

*Liberation, Redemption, Autonomy:
Contemporary Utopias in Southern Italian Popular Music*

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Introduction

Alongside the passionate interest, shown by Southern Italian intellectuals and artists, for the renegotiation of the official historical narratives (Messina 2015), the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy have at times reawakened the need to imagine a better future. These exercises in utopianism have constructed, from time to time, a future characterized by the liberation from the mafia, or by the bridge of the economic gap with the rest of the country, or even by the overcoming of national unity towards autonomy or independence-based solutions. Taking Connelli's (2013) and Polizzi's (2013) works on Southern Italy (aka *Mezzogiorno*) and post-coloniality as fundamental premises, this work seeks to interpret this phenomenon in the light of the theoretical tools provided by postcolonial studies, and in particular by the concept of postcolonial utopia, formulated, among others, by Ashcroft (2012).

A key element is memory, whereby historical chronicles become, in a way, the allegory of present power relations and the discussion of the past serves to open up a debate about the present (Slemon 1988). Ashcroft argues that memory is also fundamental "in the formation of utopian concepts of a liberated future" (2012: 2), and

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continues by mentioning two other characteristics of postcolonial utopias, namely the obsession with place and the problematic relationship with the concept of nation (2012: 3-4).

In light of this last point, one can already try to interpret utopianism in Southern Italian songs as postcolonial utopia. Although the South has a tradition of political unity prior to the Italian unification, the prospect of a future Southern Italian nation-state is not unanimously shared among artists. Utopianism in songs oscillates between desires of shared spaces which overcome national barriers, and opposite ideas, which contemplate the exasperation of existing borders. Thus, Eugenio Bennato's *Che il Mediterraneo sia* supports the idea of a free and united Mediterranean, "a gateless fortress, where everyone can live" (2003)², while in *Allarga lo Stretto* (2010) the Sicilian band Brigantini polemically and ironically proposes the reinforcement of the natural border between Sicily and mainland Italy, as a protest against the projected construction of the Strait of Messina Bridge. Both songs suggest the overcoming of the national Italian space, nonetheless, while Bennato advocates the overcoming of such imaginary borders as the national or European communitarian ones, Brigantini sardonically imagines the paradoxical strengthening of a natural barrier. Coherently with Ashcroft's formulation of postcolonial utopia, both songs are centred on the concept of place, as Bennato's utopia is spatialised around the Mediterranean, while Brigantini focus exclusively on Sicily. Bennato appears to resist the idea of the nation-state explicitly, while it is not clear whether Brigantini are seriously supporting a clear independence agenda connected to Sicily³.

In this chapter I explore utopia in songs released in the period of the celebrations for the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Italian unification (2011): with regards to these songs, I will focus on how aspirational images of the future can be articulated around the concepts of place and memory, as suggested by Ashcroft. During the period of the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary, the celebration of the

² "Che il Mediterraneo sia/la fortezza ca nun tene porte / addo' ognuno po' campare / d'a ricchezza ca ognuno porta". Unless stated otherwise, all translations from Italian are mine.

³ It needs to be clarified that Brigantini's song contains some apparently offensive lyrics against African women migrants: "They promise us that with the bridge things will change / it will be the right thing to do, everyone will envy us/ and once completed, if there will be some cement left/ they will build another bridge from Tripoli to Agrigento/ so that Egyptian, Libyan, Ghanaian and Nigerian women/ will come here roller skating to work as whores [Con il ponte, ci assicurano, le cose cambieranno/ sarà fatta cosa giusta, tutti ce lo invidieranno/ e appena completato se resterà cemento/ un altro ne faranno da Tripoli a Agrigento/ così egiziane, libiche, ghanesi e nigeriane/ verranno con i pattini per fare le buttane]". (Brigantini, 2010). In denouncing the unacceptability of these lyrics, I would also like to acknowledge the distance between *Allarga lo Stretto* and the rest of the Sicilian cultural production engaged with ideas of independence and autonomy, normally characterised by non-racist and non-sexist views.

past triggered the need for a critical revision of historical events (Monsagrati 2014) which inevitably became renegotiation of the present and imagination of the future.

