such as that of Italy where religion marks cultural identity rather than spiritual participation. Nor should his comments regarding the cultural repercussions of having a media mogul as Prime Minister go unnoticed.

To trace Italian culture through the metaphor of lineage is to recognize that sometimes the lines lead to messy places or even to dead ends. White warns us to expect broken links and loose ends.[274]. Lines diverge, they intersect; on each occasion, however, they offer greater and richer views of what a culture is, of how it might be understood. In this lies the greatest strength of White's study: his flexibility in including as noteworthy numerous aspects of culture, at various registers of interpretation (from Art works to zoos for kangaroos). His obvious delight in following a trace through archives, capturing it as it weaves through myriad appearances in 18th, 19th and 20th century texts and artifacts, enhances the study further, as does his intellectual satisfaction in sharing how a piece of information might fit within the larger puzzle of Italian culture even if, like the bogus Venetian Hotel Version of Venice, it is not even in Italy. Clearly we must believe him when he claims that the book "has been a constant adventure of discovery to research and write" [274]. For us remains the fascinating adventure of reading and pondering White's discoveries and observations.

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Giovanna P. Del Negro. *The Passeggiata and Popular Culture in an Italian Town. Folklore and the Performance of Modernity*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. Pp. 183. ISBN 0-7735-2722-2. \$75

The effects of globalization and modernization on society have been scrutinized by numerous scholars on a large scale, leading to far-reaching conclusions in the fields of politics, economics, and environmental science, to name only a few. But what is the effect of modernization on any small segment of the world population—for example, the inhabitants of a modestly sized, partially industrialized, central Italian town? And why is this information relevant to the rest of us?

Giovanna P. Del Negro undertakes to answer these questions in her comprehensive and well-documented book, *The Passeggiata and Popular Culture in an Italian Town*. She begins with a historical, cultural, and geographical presentation of the town of "Sasso" and some introductory notes on her approach to her fieldwork. She then contextualizes her study by outlining past academic explorations of modernity that have informed and influenced her own. Subsequent chapters use references to concrete events in order to examine the collective identity of the people of Sasso—Sassani—in a changing modern society. In the final chapters, Del Negro's work culminates with an analysis that focuses specifically on the *passeggiata*, or ritual promenade, and its relation to the portrayal of a modern identity.

Though its title centers on the customary Italian stroll, Del Negro's analysis encompasses sources as varied as postcards, a televised political exposé, community games, citizens' responses to current affairs, a Catholic-influenced South American soap opera, and a local sex scandal. By examining these aspects of contemporary society in a specific small-town environment in mid-1990s Italy, the author provides a fresh outlook on globalization as a force that is not necessarily homogenizing. A proponent of the multiple modernity theory, Del Negro presents her work in Sasso as evidence that "culture informs the ways in which modernity is manifested in a particular locale." Far from passively submitting to the outside influence of Western or consumerist attitudes, the Sassani evaluate, debate, integrate, and react.

The *passeggiata* is the consummate example of this dynamic process, "a culturally specific response to the social instabilities of modernity." Here the modern self is both invented and performed in "a microcosm of village society, a battleground in the daily struggles of politics and gender, and fashion runway for displays of sophistication and style." This nightly spectacle involves both the participants (walkers) and the spectators (who observe and comment from sidewalks and terraces), and has diverse functions that include depicting oneself as a respectable potential spouse and exuding a sophisticated community identity that is nonetheless grounded in traditional values. By "seeing and being seen," Sassani can both embody and discuss the themes of modern society—"cosmopolitanism and local identity, changing gender roles, industrialization, class tensions, and the problems of the bureaucratic state"—and their moral implications.

