

Ennio Flaiano And His Italy: Postcards From A Changing World

Francesca Giuliani (May 09, 2011)



Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò presented the first English essay on Ennio Flaiano, Fellini`s most important screenwriter

Many of our American readers will surely be familiar with [Federico Fellini](#) [2] and his masterpieces, but to them the name of [Ennio Flaiano](#) [3], his collaborator for fifteen years, and most important screenwriter, is likely to sound new.

Often underrated as a “minor” author even in Italy, where his notoriety was overshadowed by Fellini`s enormous fame, Flaiano is actually one of the most interesting and eclectic Italian literary minds of the twentieth century.

[Marisa Trubiano](#) [4], Associate Professor of Italian at Montclair State University, is the author of the first English essay on Flaiano`s oeuvre, *Ennio Flaiano And His Italy: Postcards From A Changing World*, a comprehensive book that sheds a light on the artist`s poetic and his works, featuring unpublished materials and a study of what Trubiano defines as the “Flaiano effect” on Federico Fellini`s cinema.

A dramatist, journalist, novelist, and film and theater critic, Flaiano was a very influential presence in Fellini`s creative process, and a crafty writer with a strong voice of his own.



In the words of Professor Mario Fratti, who held a speech at the book presentation at [NYU's Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò](#) [5] on May 4, Flaiano's approach to literature is defined by a strong belief in its superiority over cinema, which constitutes a "sub-standard".

Fratti stressed the sardonic vein in Flaiano's oeuvre, characterizing in particular his reflections on Italy and on Italian identity: "Italian is a profession, not a nationality", he wrote in *La solitudine del satiro* (1974).

"Flaiano is an anthropophagus who eats his own people", pointed out Lucilla Sergiacomo, president of the Associazione Culturale Ennio Flaiano and of the [Premio Internazionale Flaiano](#) [6].

However, through his sardonic and sometimes harsh remarks on Italian identity, or on the lack of a univocal Italian identity, Flaiano liquidated notions such as regionalism and nationalism, colonialism and fascism.

In the words of Trubiano: "His postmodern autobiography emerges, punctuated by flashes of intuition about an Italian who left a provincial background to become a world citizen."

America holds a privileged position in Flaiano's writing, as an observatory on cultural differences through which he theorizes the "fluidity" of Italian identity, or "italianità fluida", as the land of opportunities for filmmakers and screenwriters.

In *Melampus*, a novel that features the transposition of Flaiano's autobiographical experience in the States, America is depicted by the author as "a side of heaven", a land of optimism where interpersonal relationships are based on pragmatism and innocence, and most of all as a place where the word "impossible" doesn't exist.

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Links

[1] <http://newsite.ility.org/files/flaiano1304977293.jpg>

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[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ennio_Flaiano

[4] http://www.montclair.edu/profilepages/view_profile.php?username=trubianom

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

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