or possibilities of migration. Thus, while the already extraordinary exportation of capable migrants (followed by their common treatment as mere labor when not discriminated against in the host countries) is dramatic enough, its effects on those left behind and the (im)possibility of migration itself must not be forgotten; notably, *Gente Conmigo* portrays the documented gender differentiated pattern of migrations at the time (Gabaccia), but the literature provides the human hues, which here particularly gives voice to the powerless women who do not have even a choice or will of their own and, worse, are the very receptacles or breeders of those (also disenfranchised although eligible) exportation products.⁹ We also get other contextual shades at play imaginatively rendered, that is to say, migration from Italy and gender roles embedded in a broader socio-political and cultural blend of historical time:

My village was like that: a concentration camp for the exodus. Men who while waiting the departure went to drink and get the courage, they said; young women who went to Rome or Milan with so much determination that they could be servants or any other thing; boys who run away with the circus; boys who were stripped from the fields to be soldiers, greater

⁹Italian writer Maria Messina constitutes another voice that has represented “those left behind,” praised also (by her literary mentor, friend, and renown national writer Leonardo Sciascia) for her visionary recording of a human drama and unprecedented phenomenon. More importantly, Messina particularly stressed the effects of the exodus on women and the elderly as well as the devastation to family structure and the non-trivial difficulties of the *returnés*. And like Poletti herself, she has lacked significant critical recognition (until 1981 even Sciascia failed to include her in the male “rich, intense, coherent tradition” he attributed to Sicilian writing) or become forgotten in the literary canon or women’s history pursued by Italian feminists (Gardaphe v–ix).

mystery than when they went abroad. You did not know if Mussolini would send them back for the wheat harvest or if he would play dice with them after giving them a black t-shirt. Even the Vatican absorbed our seminarians: they were so solid they could send them as missionaries to Africa or China. There men grew up and left after having devoured everything. Young women followed them: it was their destiny. Only the old, the ugly and the girls, like me, were left; the ones who nobody desired and who had no other alternative than manage by themselves and become alone and dry as rocks. (Poletti 11–12)

As said before, personal and familial crises mostly stem from migration, and there is a predominant stylistic imprint of rift characterizing the depiction and effects of migration, although not solely or not exclusively the most immediate. Family divisions, particularly the drama of those who stay behind and the uprooting of emigrants for their mother country and relatives, the most direct consequences possibly, best feature this through an abundant semantic field related to sharp separation, physical and emotional abysses and complete estrangement. The collection of 13 stories *Línea de Fuego* (1964), published only three years later, shares the theme of the migratory experience and the psychological consequences of the maternal departure regarding affection, the possibility of emotional bonds and a general sense of belonging, sometimes again through the recurrence of the child left behind.

Equally, the focus on women, especially old, not only minors, who are left behind is addressed, here also depicted by using nature imagery that signifies their compulsory stillness and, by extension, the impossibility of migrating; if in *Gente Conmigo*, they became inert rocks or figuratively fastened as Doña Martina with her hands like roots (28), in *Línea de Fuego* they are abysmally forgotten, even by their own migrant children, by becoming confused or buried in the landscape of the home country, in its hardships and a sense out of time or place. “Midnight Train” opens and closes with descriptions of heavy snow falling and of quietness, thus mirroring through its frame the metaphorical distance not only in space but time surrounding the main characters, which is more explicitly depicted in “Only a Plant”:

She [the grandmother] said there are plants that stay and others that leave. She said that because she thought about the other son, who migrated to America, the one with the skyscrapers, automobiles and liberty. All those things make them forget the poor mothers, those little old women so adhered to stone houses and steep narrow streets that one ends up mistaking them with picture cards. It was the son who had studied, the one who then would go to other lands to better bloom. You always export the more healthy section. (84)

As in *Gente Conmigo*, grandmother and granddaughter are figures close to one another not only by family love but also joined by the pain of their shared experience of abandonment and wait, one for the mother, the other for the son. The metaphor of the monster for America that devoured migrants and their memories (37–39) again reappears, named through the train which stands for progress, the same as migration and its alleged promises. Finally, the rift comes also forcefully through more specific vegetal imagery that describes not only the quintessential uprootedness associated with migration but more precisely with the impact or drastic shock of the most direct and lived experience. *Gente Conmigo* represents the family in decomposition as a trunk with its unnatural separate or dispersed branches, “sections that have to grow their own roots because parents are unable to adapt” (35). In “Only a Plant,” following maternal departure in “the afternoon of the tearing” (*Línea* 41), the protagonist herself parts from her beloved grandmother when “it arrived the morning when a slash should cut my sap from hers” (90).

