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Parati, Graziella. *Migrant Writers and Urban Space in Italy: Proximities and Affect in Literature and Film*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Pp. 264. ISBN 978-3-319-55570-6. \$119.00 (Hardcover) \$109.00 (eBook).

Graziella Parati is one of the first and most influential scholars to respond to an urgent need to bring Italophone literatures of migration to Italian studies in the American academy. Parati established the field by writing several interdisciplinary books, including *Migration Italy: The Art of Talking Back in a Destination Culture* (2005), for which cultural studies served as a new theoretical frame for reading minor European literatures. In her recent monograph, *Migrant Writers and Urban Space in Italy*, Parati grounds her analyses in the field of affect theory. Affect theory addresses the body and emotions, or the power of the body and the mind to affect and be affected. This epistemological lens allows Parati to explore ambivalence and belonging in migrant narratives in two Italian cities whose landscapes have been changed by migration: Milan, Italy's commercial center, and Rome, the capital and symbolic heart. Through the literary representation of emotional relationships to space, the chosen narratives express a "felt politics," or a politics that is felt in and with the body, can "remap" these urban landscapes. These narratives transform space, an abstract quantity, into place, infused with affective meaning or feelings of love, allegiance, discomfort, and disgust that constitute a belonging unlike that of formalized citizenship. It is this feeling of love, of creating home in a new place, that she calls "affective citizenship." Using affect as her point of departure to discuss belonging, Parati makes tangible a mysterious inroad to better understand the humanity of those who populate and animate Italy's landscapes, making a persuasive case for the need to challenge Italy's existing discourses of belonging and our broader practices of reading.

In her theoretically dense introduction (Chapter 1), Parati explains that she chooses narratives that "talk politics and talk to politics" to advance the affective citizenship of their subjects and call for broader migrant justice. Relying on the work of sociologist Francesca Polletta, Parati insists on the power of storytelling to engender social change. These works convey "inclusive proximities" wherein the plurality of communities can reshape what it means to be Italian. To this end, she often identifies the difference between the migrant and the non-migrant by naming them, migrants or New Italians, and "natives", respectively, often complicating these discussions by comparing this context with the context of internal migrants. Parati's study itself migrates back and forth across the two cities across chapters, suggesting that the issues of belonging apply across both cities and perhaps across Italy at large.

Chapter 2, "Transitive Spaces" examines Amara Lakhous' novel *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a Piazza Vittorio/ Clash of Civilizations over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio* (2008), the success of which allowed Lakhous to emphasize the plight of migrants during a time of hostile legislation. Parati offers a fascinating history of the Roman square and its meanings to argue that its recent transformation as a space for migrant business indicates a continuation of change rather than a threat to any previous, stable identity. Parati considers the protagonist of Lakhous' novel to reveal meanings of space change through the people who inhabit them. Ahmed, who is assigned the name Amadeo by "natives" allowing him to "pass" as Italian. Ahmed/Amadeo's mastery of the Italian language and knowledge of the city, thanks to his constant walking and observations allows him to mediate between disparate people and places. In this way, Parati shows how Amadeo, and the novel, create new affective proximities with the project of making the city transitive. By transitive, Parati means "porous, open to change" through the continuous transit of the walking body of Ahmed/Amadeo. She is careful to state that not all migrants have access to equal transitivity. There are those whose lack of language or access to space compels them to embody affective

relation to the city differently. For example, in one segment, a man turns his marginal position into a performance of marginality by sewing his lips together. In another, a woman over-eats to fill the void of affective proximities and further curtails her access to others due to trauma (rape, abortion, unprotected sexual encounters, etc.). Though her discussions of the interweaving narratives in the novel can be slightly confusing in their attendant overlapping of ideas (space, place, proximities, transitiveness), Parati very effectively urges the reader to understand the importance of these complexities and of literature's power to create crucial discourses of diversity and the development of civic pride.