Before analysing the songs, it is useful to take advantage of another argument made by Ashcroft, namely the interpretation of the term “postcolonial”. For Ashcroft, “the term refers to post-invasion rather than post-independence, it identifies neither a chronology nor a specific ontology—it is not »after colonialism« nor is it a way of being. Post-colonial is a way of reading—a way of reading the continuing engagement with colonial and neo-colonial power” (Ashcroft 2012: 1). For the sake of this chapter, it is useful to transpose this reading to the dualism that characterises Italy, and propose the identification of a “post-Italian” discursive space. Those involved in the production of post-Italian discourses do not necessarily address the desire of overcoming Italian national unity, but rather seek to rethink their own identities and aspirations as the result of a direct engagement with a past historical moment.

In this work, preference is given to the term “post-Italian” over the term “anti-Italian”, proposed, for example, by Ernesto Galli Della Loggia (2014). For the sake of countering the plethora of allegations and prejudices springing from the description of the critical renegotiation of the past, the present and the future in Italy as “anti-Italian”, I consciously choose to employ the prefix “post-”, although this might recall strongly contested concepts such as that of “post-modernism” (Callinicos 2010), or “post-coloniality” itself (Mignolo 2000). While acknowledging the ambiguousness of these concepts and their partial or total failure in describing reality accurately, and while accepting the consequent suspiciousness associated with the prefix “post-”, I consciously embrace the potential failures and ambiguities embedded in the term “post-Italian” as a necessary component of the discursive phenomenon I attempt to describe. After all, what I attempt to describe as “post-Italian” is characterised both by the lucid perception of a persisting and intolerable condition of coloniality and by the consciousness of a potential failure to embrace an effective decolonisation agenda.

It is important to clarify that the post-Italian discourse is produced by historical narratives on the Unification that are considerably different from the official narratives, i.e., the narratives that can be evinced from national celebrations, national media, and school. On the one hand, the official narratives propose the glorified act of liberation of a chunk of Italy from a foreign sovereign; on the other hand, revisionist narratives focus on the violence exerted on Southern people, the politico-economic

interests that led to the Unification, the plunder of Southern resources, and the progressive impoverishment of the South, among other things.

This revisionist tradition has led to the production of a myriad of works attempting at proposing alternatives to the traditional historiography (among the most notable examples see Ciano 1996; Izzo 1999; Di Fiore 2010; Guerri 2010). The most influential of these works, at least in terms of mass culture, is Pino Aprile's *Terroni* (2010), which deals with most of these issues and makes them accessible to the public. This book has often been criticised by academics, either for alleged overstatements (Felice 2012) or for methodological weaknesses (Cassino 2013), or for having sold as shocking new discoveries facts that were long time known in academia (Tintori 2012). Discussing these positions is not among the purposes of this paper, suffice it to say that Aprile's work is considered here in relation to its present influence on songwriters, rather than as a history treatise.

Taking these positions as a starting point, it is possible to articulate post-Italian discourse along several different interpretive lines, proposed by various authors, unveiling a much broader and complex scenario than the monolithic "anti-Italian" perspective identified by Galli Della Loggia. For instance, as part of a research on Sicilian society, Pardalis argues that Sicilians resort to the assertion of their own, separate identity as a means to renegotiate their position within Italian society, and not as a way to claim political independence for Sicily (2009: 233-234). Joseph Pugliese goes a bit further, and identifies Southern practices of resistance described as "a tactical blackening of Italy in the face of a virulent and violent caucacentrism" (2008: 2). Furthermore, Pugliese talks of "Provisional Street Justice" when describing the graffiti that disfigure the statue of Dante Alighieri in Naples: these manifestations, perceived as incomprehensible and vandalism by the dominant social groups, are on the contrary attempts to propose alternative political discourses, capable of reorienting the "caucacentric, monoglossic nation-state space into a place that is coextensive with southern community histories, politics and cultural practices" (Pugliese 2008: 13). Francesco Festa looks at protest movements in Naples and talks about a spontaneous tendency to self-organisation, seen as a form of constructive antagonism against both the state and the criminal organisation (2014). Finally, it is important to consider the genuine autonomy/independence agendas, whose spirit can be partly unified under Nicola Zitara's call for a Southern Italian struggle for national liberation (1973). Zitara was not the first advocate of national liberation for Southern Italy: before World War II, in a congress secretly held in Cologne in 1931, the Partito Comunista d'Italia (The

Communist Party of Italy) had drafted a document that advocated the constitution of independent republics in Sicily, Sardinia and mainland Southern Italy, as part of a confederation of Italian republics (Perri 2012). In the 1940s, the Sicilian Independence Movement also advocated the idea of an independent Sicily within an Italian confederation (Finkelstein 1998: 189). Today, autonomy and independence agendas are supported by many of the Southern Italian movements and associations described by Patruno (2011). It is evident how even the most radical instances of antagonism, autonomism and independentism are hardly ascribable to a genuine “anti-Italian” feeling, in that forms of dialogue with the rest of the country are almost always contemplated, even when the imagined scenario involves the political separation from the rest of Italy. The three case studies presented below introduce songs released between 2010 and 2011, in the period of the celebrations for the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary, which present relevant affinities with the different interpretive lines of post-Italianism proposed above.

