

Re-Reading Italian Americana @ Casa Italiana

Natasha Lardera (September 16, 2014)



Professor Anthony Julian Tamburri's 198 page compendium, *Re-Reading Italian Americana: Specificities and Generalities on Literature and Criticism*, was recently presented at Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo by the author himself in the company of Professor Josephine Gattuso Hendin and Professor Martino Marazzi. The book is a brilliant analysis of the status of Italian American studies in America and Italy, a powerful appraisal of critical works in the field, and a literary feast.

"Re-reading Italian Americana is a brilliant analysis of the status of Italian American studies in America and Italy, a powerful appraisal of critical works in the field, and a literary feast. Enriched by Tamburri's original and informed commentary on major writers and poets from di Donato to Mazziotti Gillan, it persuasively argues for the importance of Italian Americana in the American literary and cultural canon. Tamburri has written an indispensable book that is required reading for anyone who cares about multiethnic writing in the contemporary scene."



This quote by [Josephine Gattuso Hendin](#) [2], professor of English, New York University sums up in just a few sentences the uniqueness of professor Anthony Julian Tamburri's 198 page compendium that was recently presented at [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo](#). [3] The panel consisted of Tamburri himself ([Dean of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of Queens College, CUNY](#)) [4], Professor Josephine Gattuso Hendin and Professor [Martino Marazzi, University of Milan / NYU Tiro a Segno program](#). [5]

Prof. Anthony Julian Tamburri's research interests lie in literature, cinema, semiotics, interpretation theory, and cultural studies. He has divided his intellectual work evenly between Italian and Italian/American studies, authoring more than a dozen books and one hundred essays circa on both subject areas in English and Italian. Tamburri is also the editor of more than thirty volumes and special issues of journals. He is the director of the Calandra Institute, the executive producer of the TV program *Italics* and a member of the founding directors of *i-Italy.org*.

[Re-Reading Italian Americana: Specificities and Generalities on Literature and Criticism](#) [6](Fairleigh Dickinson, 2013) is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the general situation of Italian/American literature and its reception both in the United States and in Italy. It also discusses other social and cultural issues that pertain to Italian Americana. Section two consists of six chapters, each discussing a specific author; three dedicated to prose (Pietro di Donato, Mario Puzo, Luigi Barzini), three dedicated to poetry (Joseph Tusiani, Maria Mazziotti Gillan, Rina Ferrarelli). Section three examines the current state of criticism dedicated to Italian/American literature, the second part focusing on a number of specific works.

"When I was asked to read this book, I had no idea what I was about to read... but right away *Re-Reading Italian Americana: Specificities and Generalities on Literature and Criticism* was full of pleasant surprises. It gave me the possibility to explore new ideas and to discover how this culture has deep roots in Italian popular culture," Professor Marazzi said during the panel presentation.

"This book is a call to action in the creation of a greater sense of community. It is proof of what Italian Americana is, how it got to be this way and what it can become. It explores several aspects of our history (repression, stereotyping) and this history is a departure point to see the interaction between Italian and American cultures," Professor Hendin added.

The book, which is enhanced with the inclusion of an extensive bibliography and a comprehensive index, is a must read for anyone interested in learning what the Italian American experience is all about. "The title includes the word "re-reading," because we must read this literature in a different way, a way never applied before," Tamburri explained when talking about the challenges of writing this book and the work he has performed. "This book came to be because we need to remember the voices of our community but also to show that so much work needs to be done in order to move forward."

Professor Tamburri touched different topics, from the notion of bilingualism to tribalism and the superficiality of several books that simply "don't cut it."

Re-Reading Italian Americana: Specificities and Generalities on Literature and Criticism is an extraordinary and highly recommended addition to academic library collections but mostly and invitation to Italian Americans to get involved and contribute.

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[3] <http://www.casaitaliananyu.org/>



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