

seeking a tool to regain well-being. Lüdtke ends the book with an intimate tone, sharing her personal account of Evelina's participation in a healing ritual in the chapel of St. Paul in Galatina.

Overall, this book is very well researched and beautifully written. It is a great resource for all—scholars and laypeople—interested in Italian culture and folklore, medical anthropology, and the relationship between the performing arts and healing.

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Religious Festive Practices in Boston's North End.

By Augusto Ferraiuolo.

Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009.

291 pages.

In this well-researched but sometimes frustrating book, Augusto Ferraiuolo explores the complex and vibrant community life of Italian Americans living in Boston's North End. Although he focuses on the cycle of religious festivals that spans every weekend of the summer, Ferraiuolo persuasively demonstrates the far-reaching effects of these performances beyond the periods of their enactment. Each *fiesta* represents the collective labor and long-term planning of a voluntary association originally based on regional and even village ties to Italy. Ferraiuolo shows how these groups are fundamentally social and political institutions that have different, and at times overlapping, constituencies shaping the day-to-day lives of Italian Americans in the North End. This includes who drinks coffee together at which bar, who attends which church and supports which political candidate, and who helps whom with donations of money and labor when times get rough.

Ferraiuolo opens with two largely historical chapters: The first explores the cultural and political geography of the North End going back to the seventeenth century, whereas the second focuses on the successive waves of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigration that shaped the neighborhood's ethnic character. Both of these chapters are data rich but also include information that does not seem directly relevant to the book's overall project, such as a lengthy discussion of topographical changes in the eighteenth century or tables of transportation and housing costs from the 1840s. Ferraiuolo then moves in a more interesting and appropriate direction in the third and fourth chapters, both of which were based to some degree on ethnographic research. In these chapters, he explores the community's concern for orthopraxy, or correct historical behavior and action, which requires that each religious festival maintain practices that are rooted in the Italian past while accommodating the Italian-American present. For example, the statue of a saint must be carried on the shoulders of the faithful rather than pulled through the streets in a cart because to do otherwise would break with local tradition in the North End. Practice is key in Ferraiuolo's analysis, for there seems to be little concern for

religious orthodoxy in the community that he studies—somewhat to his surprise, he finds that the traditional religious ideologies that once underpinned and explained these performances are absent.

What readers may find most interesting are the concrete details of how Italian-American identities are negotiated and enacted in the North End. The book is liveliest in the two ethnographic chapters where Ferraiuolo provides the bulk of his descriptive data on the festivals and where he positions himself as a fieldworker. Knowing what language he used during interviews, for instance, or how the community responded to him as a native Italian helps the reader to better contextualize his findings. In these chapters, the author provides some rich ethnographic data about the space of the religious performances and celebrations and, through them, how the neighborhood comes to fully express the complexity of Italian-American identity. For example, during the festivals, Italian, Sicilian, and American flags are paraded through the streets, while people enjoy *arancini* (rice balls), fried calamari, and chicken fingers with equal relish. Village dialects mingle with standard Italian and English as people negotiate their various connections to one another. All of these multi-stranded expressions of Italian-American identity are on the move, as people negotiate, shift, mingle, strategize, and simply live in the complexity of the moment.

This focus on movement and flux is what allows for one of Ferraiuolo's central arguments—that Italian-American identities in the North End are *ephemeral*, by which he does not mean that they cease to exist outside of festival time but that their form and expression change from day to day, moment to moment. In "Ephemeral Identities," the final chapter of the book, Ferraiuolo makes his most important contribution to debates about Italian-American identity and festive practices. In this chapter, he wed Italian anthropological concerns with subalterity, hegemony, and power dynamics—stemming largely from Gramsci's influence on the field—with North American anthropological perspectives on poststructural and postmodern subjectivity. What Ferraiuolo provides is a theoretically rich framework for understanding Italian-American experience and identity, one that extends the classic literature on religion and ritual in new directions.

Though the arguments in this final chapter are compelling, I would have liked to see at least some of the theoretical discussion appear earlier in the book so that the theory remained not so abstract but instead was enlivened through the ethnographic description itself. As is, the last chapter seems somewhat unmoored, and I found myself second-guessing the analysis to see if it made sense in terms of the data he had presented in earlier chapters of the book. One of the places where we can see a disconnect between his theory and data is in his overall characterization of Italian-American identity. For instance, is it fair to characterize Italian identity in this American setting as something that is disappearing and becoming merely a tourist commodity, as Ferraiuolo does on pages 73–74 and 81, when many of his interviews with Italian Americans are conducted in Italian or dialect? This model of loss also predisposes Ferraiuolo to focus on the "strategic essentialism" of North End festive practices—suggesting that North Enders must work to preserve what is disappearing because their livelihood depends on maintaining the appearance of ethnic distinctiveness. But what are we to make of those aspects of Italian-American culture and identity that endure in these performances or those affective dimensions that bind ethnic groups together outside of the realm of strategy, including things like the comfort of familiarity that works at

an almost precognitive level? Neither of these aspects can be accounted for within the narrow frame of the “ephemeral” or the “strategic.”

Beyond having to tease out how the analysis fits the data, the reader will have an additional challenge related to the extremely poor editing of the book. Here the fault lies not so much with the author as with the press. Particularly because Ferraiuolo is not a native English speaker, the press should have given the copy editor a firm mandate to tighten up the manuscript. Instead, the book is riddled with errors, such as word omissions, sentence omissions within English translations, and numerous misspellings, including three in a single sentence. The text is also wordy, with long block quotations—some from field notes and interviews, others from historical documents—that should have been reduced in length and used more selectively. This sloppiness is frustrating for the reader and makes it less likely that the book can be assigned in the classroom.

Despite these shortcomings, the book is a contribution to the anthropological literature on ethnic identity and festive practices. In particular, scholars of Italian-American life will be interested in Ferraiuolo’s findings and the novel ways he proposes of thinking about the relationship between lived experience and ethnic subjectivity.

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The Imagined Immigrant: Images of Italian Emigration to the United States between 1890 and 1924.

By Ilaria Serra.

Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009.

313 pages.

In *The Imagined Immigrant*, Ilaria Serra undertakes the ambitious task of exploring the turn-of-the-century Italian *imago migrationis*, what she calls that “complex knot of collective representations, how the immigrant is seen, and self-representations, how the immigrant sees himself” (9). Serra contends quite rightly that the imagined immigrant, though invisible and impalpable, is absolutely real and “walks alongside the real immigrant in flesh and rags” (9). Her goal is to trace a “history of mentality” and to “listen to these protagonists of history to discover their full humanity” (10). In large measure, this worthwhile book succeeds in that endeavor.

The protagonists of this history are the first- and second-generation Italian immigrants of the Great Migration. Serra tells their stories through diverse sources, including newspapers, films, letters, autobiographies, and interviews. These materials, Serra argues, trace an arc in the Italian immigrant story. The *New York Times* concentrates on the assimilationist trends in American reactions to immigration, while the first films start developing the stereotypes that define the immigrants for years. The interviews speak of life in Italy, the departure, and American experiences that lead to eventual integration, even as the letters “linger on the pain of distance and the more or