Rediscovering Unity: Mimmo Cavallo’s *Quando saremo fratelli uniti*

Mimmo Cavallo’s 2011 album *Quando saremo fratelli uniti* [*When we will be united brothers*] was written for a musical theatre work called *Terroni: Centocinquant’anni di menzogne* [*Southerners: 150 years of lies*] (2011), directed by Roberto D’Alessandro and based on Pino Aprile’s aforementioned book *Terroni*. Many songs in Cavallo’s album are strongly inspired by Aprile’s work, to the point that some of the lyrics quote passages of the book, almost word by word, as it happens, for instance, in the song *Fora Savoia* [*Savoy go out*]⁴.

The album appears to convey a utopian message from its very title, which expresses hope for the end of divisions between Italians. The title track, *Quando saremo fratelli uniti*, develops this concept by connecting future improvements with the recuperation and clarification of historical memory. In other words, Cavallo claims, after Aprile, that a revision and a rewriting of history are necessary to solve the tension that characterise the present, in order to progress, in turn, into a future characterised by solidarity and sisterhood/brotherhood:

⁴ The House of Savoy unified and ruled the Kingdom of Italy from 1861 until 1946.

Italy, ungenerous stepmother
 recover your memory,
 let's be
 a family.
 But in order to be together,
 to live in peace and in glory,
 maybe we should
 rewrite history.
 When we will be united brothers
 from north to south, the white and the black,
 we will reason about helping each other
 when we will be brothers.
 When we will be united brothers
 from north to south, real brothers,
 without outvoicing each other
 we will talk about love and peace (Cavallo 2011)⁵.

The spatial dimension of this utopia appears to coincide with the territory of Italy, although the reference to north and south can be well extended to a wider space, such as the Mediterranean or the entire world. Coherently with Pardalis's arguments on the implications carried by the questioning of Italian identity, here Cavallo's critique of Italy ("ungenerous stepmother") is aimed at the solicitation of a renegotiation of the condition of the Mezzogiorno, and of a revision of the north-south relationship.

Resisting the State and the Mafia: Kalafro's *Resistenza Sonora*

My background in practice-led avant-garde music research urges me to compare Cavallo's conciliatory vision to some of the avant-gardist manifestos that populated the first two decades of the twentieth century in Italy. In particular, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's general futurist manifesto (1909) and Luigi Russolo's *The Art of Noises* (1916) staunchly refuse ideas of social conciliation, and celebrate war as both a necessary and desirable occurrence, "the world's only hygiene" (Marinetti 1909) and a producer of pleasing aural results (Russolo 1916: 43-49). Commonly associated with

⁵ "Italia, madre-matrigna / ritrova la memoria, / facciamo pure in modo / che sia tutta una famiglia. / Però per stare insieme, / per stare in pace e in gloria, / occorrerebbe forse / riscrivere la storia. / Quando saremo fratelli uniti / fra nord e sud, fra bianchi e neri, / ragioneremo in termini di aiuti / quando saremo fratelli. / Quando saremo fratelli uniti / fra nord e sud, fratelli veri / senza diritto di alzare la voce / e parleremo d'amore e di pace".

the Italian right wing, Futurism was “looked upon with suspicion and disapprobation” (Berghaus 2012:395) by Post-World War II avant-gardes, including Luigi Nono, who nevertheless shared part of Russolo’s aesthetics in terms of celebrating “noise”, alongside the urge to imagine a liberated future based on class war (Nono 2007).

The Calabrian hip-hop/reggae group Kalafro articulates a radical Southern aesthetics that seem to contrast with the Northern identities of Marinetti and Russolo as well as Nono. Kalafro imagines a liberated future around a lucid decolonial politics of Southern Italy, that through the coinage of the phrase “*brigantaggio postmoderno* [postmodern brigandage]” (Kalafro 2011b) celebrates both its link with a present historical moment and its connection with the past struggles of the *briganti*, the Southern post-unification freedom fighters who fought against the Piedmontese/Italian army in the 1860s. In 2011, Kalafro published the album called *Resistenza Sonora* [*Sonorous*⁶ *Resistance*], which is full of references to historical memory. In the songs, Kalafro repeatedly compare themselves to the *briganti*: in the song *Briganti* (2011a), for example, the fight of Calabrian people against the *Ndrangheta* (Calabrian mafia) is compared to the fights of the *briganti* against the Italian army. Furthermore, in the same year, 2011, as part of an unrelated solo project, Kalafro member Nicola Casile aka MastaP released the song, *Atterrite queste popolazioni* [*Terrorise these populations*], which is totally centred on a critical revision of the history of Unification.

