

## Diana Glenn and Graham Tulloch (eds). Italian Identities

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**Diana Glenn and Graham Tulloch (eds). *Italian Identities*. Leicester: Troubadour Publishing LTD, 2020. Pp. 147. ISBN 9781838594473.**

Diana Glenn and Graham Tulloch's 2020 text, *Italian Identities*, consists of nine chapters written by eleven authors. The editors write in the work's introduction that "Italian Identity' can cover both identities that are intimately bound up with the idea of Italy and those which are simply individual identities of people, places and things within Italy" (ix). This leaves readers with a highly nuanced understanding of "Italian" identity. Whereas the first five chapters of the book examine individual identities without explicitly connecting them to dominant Italian culture or broader manifestations of Italianness, the last four chapters of the book insightfully link their topics of study with larger issues regarding *Italianità*.

In the first chapter of *Italian Identities* Diana Glenn engagingly depicts Dante Alighieri's pseudo-autobiographical psychological, spiritual, and metaphorical peregrinations in the *Divina Commedia* as well as the poet's search for belonging. In the second chapter Irene Belperio expounds on a new current in Dante Studies by focusing on how the "polysemy" of Dante's works may pedagogically utilize animated, digital, and multimedia representations of his poetry in light of the function of the Western literary canon. This is followed by a third and final essay on Dante in which Liz Campbell studies the meaning of Dante's use of fraudulent counsel and pride as dominant themes in the *Inferno's* Canto XXVI and Canto XXVII. Departing from Dante Studies, the fourth chapter is written by Luigi Gossago and analyzes how Environmental Criticism, or Ecocriticism, may be applied to various works found in several epochs and genres of Italian literature. Gossago also discusses how such criticism may be used as a pedagogical tool for reexamining "pseudo-rationalistic 'humancentredness,' which is currently at the core of our 'quantification-obsessed global economy'" (52). In the fifth chapter Lousie Baird explores Natalia Ginzburg's depiction of family dynamics and protagonist self-awareness in the novels *Caro Michele* and *La città e la casa* by thoroughly examining the works' epistolary narratives.

Beginning in the sixth chapter of *Italian Identities*, however, readers encounter a more direct treatment of Italian identity. Whereas the first five chapters discuss Italian people or works without linking them to a greater understanding of Italianness, subsequent chapters do the opposite. In the sixth chapter Josh Carter fascinatingly studies the hybrid Somali-Italian identity of writer Igiabo Sebo in her life and works. This chapter notably explores the role of "autofiction"

in representing the trauma and memory of first- and second-generation migrant Italians, especially those connected to the Italian colonial legacy in Africa. In the seventh chapter Diana Glenn, Maria Palaktsoglou, Daniela Cosmini, and Eric Bouvet collaborate to deliver a riveting look at the problematic Italian identity of inhabitants of the now Greek Dodecanese Islands while they were under Italian control from 1918 until 1943. This captivating chapter shares with readers the often unknown, yet problematic and conflictual Italian identity experienced by these and other populaces of Italian territorial possessions that officially held a higher status than colonies during the Italian fascist regime yet prohibited its inhabitants from enjoying full Italian citizenship. This chapter also recounts complications experienced by Dodecanese Islanders that arose due to their individually perceived and officially documented national identities during and after emigration to Australia. Finally, the last two chapters of the work focus on different aspects of Sicilian identity. In the eighth chapter Barbara Pezzotti insightfully investigates how the use of food depictions in Andrea Camilleri's detective novels denote cultural belonging, accentuate regional differences, and emphasize Southern Italian distaste for Northern Italian officials while serving as a "metonym for political and social corruption in contemporary Italy" (102). Lastly, in the ninth chapter, Graham Tulloch thought-provokingly studies the possible influence of Walter Scott's historical regional novel on Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's portrayals of Sicilianness in his pseudo-historical novel *Il Gattopardo*.

Cultural Studies and Identity Studies have been growing in popularity in recent decades and their importance and relevance show no signs of decreasing. *Italian Identities* is a work that shows how understanding manifestations or perceptions of individual and collective identity can be challenging as well as fascinating. As such, creative and dynamic contributions like this text are timely and needed. This work's chapters on Afro-Italian, Sicilian, and Italian identities of the fascist period are especially relevant for contemporary trends in Italian Studies and serve as a good resource for scholars in these areas. *Italian Identities* is consequently a meaningful addition to Italian Studies and expounds on several important topics in the field that deserve continued study.

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