In her discussion of Milan in Chapter 3, "Areas of Limited Access and Affective Places", she looks at *Giallo a Milano/ Thriller in Milan* (2009) Sergio Basso's documentary about Milan's Chinatown. She provides a fascinating history of the Chinese presence in Italy as well as media anxieties around it, leading up to the 2007 Chinatown riots in Milan. Parati explains that it is almost impossible to find a narrative written by a Chinese immigrant or first generation Chinese Italian. However, Milan's Chinatown, the largest in Europe, is so crucial that an academic book about the migrant landscape of Italy would be noticeably incomplete without a flashpoint on Milan. This film, though not made by a migrant, valuably showcases the multiplicity of experiences across generations of Chinese immigrants in Milan, allowing Parati to elaborate, from the previous chapter, on the notion of proximities and transitiveness. However, this time she does so through a discussion of space, its appropriation, and administrative xenophobia as expressed through gentrification. Attempts to push Chinese migrants out of their own homes and places of business result in transitive proximities, or the constant cultural reshaping of space. Parati takes a dizzying look at movements outside and inside, public and private, assessing the possibilities of proximity and these migrants' emotional claims to belonging.

Chapter 4, "Emotional Maps of Affective Citizenship" is Parati's longest and most impassioned chapter. It looks closely at Igiaba Scego's memoir, *La mia casa è dove sono/ My Home is Where I Am* (2010). Parati summarizes the memoir at length to show how Scego excavates lost colonial histories of Rome as she charts her own migration and emotional relationship to space. Like Ahmed/Amadeo, Scego walks through Rome, narrating erased histories while also narrating the creation of a physical map that layers these histories and personal memories onto the body of the city. Parati names this a creation of linguistic and visual proximities, and analyses Scego's equation of the body of the city with the body of the migrant subject, particularly in its feelings of pain and suffering as a form of affective citizenship. Parati insists on the centrality of the body to Scego's mapping project, and identifies many bodies in this chapter that may have warranted untangling and further analysis: the body of the city, the body of the migrant, the body as mediator of emotions, the body of Scego's writing, and the body of the nation. Parati focuses on the body of the city as a site of deep ambivalence as Scego expresses rage and disgust over the excesses of colonialism and simultaneous love for her city and its beauty. This ambivalence is constitutive of affective citizenship for Parati, but how this ambivalence is embodied by Scego is submerged in her analysis to privilege a longer discussion of space. Scego's memoir recalls painful bodily expressions of the pain of unbelonging including bulimia, self-harm, and gendered anxieties about her blackness. Considering the multivalence of the body for this analysis, Parati's avoidance of the materiality of the black female body and its discontents in a hostile place (in Scego's work) is curious, and leaves the reader questioning how and where to place the body in Parati's application of affect theory.

The fifth chapter returns to Milan with Gabriella Kuruvilla's collection of short stories, *Milano, fin qui tutto bene/ Milan, So Far So Good* (2012). Kuruvilla's characters, by contrast to characters in previous works discussed by Parati, hold onto their (un)belonging as a form of resistance and critique of the alienation they suffer due to xenophobia and racism. They live in Milan but actively

resist affective belonging, holding onto anger and melancholia without countering them with the love and attachment that Igiaba Scego also feels for her city. Conjoining Zygmunt Bauman's theories on liquid modernity and individualism and Sianne Ngai's theories on "ugly feelings," Parati analyses the disaffected and ultimately antisocial characters of Kuruvilla's stories. At length, she analyses each character's choice to embrace "disagio"—a word connoting a wide range of feelings of discomfort, as a form of what "disaffective citizenship," or a practice of isolation as rebellion. This is perhaps the book's most complex and intriguing chapter, offering much needed nuance to the articulation of immigrant experience in migration studies, literary and otherwise.

Taken together, Parati's examination of these narratives and the feelings that emerge in them produce place as imaginative geography, and it insists on divorcing belonging from documentation and other apparatuses of the nation state that produce social logics of exclusion. This academic study amplifies and adds its voice to the cry for justice it describes.

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