Within this framework of historical memory and revisionism, the title track of the album, *Resistenza Sonora*, opens with a utopian vision of the future, characterised by a violent civil war fought by Calabrians against the *Ndrangheta* bosses:

I dream of a coup d’état organised in the street,
 an armed revolution, a new intifada,
 people in barricades, angry youth,
 blocking every border, from Sicily to Basilicata.
 From the countryside, some women, on an ordinary day
 will say the names of those scoundrels;
 their voice will give voice to those who now are silent
 and the last boss will be the last man of peace (Kalafro, 2011c)⁷.

⁶ Both in the sense of “sonic” or “aural” and in the sense of “loud” and “strong”.

⁷ “Sogno: colpo di Stato organizzato in strada, / insurrezione popolare armata, nuova intifada, / gente barricata, gioventù incazzata, / ogni frontiera bloccata dalla Sicilia alla Basilicata. / Dalle campagne, donne, un giorno qualunque / faranno i nomi degli infami e metteranno il fuoco dentro ai bunker; / la loro voce darà voce a chi ora tace / e l’ultimo boss sarà l’ultimo uomo di pace”.

The civil war fought by the Calabrians does not seem to be fought together with the state. On the contrary, Kalafro refers explicitly to a “*coup d’état*”, whereas the idea that “the last boss will be the last man of peace” alludes quite explicitly to the issue of the connivance between the Italian state and the criminal organisations, which is explained and developed in the rest of the song and in the rest of the album.

Kalafro’s exaltation of paramilitary violence resonates both with the political thought of Nono⁸ and with the militaristic aesthetics of the futurists. However, the idea of “blocking every border, from Sicily to Basilicata” introduces an additional post-Italian element of detachment from the Italian national space that goes towards an autonomous reorganisation of the Calabrian community.

The antagonism advocated by Kalafro is similar to the one described by Festa (2014), as it is spontaneous, and organised in a way to oppose both the criminal organisations and the state at the same time. This antagonism is generated by narratives that appear to stand in opposition to those proposed by national Italian media, which often describe self-organised rebellions in Southern Italy as the product of dynamics controlled by the mafias, and, more in general, as the expression of feelings and agendas that are hostile to the nation’s common good (Festa 2014: 205).

Autonomism vs. Officiality: Sfasciatura’s *Splendi Sicilia*

Francesco Festa’s critical work strongly resonates with the thought of Nicola Zitara, and especially with Zitara’s formulation of “*proletariato esterno* [external proletariat]”, (Zitara 1973) when discussing the chronic neglect of the Southern population operated by national political movements and parties in Italy. Festa is also associated to the EuroNomade and Uninomade projects, which host contribution from intellectuals such as Toni Negri, Christian Marazzi, and Franco “Bifo” Berardi. It is important here to discuss the tensions produced in the encounter between Zitara’s decolonial approach and Italian operaist and post-operaist intellectual traditions. Speaking at the beginning of the 1970s. Zitara was sceptical about any possible collaboration between the Northern industrial working classes and the Southern proletariat, mainly unemployed, underemployed, or absorbed by the rural sector (Zitara 1973).

⁸ Among other things, Nono was imprisoned in Lima in 1963 for voicing his support for the Peruvian guerrilla (Restagno and Nono 1987: 45).

Arguably, this allowed Zitara (alongside a number of Third-Worldist authors) to unveil the trappings of orthodox Marxism much earlier than the articulation of a critique of traditional categories offered by Berardi (2015), Negri (2008), and others. Negri, for example, in *Goodbye Mr. Socialism*, declares that there is “no longer Taylorism but the fluidification of labor power, no longer Fordism but precaritization, no longer macroeconomic techniques of control but pure monetarism” (2008: 238). For Negri, this is the result of a process that started in “the early 1970s, when the factories began to throw labor out” (2008: 237). Zitara, on the contrary, describes these same phenomena as being the product of colonial dependency, and as affecting Southern Italy since Italian Unification (Zitara 1973). In his volume *Heroes*, Berardi says that, since “the year 1977 [...], what had been produced by labour and social solidarity in the centuries of modernity started to fall under finance’s predatory process of de-realization” (2015: 5-6). A few lines below, Berardi describes the current Neoliberalist regime arguing that:

[...] in the second decade of the twenty-first century [...] this new system started to swallow and destroy the product of two hundred years of industriousness and of collective intelligence, and transformed the concrete reality of social civilization into abstraction (Berardi 2015: 6).