Some other important consequences are the real and psychological estrangement even, or perhaps more so, when returning: back after only 10 years, the protagonist of the story naming the collection, “Line of Fire,” is dismayed that she cannot recognize places and people any more, which is attributed again to the impact of progress, causing the deep rift in identity as “the only memory capable of gratitude is that of the crazy people” (*Línea* 182). As for the harsher return of the migrant past in the form of soldiers who have to fight their own family and land of origin during WWII, the fissure is permanent as embodying and causing death; in both texts the loved character of the old grandmother dies because “she had not feared the places from America where the son had gone” (*Línea* 91).

As evidenced, there are many obvious similarities regarding character building and thematic treatment between Poletti’s first novel and her first collection of stories. There are, however, significant novelties that should be noticed and that indicate an evolution in her writing, particularly in relation to a transcendence of the misleading autobiographical element that may result in diminishing the artistic value of a work and create misunderstanding or forgetting the differences between an author’s life and their fiction (Jin). As Poletti herself has made clear in relation to the question if all her work is autobiographical, it depends and she prefers the term “poeticized memory” (Gardini 10). Regarding personal events or lived experiences, some are true, others invented or a mixture of both; what she defines as autobiography in her work is rather a certain worldview or “one’s universe,” “a way of narrating or a style that is the result of the subjective and so appears as true because it is charged with the life itself” (qtd. in Bravo-Herrera 5). Immigration, as mentioned earlier, is more of literary than existential, being able to narrate the experience of arrival beyond bio-

graphical data, exemplified by ...y *Llegarán Buenos Aires* (1989),¹⁰ where she relates the foundation of the city by European pilgrims in 1535, backing the mentioned recovery of migrant history and literature in Argentina.

Thus, within a larger analysis and comparison regarding her whole literary career, we may now frame two almost contemporary texts which share a similar aesthetics and literary style but employing divergent approaches as in thematic treatment. Notably, the rift imagery and bodily imprints (as well as impediments) more associated with the experience of migration in *Gente Conmigo* are later also presented primarily from a gender perspective. In other words, apart from the recurring "wound in the side" or the "slash" caused by emigration in "Train of Midnight" or "Only a Plant," we find a similar rhetoric and themes of family division and feeling of foreignness associated with the experience of gender discrimination. In "Horses," the child protagonist describes a family gap and uses imagery of broken natural organisms such as plants again but her feelings of alienation take place within the same country and family because of patriarchy. Emigration appears in the background, and is, in any case critically presented from a feminist perspective since only men are the migrants, and for women it is envisioned as an escape option or chance for greater independence. Male domination is represented through the giants, symbolic colossal figures of physical and indisputable power, who openly boast their preference for male children, the same as the mothers; however, women show an absurd complicity with that system of privilege even if they do not have many options:

The mother never noticed those frenetic hands, clumsy butterflies which longed for a caress. The mother kissed the chobby small hands of the tiny giant, the one who would validate her role to the real giant and would also mediate between him and wine. When the light stopped sheltering her and showing landscapes [Dolomitas], she went to take refuge in the stables. Here there were neither portraits nor giants who demanded wine, or mothers who whined or were suddenly jealous and vented in unexpected pinches. . . . There were only them: Barbita . . . and Mocha . . . With them she talked and made long trips. . . . and travelled through marvelous countries . . . In those worlds the girls were precious and loved, and giants were excluded. Countries without giants. (13)

As a result, the girl is a "foreigner, split from the familial trunk," emphasized by her perpetual inability to comprehend the very female cooperation in sustaining that order against their own interests as women, as when at the end, one of the men suffers an accident on horseback and she cries for the horse while the others for the giant who was abusing them.

