

Consumer Culture And The Production Of Ethnic Identities - Critical Studies In

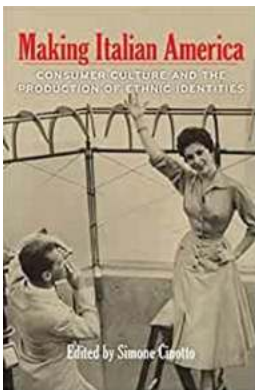
The Influence of Consumer Culture on Ethnic Identities

In today's globalized world, consumer culture plays a crucial role in shaping various aspects of our lives, including our ethnic identities. Critical studies in consumer culture have shed light on how consumption practices influence the production and maintenance of ethnic identities. This article aims to explore the intricate relationship between consumer culture and the construction of ethnic identities, offering insights into the factors that contribute to the commodification of ethnicity.

The Commodification of Ethnicity

Consumer culture has transformed ethnicity into a marketable commodity, rendering it susceptible to manipulation and appropriation. Companies capitalize on cultural symbols and ethnic products to target specific consumer segments. Whether it's the use of traditional clothing, ethnic cuisine, or cultural artifacts, the commodification of ethnicity perpetuates stereotypes and simplifies complex cultural identities for commercial gain.

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Making Italian America: Consumer Culture and the Production of Ethnic Identities (Critical Studies in Italian America)

by Simone Cinotto (Illustrated Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 4659 KB

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Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

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Lending : Enabled



The Role of Mass Media

Mass media plays an integral role in perpetuating consumer culture and influencing the construction of ethnic identities. Advertisements, movies, and television shows often portray certain ethnic groups in stereotypical ways, reinforcing preconceived notions about their culture and encouraging consumption of products linked to those identities. This helps create a cycle of identity reinforcement through consumerism.

The Power of Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation emerges as a contentious issue when consumer culture exploits ethnic symbols without respect for their historical significance or the communities they represent. From fashion trends to music genres, cultural elements are often borrowed and stripped of their authenticity, reducing them to mere fashion accessories without acknowledging their cultural roots. This not only erases the true value of ethnic identities but also perpetuates cultural inequality and marginalization.

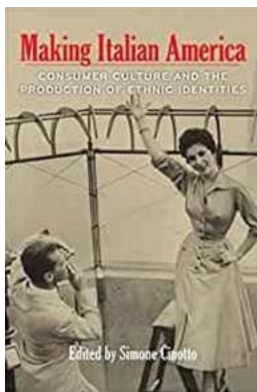
Mainstreaming Ethnic Identities

Consumer culture's influence extends beyond commodification and appropriation; it also impacts the mainstreamization of ethnic identities. As certain ethnic identities gain popularity, they often undergo blending and dilution to cater to wider consumer markets. This process can lead to the loss of unique cultural traits and practices, compromising the integrity and diversity of ethnic identities.

The Role of Resistance

While consumer culture has a significant impact on the production of ethnic identities, it is important to acknowledge and support resistance movements. Individuals and communities are increasingly reclaiming their cultural heritage and challenging the narratives imposed by consumer culture. By promoting cultural authenticity and countering the homogenizing effects of consumerism, these movements contribute to the preservation and revitalization of diverse ethnic identities.

In , critical studies in consumer culture reveal a complex relationship between consumerism and the production of ethnic identities. Consumer culture's commodification and appropriation of ethnicity perpetuate stereotypes, reinforce inequalities, and dilute cultural heritage. However, resistance movements offer hope for the preservation of authentic ethnic identities amidst the forces of mainstream consumerism. Understanding these dynamics is crucial in promoting cultural diversity and fostering a more inclusive society.



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Fourteen cultural history essays exploring the relationship between Italian Americans, consumer culture, and the American identity.

How do immigrants and their children forge their identities in a new land? And how does the ethnic culture they create thrive in the larger society? *Making Italian America* brings together new scholarship on the cultural history of consumption, immigration, and ethnic marketing to explore these questions by focusing on the case of an ethnic group whose material culture and lifestyles have been central to American life: Italian Americans.