Interestingly, in the above quotes the process of contemporary disintegration of reality is deemed to menace “the concrete reality of social civilization” that had been achieved as part of “the centuries of modernity” and of “two hundred years of industriousness”, elsewhere referred to as “five hundred years” (Berardi 2016). The association of such signifiers as “modernity” and “civilization” with the long durations indicated by the author appears to insist problematically on a Eurocentric chronology, which uncritically identifies modernity with the violent European conquest of America, started more or less “five hundred years” ago, and later with the “discovery” of Australia and the early phases of the partition of Africa, which started more or less at the beginning of the “two hundred years of industriousness” identified by Berardi. As Enrique Dussel puts it,

[...] modernity only truly began when the historical conditions of its real origin were met: in 1492, when a real worldwide expansion took place, when the colonial world became organized and the usufruct of its victims’ lives began. Modernity really began in 1492: that is my thesis. The real overcoming of modernity (as subsumption and not merely as Hegelian *Aufhebung*) is then the subsumption of its emancipatory, rational, European character transcended as a worldwide liberation project from its denied alterity (Dussel 2000: 474).

In other words, a global politico-economic system that bases its prosperity on annihilation and “the disintegration of reality” (in terms of territories, communities, languages, identities, natural resources, etc.) has been in power for at least five hundred years. Contrarily to what Negri, Berardi and a plethora of other authors say, what has happened in the last few decades is not that new, unless we actively (and absurdly) postulate that what happens in Europe, North America and Australia globally deserves more attention and more emotional participation than what happens in Africa, South America and Asia. In this sense, the “liberation project” advocated by Dussel appears (to me) the only global solution ever possible, and resonates with the aforementioned struggle for the national liberation of Southern Italy imagined by Nicola Zitara.

This struggle for national liberation seems to be advocated in the song *Splendi Sicilia* [*Shine, Sicily*], released in 2010 by Sicilian band Sfasciatura. The original version of the song, published on the internet together with an official video, talks, clearly and concisely, of autonomy:

Shine Sicily,
centre of the world,
autonomy
is not just a dream (Sfasciatura, 2010)⁹.

The statement that “autonomy is not just a dream” is a clear reference to one of the fundamental points of the political debate on Sicily. The administration of the island is regulated by a Statute of Autonomy, which came into force in 1946, and devolves to the Regional Government some fundamental powers, normally administered by the National Government. Autonomy was conceded to Sicily as a compromise, following what was precisely a decolonial struggle for national liberation which saw Sicilian independence militants gaining electoral momentum and embarking in armed resistance against the Italian State between 1943 and 1947 (Paci and Pietrancosta 2010). Currently, a faction of detractors of the Statute of Autonomy (Lanfranca et al 2012) is opposed to the autonomists, who, on the contrary, claim that the Statute was never really implemented (Costa 2009). This debate, which has been at the base of Sicilian electoral politics until the present day, is undertaken by Sfasciatura, who clearly stand with the autonomists, and optimistically foresee the future

⁹ “Splendi Sicilia / centro del mondo / l’autonomia / non è solo un sogno”.

implementation of the regional autonomy, implying that the current situation does not constitute a real autonomy, and implicitly putting autonomy in relation to the centrality of Sicily.

On 16/17 March 2011, Sfasciatura featured in a concert in Catania, which was a part of the celebrations for the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the Italian unification. When playing this song, they altered the lyrics in correspondence to the reference to the autonomy. The new lyrics were::

Shine Sicily,
centre of the world,
your redemption
is not just a dream (Sfasciatura 2011)¹⁰.

The replacement of the reference to autonomy with a much vaguer idea of redemption depoliticises the utopian message of the song and makes it compatible with the monologic and monoglossic unity celebrated by the official event. It is not difficult to imagine that this small modification might have been made under the pressure of the organizers, or as a result, in the best-case scenario, of the musicians' self-censorship, made in the fear of being excluded from the event.

