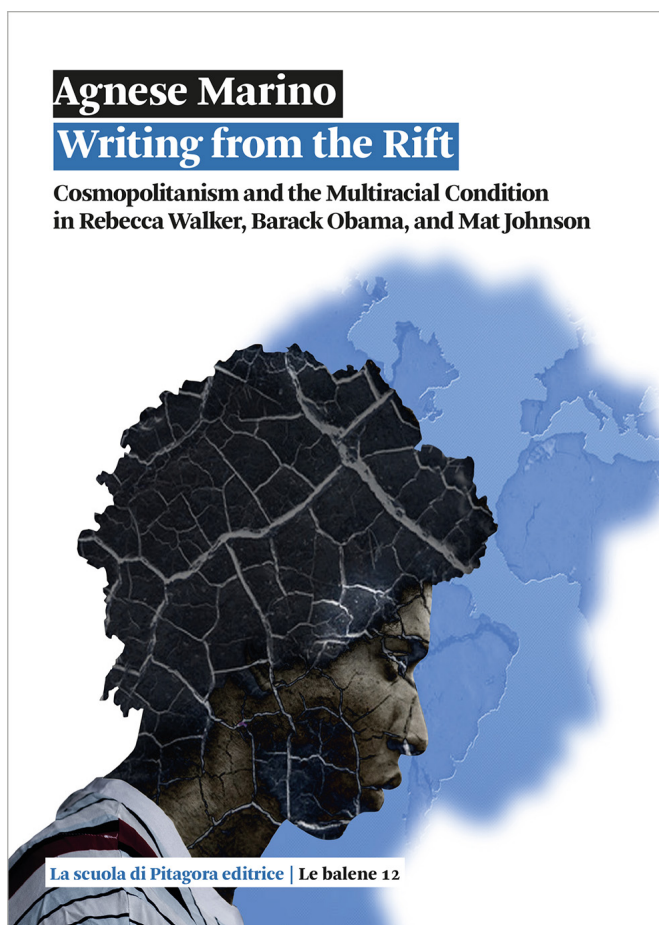


Writing from the Rift



Cosmopolitanism and the Multiracial Condition in Rebecca Walker, Barack Obama, and Mat Johnson

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Description

In the U.S. cultural universe, black/white biracial subjects are often compared to bridges connecting incommunicable worlds. But such a dichotomous image proves inadequate to represent the lived complexities of transracial relationships—the interconnected histories and cultural heritages, the ghost of compromise, the discrepancy between body and identities, the power asymmetries, the collective fears and resentments, and the sense of placelessness that frequently mark the mixed-race experience in the U.S.A.. Analyzing three renowned multiracial self-narratives published at the turn of the millennium—Rebecca Walker's *Black White and Jewish*, Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*, and Mat Johnson's *Loving Day*—this work explores the challenges of biracialism through the alternative image of the *rift*: an intimate narrative space/non-space where the secret, unspeakable continuity between the black and white worlds emerges from the fractures and gaps of the text. With a focus on the authors' travels abroad, it also unveils the links between the condition of *never feeling at home* and the cultivation of a planetary sense of humanness and responsibility which evokes a neo-cosmopolitan ethos.

Agnese Marino is a Research Fellow at the University of L'Aquila. She graduated in Comparative Literature from the University of Naples "L'Orientale." Her M.A. thesis, about post-ethnicism in contemporary U.S. literature, was awarded the Agostino Lombardo Prize by the Italian Association of North-American Studies. She earned her Ph.D. from the American Studies program at the University of Heidelberg, with a dissertation on the influence of new cosmopolitanism on post-civil rights biracial authors. She has published articles in *RSA Journal* and *Iperstoria*. Her main research interests are cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, post-ethnicism/post-identity theory, multiracial identity and literature, autobiography, utopia and heterotopia.

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A look backward (and forward)

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Reviews

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