¹⁰And Buenos Aires/Good Times will finally come (personal translation).

In *Gente Conmigo* Nora suffers from scoliosis and this is connected with the author's main thematic concern of migration, with Argentinian laws forbidding entrance to people with any physical deformity even if it not contagious. Poletti broadens the injustice to further cultural beliefs and practices by referring to the Monte Taigeto (152), which beyond the Spartan warrior-oriented society laws to banish their unfit newborn, synthesizes the destruction or ostracism of disability throughout history (in ancient Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages and until recently rights have finally granted equality and decent human treatment) and across geographies (from east cultures to American tribes) as punishment because of religious associations to external signs of evil or simply as contrary to the cult of beauty, physic perfection and war of many societies (Hernandez-Gómez 12–13, 81). This association thus emphasizes the entrenched social disenfranchisement that goes beyond a particular historical moment of unfair laws because of the interests and effective calls (e.g. 1876 Avellaneda Law supporting Immigration and Colonization) for productive, healthy labor force for Argentinian unpopulated extensive countryside and burgeoning cities (Serafin; Sergi).

Yet migration remains the central concern as the derived traumatic experience of rejection of the main character in Trieste is again repeated through Rafael and at the very end of the narrative through the hallucination. In *Línea de Fuego*, however, we find disability completely disentangled from the migratory experience and associated instead with general social prejudices and barriers or to gender-related constraints. With settings entirely in Italy, "Line of Fire" deconstructs official laws of civic unsuitability such as the above-mentioned in Sparta by making the girl protagonist participate in a WWI battle, and in "A lad with luck," his physical deformity is transformed from congenital or acquired disability to a "birth mark" which is no other than illegitimate birth: through a use of a similar semantic field to that of physical or mental disability (by the characters) in other stories, the reason why the boy is misunderstood and aware of having this stain that sets him apart, from other children even, is his having no legal father.

Two other fundamental thematic differences, even within the context of migration in some cases, concern the treatment of the home and host countries. In *Gente Conmigo*, descriptions of Argentina come through the lens of the experience of migration. It is mostly described as an amalgam, although Italians constitute a majority, living in complete estrangement; "in the limb of social reality," Nora/the narrator affirms, Argentinian people live as if lost or confused in the new country, "de paso" or in transition, as if going somewhere else after, and all trying to "heal the wound they bring on their side" (141). This imagery of bodily imprints associated with emigration also recurs strongly in *Línea De Fuego*, as through the character who finally also leaving for Argentina carries the same wound on her side in "Only a Plant." In general the migration history of Argentina is completely blurred in the collection.

Nora repeatedly denounces Argentinian and Italian immigration laws against the disabled and women by allowing proxy marriages. She is gen-

erally deeply involved in fighting any injustice and frivolity that have to do with political and socio-cultural realities but who are indirectly connected to migration too. For instance, the lack of compromise or the conformism on the part of Argentinian people, what she describes as an old/worn-out country, "a pathetic country that desperately seeks for a human expression that identifies it and allows everyone to live facing instead of turning their back to social reality" (142). This is a reality that is very much linked to the consequences of migration since a kind of explanation is provided for this passivity through the character of Rafael's father, who was deceived by a Member of Parliament to plot against Peronism and was put into prison accused of terrorism. Nora links the abuse toward the innocent and migrants to the situation of the country, leading not only to their disappointment about politics but to the point where their own and their children's legitimate condition of citizens is seriously damaged: "Their fathers will tell them: this is a shit of a country. Do not get involved. We'd better resist, pretend we respect it and wait for the moment to tease them. This is not our land" (141).