This episode permits to reflect on the celebrations: while on the one hand revisionism has often been accused of undermining national unity (Monsagrati 2014; Galli Della Loggia 2014), the celebrations are part of an official Italian monologue which intervenes on the ideas and aspirations of people and submits them to violent revision, to the point of depoliticising or even silencing them. Here one could refer to the division between subjective and objective violence proposed by Slavoj Žižek, where subjective violence is caused by a "clearly identifiable agent" (2008: 1), and "is seen as a perturbation of the »normal«, peaceful state of things" (Žižek 2008: 2), while "objective violence is precisely the violence inherent to this »normal« state of things" (Žižek 2008: 2). While subjective violence is immediately identifiable and condemnable, objective violence is the very cause of subjective violence (Žižek 2008: 1-7). In this case, despite Sicily's autonomy is officially contemplated by the Italian constitution, Sfasciatura's autonomist utopia is perceived as the perturbation of a natural state of things, and thus it is coercively depoliticised in light of the need to preserve the official narrative of a harmoniously united Italy. It is not important to

¹⁰ "Splendi Sicilia / centro del mondo / il tuo riscatto / non è solo un sogno".

ascertain whether this (symbolic) violence was self-inflicted by Sfasciatura themselves, or if it was the result of a directive coming from the concert organisers: the very imperceptibility of the agent of this intervention makes the violence more difficult to challenge and condemn—no one did it, it just happened.

Final Remarks

To summarise, in this chapter I have presented some instances of utopianism that characterize the current debate about Southern Italy, through the study of the lyrics of some songs released between 2010 and 2011, during the celebrations for the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the Italian unification. In line with Ashcroft's insights on postcolonial utopia (2012), I have shown the fundamental connection between the critical revision of official historical narratives, on the one hand, and the imagination of a better future on the other hand. This connection is, in turn, centred on the concept of place, which somewhat engages with, or resists, the concept of nation (Ashcroft 2012). This concept remains fundamentally ambivalent and problematic in the songs examined in this work, and this ambivalence is coherent with the complexity of the utopian positions connected to a critical revision of the history of Italian unification. As shown above, it is possible to identify attempts to renegotiate the position of the South aimed at the recuperation of national unity, as in Mimmo Cavallo's *Quando Saremo fratelli uniti*, alongside the support of forms of self-organised resistance, in antagonism with both the state and the criminal organisations, as in Kalafro's *Resistenza Sonora*. It is also possible to identify autonomism and independence, which, as seen apropos of Sfasciatura's *Splendi Sicilia*, are often subjected to censorship or self-censorship, following an attempted dialogue with officiality that normally proves to be extremely imbalanced in favour of the latter (Gribaudi 1997). In defence of this attempted dialogue, and in defence of the complexity of the attempts at rethinking one's Italianness and recuperating/revising historical memory, I have proposed the term "post-Italian", coherently with a theoretical framework offered by postcolonial studies, and in opposition to the term "anti-Italian" proposed by Dalla Loggia (2014) among others. Rather than being anti-Italian, Southern Italian utopias seek to reconsider Italianness by formulating aspirations that deal with the overcoming of the national Italian space and with the achievement of an effective equality between the North and the South of the country.

In 2014, well beyond the period of controversies and debates that accompanied the celebrations for the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary, Rocco Hunt has released the song *Nu juorno buono* [*A good day*], based on a Southern Italian utopia as well and characterised, among other things, by the imagined bridging of the gap between the North and the South of the country:

Forget having to emigrate to find a job
 New industries will flourish in your own territory
 Forget the banks, we will lend money to them
 Zero rulers, we will overthrow them [...]
 Scrap that border that divides the north and the south (Pagliarulo, Merli, Clemente 2014)¹¹.

The song won the Newcomers' section (*Nuove Proposte*) of the Sanremo Music Festival, an event of extreme relevance in Italian popular culture, perhaps proving the urgency and significance of these issues and aspirations at national level.

In other words, Rocco Hunt's victory probably demonstrates that Italy, despite the criticism, ostracism and censorship experienced by some of the artists and authors discussed in this chapter, is secretly interested in listening to the "post-Italian", and perhaps in contemplating Southern liberation among the number of desirable futures to look forward to.

¹¹ "Dimentica di andare fuori per lavoro / Le nuove aziende fioriranno nel tuo territorio / Dimentica le banche, li presteremo noi a loro / Zero padrone, gli ruberemo il trono /[...] / Tagliate quella linea che divide nord e sud".

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