Del Negro, like the Sassani she studies, functions as both a participant and a spectator in her fieldwork, and this is perhaps her study's greatest strength. The setting of the book is the hometown of her immigrant mother, making the author a partial insider in Sassano society. This allows her to steer clear of the tendency to dehumanize the town's inhabitants or to oversimplify her research by viewing them "as mere examples of universal social processes." At the same time, Del Negro is much more than a curious daughter seeking her Old World roots. Her study is painstakingly contextualized through existing scholarly theory in a variety of disciplines, and she supports her on-site research with an extensive bibliography. Though occasionally marred by typographical errors, the examination of the town of Sasso and its customary *passeggiata* is both methodical and charmingly anecdotal, consisting of systematic descriptions and illustrations combined with analyses of the composition and usage of spaces, social norms and rituals, small-town cultural mores, and the deportment and costume of walkers.

The author's stated purpose in this study is "to provide a rich ethnography of daily life in contemporary central Italy and explore a range of problems that center on the issue of modernity" in the hope of offering new perspectives. Though Del Negro's work focuses on a small, specific sample of society—the town of Sasso—and she prudently avoids generalizing her results, she has produced an interdisciplinary work that can appeal to a number of fields, including anthropology, sociology, gender studies, and Italian studies. Her case study could prove useful and engaging to researchers and university students alike. *The Passeggiata and*

Popular Culture in an Italian Town is a scholarly piece, but the accessible language in which Del Negro presents the detailed historical, political, social, and academic contexts render it easily comprehensible and straightforward. Comments made in Italian or in the Abruzzese dialect are faithfully reported in their original form, then translated into English.

As Del Negro points out, the Sassani “on-the-ground” actors in their *passeggiata* performance are just as capable as scholars of reflecting on modernity. Her book demonstrates that the study of globalization is interesting and relevant not only on a grand scale, but also to the inhabitants of a small town that is forced to grapple with issues of identity in the face of a changing world.

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Concetta Perna. *UFFA! Espressioni idiomatiche e ... molto di più. Leggere e comunicare*. New York: Jean Farinelli, 2007. Pp. 208. ISBN 978-0-9786016-3-8. \$26.95

Ideato con l'intento di raccogliere un ampio ventaglio di espressioni idiomatiche di uso comune, *Uffa!* è un testo snello e scorrevole che presenta questo ricco materiale linguistico in un contesto strutturato. I dialoghi tra un gruppo di personaggi, che ritornano in varie combinazioni nel corso delle diciannove unità del testo, definiscono un'atmosfera amichevole e familiare, adatta alle esigenze di apprendimento di un pubblico giovanile. Grazie a questa coerente cornice di scambio comunicativo, le espressioni idiomatiche incluse nel testo non sono forzatamente inserite nella conversazione, come a volte accade in quei manuali di più largo respiro che affrontano questo aspetto della lingua in forme succinte. Descritti dettagliatamente nelle pagine introduttive, i protagonisti di *Uffa!* sono studenti tra i diciassette e i diciotto anni che vivono in Australia: alcuni di loro vengono dall'Italia o sono di origini italiane. A parte alcune sezioni nelle quali compaiono anche i genitori, la maggior parte dei dialoghi si svolge tra i ragazzi sulle questioni più svariate, ma tipiche di quella fascia d'età: dallo studio alla patente e dalle vacanze alla scelta di un lavoro. Un argomento che coinvolge tutti è il rapporto con i genitori, che viene affrontato, come tanti nel libro, in chiave comparativa, proprio per evidenziare le usanze locali, ma anche quelle italiane. Nell'undicesimo capitolo, il dispiacere dei genitori, le interferenze dei nonni, ma soprattutto le diverse esperienze dei giovani, che alternativamente esprimono il loro benessere o malessere in famiglia, creano un dialogo vivace puntellato da varie espressioni, così ben integrate da risultare di facile comprensione e memorizzazione: “mettitele in testa”, “all'antica”, “un'arma a doppio taglio” e così via.

Il formato del dialogo permette l'inclusione di una serie di vocaboli, modi di dire e costrutti che vanno al di là delle espressioni idiomatiche tout court, abbracciando in questo modo il “molto di più” del titolo. Ecco che nel dodicesimo capitolo, “L'infame cellulare”, una realistica conversazione-litigio tra mamma e