Gente conmigo also addresses the typical dramas of cultural accommodation, nostalgia for something lost, and the feelings of in-betweenness or dual identity which are hard to conciliate. Far from the rift so far predominant, in some instances the reflective Nora gets to acknowledge both heritages and see migration as positive, through the natural symbolism of germinating something new in a different land. She scolds Renato for remaining unchanged, being unable to assume Argentinian reality even if he had lived there for 60 years, but he is just like everyone else since, as she herself declares, the country in its entirety is nostalgic, old (142). According to Bravo-Herrera, this identification by Poletti corresponds to a "recognized cultural ripping which is consolidated in Argentina through the imposition of the dominant perspective of coloniality [...] a failed political project of construction of national identity based on integration and *Argentinization* of immigrants" (9 [personal translation]). In other words, it derives from migration but not on the side of the immigrants this time but of the host country itself searching for an identity after experiencing the phenomenon:

It is not only a slash, a cultural scission that predominates in immigrant groups who try to resolve their rootlessness from the mother country through a resistance to integration in the new community, but an identity conformation of the Argentinian culture characterized by that detachment. (*ibid.*)

By contrast, in *Línea de Fuego* there is not that explicit criticism of the Argentinian national character regarding their passivity and conformism that emerged out of the experience of migration and seeing the country as a temporary one or Italy as the real home. Except for the sixth story

about an immigrant watermelon seller, "A Streetcar in the Corner," tales dedicated to Argentina are related to everyday and family stories of marriage, unfaithfulness and illness. Of the six stories dealing with Italy, half primarily concentrate on migration, with the solid concern for those left behind; in the rest of stories, migration is often subordinated to a greater interest in other realities, notably the status of women.

"COUNTRIES WITHOUT GIANTS": GENDER AND MIGRATION

Poletti's work offers a sharp account of women's marginal position and abuse by men. Their hard village life and lack of choices have already been analyzed, mainly through the opening scenes of *Gente Conmigo* or the very first story also in the collection *Linea de Fuego*, "Horses." I also showed how gender roles affected and were affected by migration such as its very impossibility or improbability and necessity at the same time. In the case of transoceanic Italian migration, such as to Argentina, the general pattern at the time was for men to leave and so women were either left behind or called for later as companions or "picture brides" through proxy marriages. Women were instead involved in "step" migrations, so called because these were usually internal as domestic servants to local or regional cities and many times ended in wider migrations but within the continent mostly: "women outnumbered men in cityward migrations in Europe in the nineteenth century, but in international movements, male migrants usually predominated" (Gabaccia 90).

Therefore, the "female exodus" described (*Gente Conmigo* 102) is conditioned to their marital status, as actual wives or as future ones; simultaneously, however, forced patriarchal dependence on men is portrayed as a trigger for migration, as the character in "Horses" desired in her hope for a country without giants. Studies and accounts in different contexts¹¹ have looked at the way gender norms have been transformed through the experience of migration, such as a greater female autonomy and more meaningful personal development than in their countries or cultures of origin. In this same light precisely the migrant condition in Poletti has been identified as a privileged tool of resistance, akin to recent standpoint critical theories positing a reaffirmation or re-appropriation of subaltern positions that may give you new knowledge otherwise impossible to gather if you are at the center of power. Bravo-Herrera sees all of her work as counter to old myths

¹¹In the US. See Maddalena Tirabassi's 1990 study *Il Faro di Beacon Street. Social Workers e Immigrate negli Stati Uniti (1910-1939)*, and Rosa: *The Life of an Italian Immigrant*, transcribed and published by Marie Hall Ets in 1970, "one of the few accounts of the life of a first-generation Italian immigrant [...which...] Unlike many traditional immigrant stories of success and hardship in the new country [...] focuses on how migration can prompt personal and artistic growth" (Giunta and McCormick 133).

discursively imposed upon women such as Penelope's wait and paralysis, "complexly reinterpreting this figure in several dimensions through her triple condition of woman, migrant and writer" (1). Such myth is particularly revisited or challenged through the reflection on the topic of writing and journey, on her condition of woman and migrant, thus getting the opportunity for reflexivity, expression and refashioning of the self as well as of the patriarchal narratives that dominate writing about and by women.

