



Heart and the Island, The: A Critical Study of Sicilian American Literature (SUNY series in Italian/American Culture)

Chiara Mazzucchelli

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Makes the case for a distinctly Sicilian American literature.

In *The Heart and the Island*, Chiara Mazzucchelli explores the strong bond between Sicilian American writers and the island of Sicily. Self-contained yet connected to the mainland, geographically separated from yet politically united to the rest of Italy, Sicily occupies a unique position. Throughout the twentieth century, the sense of a distinct *sicilianità*—or Sicilianness—has manifested itself in a corpus of texts that, although subsumed under the broader context of Italian literature, have distinguished themselves as examples of an exquisitely Sicilian literary experience. Mazzucchelli argues that a parallel phenomenon—*sicilianamericanità*—has emerged in the United States. Focusing on the island's geography, history, and culture, she examines how many American authors of Sicilian descent derive inspiration from their ethnic milieu and lay out a recognizable set of Sicilian culture markers in their works, thereby producing a literature that is distinctly Sicilian American. Drawing on both Italian and Italian American scholarship, *The Heart and the Island* is the first full-length study of Sicilian American literature, and it opens a space for new interdisciplinary discussions on what it means to be Italian on both sides of the ocean.

“In this ground-breaking critical study on Sicilian American literature, Chiara Mazzucchelli renders a brilliant analysis on the presence of *sicilianamericanità* in contemporary literature ... *The Heart and the Island* is an essential addition to Italian American studies, one that will continue to provoke new investigations and interdisciplinary discussions on Sicilian American literature ... Mazzucchelli's work is captivating and deeply informative for readers outside of academia ... [she] is a brilliant, soulful critic.” — *Sicilia Press*

“*The Heart and the Island* makes a distinctive contribution to the field of Italian American studies, provocatively extending it as well as continuing the invaluable work of providing reflection on a variety of narratives distinguished by generic innovation and distinctive responses to *sicilianità*. Chiara Mazzucchelli has beautifully advanced the field, interweaving with skill and poise the voices of Sicilian and Sicilian American writers.” — Mary Jo Bona, author of *By the Breath of Their Mouths: Narratives of Resistance in Italian America*

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