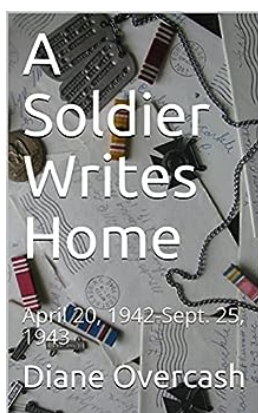
As embodied in fashion, film, food, popular music, sports, and many other representations and commodities, Italian American identities have profoundly fascinated, disturbed, and influenced American and global culture. Discussing in fresh ways topics as diverse as immigrant women's fashion, critiques of consumerism in Italian immigrant radicalism, the Italian American influence in early rock 'n' roll, ethnic tourism in Little Italy, and Guido subculture, *Making Italian America* recasts Italian immigrants and their children as active consumers who, since the turn of the twentieth century, have creatively managed to articulate relations of race, gender, and class and create distinctive lifestyles out of materials the marketplace offered to them. The success of these mostly working-class people in making their everyday culture meaningful to them as well as in shaping an ethnic identity that appealed to a wider public of shoppers and spectators looms large in the political history of consumption. *Making Italian America* appraises how immigrants and their children redesigned the market to suit their tastes and in the process made Italian American identities a lure for millions of consumers.

Fourteen essays explore Italian American history in the light of consumer culture, across more than a century-long intense movement of people, goods, money,

ideas, and images between Italy and the United States—a diasporic exchange that has transformed both nations. Simone Cinotto builds an analytical framework for understanding the ways in which ethnic and racial groups have shaped their collective identities and negotiated their place in the consumers’ emporium and marketplace.

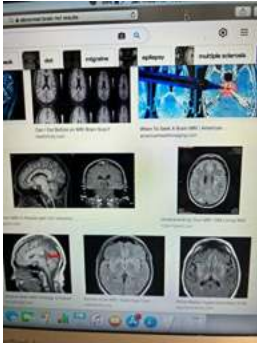
Grounded in the new scholarship in transnational US history and the transfer of cultural patterns, *Making Italian America* illuminates the crucial role that consumption has had in shaping the ethnic culture and diasporic identities of Italians in America. It also illustrates vividly why and how those same identities—incorporated in commodities, commercial leisure, and popular representations—have become the object of desire for millions of American and global consumers.

“This compelling and innovative volume captures the complexities of the pivotal role of consumption in the historical formation of transnational Italian American taste, positing a distinctive diasporic consumer culture that continues its importance today. Richly interdisciplinary, the collection represents an exciting new resource for scholars and students alike.” —Marilyn Halter, Boston University



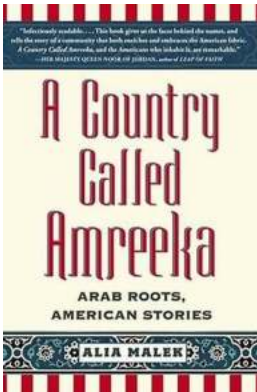
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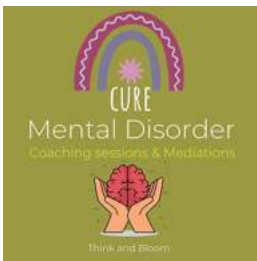
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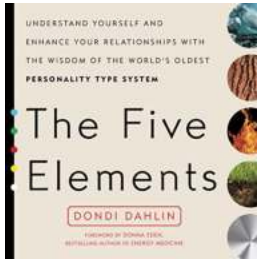
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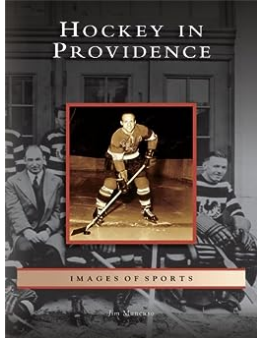
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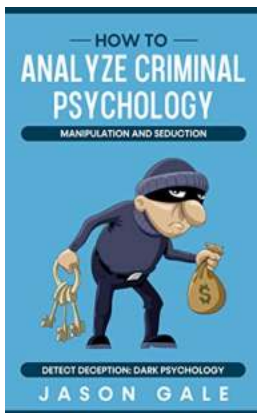
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