Poletti's discussion of her own writing is indeed as solid as manifold, from its craft to its functionality and its redeeming possibilities; and it is embodied or represented through a variety of female alter-egos. Despite the seeming fragmentary nature of her whole work, it comes together through the construction of literary personae such as the girl scribe (*Gente Conmigo* cover). Nora Candiani's *strange profession*, which reappears most forcefully in Poletti's next novel taking it as title, conforms the circular structure of the text and is the driving force of character and plot development. It is initially presented as a curse but eventually reemerges as a regenerating and creative force; although in both cases inevitable (described as fate and purpose respectively), Nora's writing for others, for *la gente*, evolves from being an instrument of social documentation to an understanding that she can also refashion and restore her self though it, thus assuming both dimensions. This character also seems fully aware of those patriarchal narratives, particularly in or through writing, that inscribe or prescribe expected female behavior as when she denounces that masculine perspective can be easily appreciated in the letters by the kind of judgements on women to be found: "It is written by a man . . . You can tell . . . Men when they write for women, they always think to interpret them" (*Gente Conmigo* 178).

Nora repeatedly strives to make visible and explode these gender codes of the literature and wider culture that define women's lives. In *Gente Conmigo*, apart from rampant marginality and subordination as in village life or in the process of migration at a very particular time and place, there is an insistence on wider strict narratives and constraints that remain intact. For instance, Renato telling her she cannot have a child without a surname and treating her as a child and by so doing trying to undermine her credibility and authority through his paternalism in "my little girl of the thoughts for the grown-ups!." She also exposes the traditional double standards of the culture, whereby men's sexual behaviour is tolerated or expected, whereas women are extremely judged when not condemned.

— "Why are you so splendid with the laundry woman? — he rebuked me — ;She is only good for giving the money to that lazy man!" / And I wanted to justify the woman of the swollen hands by the water. I wanted to justify her because, in a way, that would redeem me too. / — "Teresa was not born only to wash... She also needs a bit of love, a bit of tenderness..." / "The only thing she wants is to sleep with a guy!" / — "Renato:

it is not only 'to sleep with' . . . And I felt how we were identified in that tacit sameness of beings dominated by the male. (178)

Here we are reminded of Nora's mentioned determination to become allies with the laws. However, this is a role that needs to be pursued into a broader sense than the strictly legal. Attention is brought to what one character properly identifies as 'unwritten' laws, which are understood to be as strong as official migratory laws and laws against the disabled:

— "My little one! Laws are so unfair with women!" / — "Which laws, Teresa?" / — "What laws do you think? The laws! You are put into prison. That old woman stayed there in Italy, alone, she was not allowed to embark because she moved her head; my little daughter was not allowed to travel either because she had thin legs. It is true: they looked like rags. She could not walk: but I would have provided for her! Nonetheless, the good-for-nothing are walking free!" (183)

Nora has officially become the spokesperson and defender of the immigrants and disabled abused by the law as well as of women, hunt by double sexual standards. Yet, the identification made by this 'minor character,' which at the beginning Nora fails to recognize, denotes a space for the own voices of the oppressed to be also represented. Besides, this woman's voice or Valentina's are strong voices that will not let themselves to be simply victimized or which, at the very least, express their anger and disconformity. Thus, *Gente Conmigo* constitutes Poletti's very early text that already explores the tensions and eventual negotiations between writing and migration. That is, how the writer may feel certain obligations to their "tribe," as Jin identified, but also the need for imaginative freedom and reinvention, which we shall now turn to.

WRITING, MEMORY AND IDENTITY

Strange Profession (1971) is the last novel, ten years later, which best captures the reflections on writing through the protagonist's early vocation for art, which is again rendered as destiny since the very introduction as "Horoscope" (11) by the unnamed girl in the opening of the text. The section of "The River," dealing with the oppression of gender and weight of tradition, considers either migration or writing as only solutions in the described circumstances for women. The absence of the mother, although a hefty present phantom everywhere (62), is again painfully referred to; here however, it represents more of an acknowledgement, as the protagonist does not suffer the lack of maternal love and protection (amply provided by the grandmother) so much as the moral consequences that her behavior

have had on the daughter. Family, villagers and institutions pressure for a legitimate (male) surname to give her social and individual validation.

