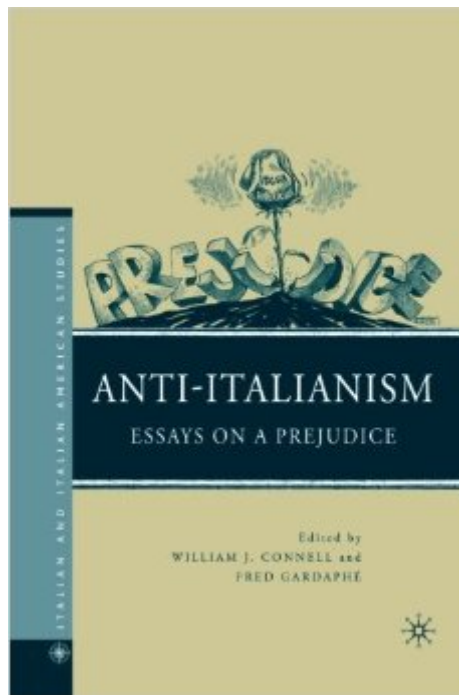


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Anti-Italianism: Essays On A Prejudice (Italian And Italian American Studies)



Synopsis

There has been an odd reluctance on the part of historians of the Italian American experience to confront the discrimination faced by Italians and Americans of Italian ancestry. This volume is a bold attempt by an esteemed group of scholars and writers to discuss the question openly by charting the historical and cultural boundaries of stereotypes, prejudice, and assimilation. Contributors offer a continuous series of cultural encounters and experiences in television, literature, and film that deserve the attention of anyone interested in the larger themes of American history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An excellent look at a reality that both Italian Americans and others have denied and dismissed for so long, but that each of us lives with every day of our lives, this book is also a clarion call for Italian Americans to seize control of our own self-definition for once. We have never owned our own self-definition ever since our families have arrived in the US, occupying (along with some others including Greeks and Jews) a middle space between race and color, two categories that the color-obsessed US conflates incorrectly as identical. Our families brought with them from southern Italian villages their habitual silence in the face of authority and resignation to anything life threw at them along with their baggage, and we are dealing with that now decades later. We need to drop that attitude and stop letting others define us as white or not depending on their own political convenience. It seems that we're white (and hence should shut up) when we want to talk about the

reality of being in the middle of two categories that are supposed to be the same, and then we're wops again when gentry whites need someone to look down on who is dark enough for them to sneer at, but white enough that they won't lose their gentry standing by doing so. *sigh* Good luck getting Italian Americans to agree to it though -- first, we'd need to agree on ANYTHING, and you'd have no better luck getting a roomful of paesans to whistle "O Sole Mio" in unison.

This is a very informative volume. It includes both personal biographical pieces and analytical and objective accounts. Given the title, no one would be surprised that much of the volume is about coming to terms with many unpleasant experiences. But it would be unfair to limit the scope of the volume to complaint. It is, thankfully, much more complex than that. The personal pieces by Gina Valle and Joanne Detore-Nakamura let us see how they coped with ethnic issues in a successful way. Susanni Tardi's piece which addresses some data about "mixed" Italian and non-Italian young people is especially informative because it seems that is the future of the Italian population in the U.S. However the two pieces that I spend most time on were Elizabeth G. Messina's article on Italians and IQ testing; and Donald Tricarico's "Narrating Guido." If you would like to read my longer reviews, please go to my site, WARBYIQ.COM.

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