Previously, in "Wet Wings" the family's decision to abruptly separate grandmother and granddaughter is not related to migration, therefore, but signals a rift encompassed in the embodied damage that has been caused by traditional conceptions of gender and the self-supporting nuclear family. Migration emerges as a way to escape those oppressions as the mother, who is said to have left for America by the river, is also suggested to have done so, or actually drown, as a consequence of her having being abandoned with a child and exposed to the unbearable judgmental village. As for the girl herself, whom the river dangerously "watches" too in what she gender-aware calls "a sickness of race" (68), her "shame" is only manageable through the literature; as in *Gente Conmigo*, it is instilled by her grandmother's stories, culminating in her profession, a destiny analogous to migration: "In every bend of the river, in every bridge, she stopped to tell me stories of freedom and love, as who marks a destiny. A destiny sealed by that immutable river course, as the city's, as hers, as my mother's" (62). By this analogy and by her grandmother's petition to promise that "you will try to know what is beyond the river. When you grow up" (69), we may infer writing is posited as a positive alternative destiny to conjure all those ills and phantoms.

As pleasurable or attractive, however, writing is not any easier than other destinies. Suicide is, not coincidentally, the literary female death par excellence, often by male authors unable to envision *or create* other ways out for their unconventional heroines. Whereas migration represents a better option, there are obstacles for an independent / single woman at the time, as the girl is appropriately reminded by the patriarchal female policing of her family, "women with male voices" (122): the old women's monologues of caution, nonsense and excessive questioning or interpellations overwhelm the girl's voice of reverie and (formal) free thought, which textually appears alternatively contrasted or separated to convey or reinforce their impossible if remarkably lengthy communication (120–216). Their dichotomist existence is all along evident by having the girl with the romantic freedom of a child, talking of birds and love, to clash with the practicality and hypocrisy of her female relatives; differences that are explicitly stressed or boasted in the latter's constant reminders: the girl is a "no one," an orphan, a young girl, poor and even without the chance to save herself through a marriage as she is crippled, recurring again to the embodiment of an alien, divided condition.

For the same reasons, writing is strongly discouraged since, being a second-class subject, she should see to "ensure life" and if studying at all dress-making must be the option according to female propriety (125). America is finally envisioned as the place where she screams back her determination to make a name *and a surname* for herself (173, 192), the same as Nora in *Gente*, pointing to the possible constructive release of migration in gender terms

and to the fulfillment of writing more particularly, literarily (re)configured as prophecy and a definite locus of identity exploration and/or resolution.

To conclude, Poletti's work offers a unique, complex exploration of the unmistakably intertwined issues of gender, migration, age and disability and of writing or literature as a means to reflect and critically interpret them all. Hence, I have stressed and contextualized the concern and treatment of migration not only because of personal experience and affiliation to a community of origin but in light of a broad understanding of Argentinian history, identity and national literature. For the same reason, the outstanding aesthetics of rift in form and content, as in the in-betweenness position of cultural allegiances as a writer and immigrant herself, extend far beyond an autobiographical account. Alienation and division are expressed in varied, lyrical or physically-embodied, forms and associated with events ranging from the great sociohistorical dramas to the most intimate such as a girl's or a boy's deeply conflicted everyday life in their families and villages. Literature is, additionally, a thematic concern in its own right. Apart from a vehicle for testimony and critical understanding of social and personal phenomena, it is the site that offers the freedom from those and the claiming of satisfactory identity and rightful belonging. In this respect, for both characters and author, the rift that is the main cause of suffering and confusion is, at the same time, the path to autonomy, resilience and self-assertion and the very source of the fiction and identity as writers. Thus, Syria Poletti's life and work constitute rich material Italian diaspora studies and feminism could greatly benefit from this neglected and powerful voice of key historical and cultural realities.

Eva Pelayo-Sañudo

University of Oviedo

Works Cited

- Bhabha, Homi. "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation." *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990. 291–322.
- Bravo-Herrera, Fernanda. "Syria Poletti y el oficio de escribir exilios." *Penelope e le altre/Penelope y las demás*. Ed. Rosa M. Grillo. Salerno: Oèdipus, 2012. 283–304.
- Cappiello, Frank, dir. *Immigrant Son: The Story of John D. Mezzogiorno*. Lux Vista Films, 2012. DVD.
- Costanzo, Gabriella A. "Lo inadmisibile hecho historia: La Ley de Residencia de 1902 y la Ley de Defensa Social de 1910." *Revista Sociedad* 26 (2007): np.
- Gabaccia, Donna. "Women of the Mass Migration: From Minority to Majority, 1820–1930." *European Migrants. Global and Local Perspectives*. Ed. Dirk Hoerder and Leslie P. Moch. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1996. 90–111.
- Gardaphe, Fred. "Preface." *Behind Closed Doors: Her Father's House and Other Stories of Sicily*, by Maria Messina. Trans. Elise Magistro. New York: Feminist P, 2007. v–ix.
- Gardini, Walter. *Syria Poletti: Mujer de dos mundos*. Buenos Aires: Asociación Dante Alighieri, 1994.

- Giunta, Edvige, and McCormick, Kathleen Z. *Teaching Italian American Literature, Film, and Popular Culture*. New York: MLA, 2010.
- Hernández-Gómez, Ricardo. *Antropología de la Discapacidad y la Dependencia: un Enfoque Humanístico de la Discapacidad*, 2001. Web. 1 Sept. 2015.
- Jin, Ha. "The Spokesman and the Tribe." *The Writer as Migrant*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008.
- Le Bihan, Ulysse. "Italianismos en el habla de la Argentina: herencia de la inmigración italiana. Cocoliche y lunfardo." MA thesis. University of Oslo, 2011.
- Londero, Renata. "La poesía di Syria Poletti: Proposte Traduttive." *Voci da Lontano. L'emigrazione italiana in Messico, Argentina, Uruguay*. Ed. Silvana Serafin. Venezia: Mazzanti, 2008. 31–40.
- Magistro, Elise. "Glossary" and "Afterword." *Behind Closed Doors: Her Father's House and Other Stories of Sicily*, by Maria Messina. Trans. Elise Magistro. New York: Feminist P, 2007. 158–193.
- Poletti, Syria. *Extraño Oficio*. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1971.
- _____. *Gente Conmigo*. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1961.
- _____. *Línea de Fuego*. Buenos Aires: Losada, 1964.
- _____. *... y Llegarán Buenos Aires*. Buenos Aires: Vinciguerra, 1989.
- Regazzoni, Susanna. "Italia Argentina una historia compartida: Syria Poletti inmigrante italiana, escritora argentina." *Dimensões* 26 (2011): 60–75.
- Sánchez, Santiago J. "El aporte del 'criollismo' a la forja de la identidad nacional argentina." *Tinkuy: Boletín de Investigación y Debate* 12 (2010): 199–215.
- Sardi, Valeria. *Políticas y prácticas de lectura. El caso Corazón de Edmundo De Amicis*. Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2011.
- Serafin, Silvana. "Argentina chiama Italia: Friuli risponde." *Altre Modernità/Otras Modernidades/Autres Modernités/Other Modernities* 2 (2009): 154–62.
- _____. "La literatura migrante en la formación de la conciencia nacional argentina." *Rivista dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea* 6 (2011): 169–88.
- Sergi, Pantaleone. "L'Argentina, l'altro mondo calabresse. Un secolo di partenze." *Calabria Migrante. Un secolo di partenze verso altri mondi e nuovi destini*. Ed. Vittorio Cappelli, Giuseppe Masi, and Pantaleone Sergi. Calabria: Centro di Ricerca Sulle Migrazioni, 2013.
- Sorrentino, Fernando. *Del Italiano al Cocoliche. El Trujamán*. *Revista Diaria de Traducción*. Centro virtual Cervantes, 2003. Web. 1 Sept. 2015.