of (neo)colonialism are being visited by the 'West' on the periphery (from the most obvious, Iraq and Afghanistan, to the more camouflaged and less followed (Honduras), or currently prominent (Egypt)), especially since the "end of the Cold War." While critical of fascist colonialism, Flaiano's alleged 'opening onto the world' ("literary globalism") does not seem to extend to those economic, social and political foundations on which current forms (institutionally more invasive and subtle) of neo-colonialism are based (class vs. 'identity').

Finally much recent criticism and scholarship discusses Flaiano and his work as if he/it were victims of untoward neglect, partly due to an alleged critical consensus of a more militant era among Italian intellectuals. First, the number of works cited in Trubiano's own bibliography, or those listed in an academic library (dozens in Princeton's Firestone library), would seem to contradict this statement. Second, the new literary/critical (formalist/postmodernist) paradigm of the Berlusconi decades (a regime supported by the neo-fascists) favours authors that share many of Flaiano's characteristics. Third, Flaiano received a Premio Strega for his 1947 novel, and his work (Trubiano quotes Brunetta on the "effetto Flaiano" in Italian cinema) with directors such as Fellini, Antonioni and De Sica who (together with authors like Calvino and Eco) are prime examples of Italian culture's "prodotti d'esportazione" hardly seems to corroborate the "neglect" thesis (which could be contrasted to the actual blacklisting many Western intellectuals were/are subjected to). Last year the documentary *Flaiano: il meglio è alle spalle* was produced. In 2010 Andrea Camilleri (hardly an "outsider") wrote an article for *Il Messaggero*: he blamed the "occhialuti cerberi" of Italian literary institutions for the marginalization Flaiano had been subjected to. Camilleri and Trubiano agree: formal eclecticism and ironic distance from militancy/partisanship in Flaiano's work were one reason.

Overall it seems difficult to make a case for Flaiano as an "outsider." Flaiano may well have been a forerunner who saw the attraction of the informal and the "global" ahead of his contemporaries (Trubiano's subtitle is *Postcards from a Changing World*), as Trubiano cogently argues, but one also wonders whether aspects of Italian "qualunquismo"/"opportunismo" revealed, almost confessionally or intentionally in Flaiano's work, may also inform his worldview.

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Italy and the Bourgeoisie. The Rethinking of a Class. Edited by Stefania Lucamante. Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009. Pp.208. ISBN 978-0-8386-4202-3. n.p.

The editor of this volume has set for herself a formidable task, and has accomplished it to a notable degree of success. What does Bourgeoisie mean in Italy and for Italians? A dynamic term, with numberless denotations, the wise decision of the editor is that the term is better described rather than defined. She proffers, in

fact, a multi-bourgeoisie with different manifestations not only over time since Italian Unification, but also across class, political ideology, religion/agnosticism, and engagement with public welfare (p.11). Using Benedetto Croce's fundamental essay, *Di un equivoco concetto storico: la borghesia* (1931) as a point of departure, this study embraces his problematised considerations, including the negative characteristics he attributed to the term, and seeks to illustrate how the Italian bourgeoisie, which developed much later than that of the French or British, is also, as Croce had posited almost paradoxically, "the serious character of the whole modern age" (p.15). In other words, the bourgeoisie in Italy is also the harbinger of a sense of ethical legacy for future citizens, burgeoning with a new energy and unfettered by strict boundaries (p.16). Lucamante also wonders, following the work of Alberto Banti, how the members of the bourgeoisie construct their self-identity beyond the sense of collective culture.

To elucidate the conundrum, Lucamante offers nine excellent essays. The volume is not a history of the bourgeoisie in Italy but an intelligent and thoughtful interpretation through interdisciplinary considerations. The chapters are arranged more or less in chronological order, a felicitous decision that emphasizes the rich network of meanings, both denotative and connotative, as the Italian bourgeoisie evolves. Cristina della Colletta convincingly depicts how Edmondo De Amicis set the hegemonic benchmark for an early sense and manifestation of the Italian bourgeois in his essay *Torino 1880*; he wrote here of the world's fair in the then Italian capital. Della Colletta offers us a Foucauldian interpretation of the essay, pointing out how its panoptic perspective determined a cityscape that purportedly exemplified the best of bourgeois endeavours, all presented in "harmonious hierarchies" (p.49) to ensure that the liberal bourgeoisie shone as a bright socioeconomic beacon for Italy, and also (since the occasion was the world's fair) for the world.

All too soon, however, the pretty picture became a caricature in the years of Fascism and the Second World War, as the essays on "Growing up Jewish in Giorgio Bassani's Ferrara: A Personal Recollection" (Guido Fink), and "*Morte della Patria* and Mourning Elaboration: Memoirs and State of Consciousness after *Otto Settembre's* Italy" (Giuseppe Tosi) confirm. The former explains the verisimilitude between Bassani's fictional bourgeois world and that of Ferrara in the 1930's and 1940's as seen through three generations of Ferrarese Jews. Threaded through the fictional fabric are also Fink's own memories of the city at that time, different and yet the same, since Bassani has used Fink's family in his portrayals. Although he does not enter the picture, one is reminded here of Edward Bruner's work on reality, the personal experience of that reality and the expression of that experience. Bruner informs Tosi's essay as well, as Tosi comments on various testimonial reactions to the weeks between July 25 and September 8, 1943. He concludes that for the young men of the bourgeoisie, the war's end brought only the trauma of events that had denied them their youth. Claudia Nasini's essay focuses on Italy after the war. "Adriano Olivetti: A 'Socialist' Industrialist in Postwar Italy" relies also on recently opened CIA archival material. The author describes Olivetti as a man constantly in search of a new bourgeois ethic, namely one of "civil cohabitation, one that rethinks the relationships among persons, especially between themselves

and institutions" (p.77). Her words presage a new Italy, "rethought" to engage the society affected by rapidly evolving industrial and technological changes, and by the American political juggernaut.

The remaining chapters of the volume focus primarily on artistic interpretations of the bourgeoisie in Italy. Cosetta Seno Reed's study of *Alonso e i visionari* (1996) by Anna Maria Ortese confirms Ortese as a non conformist and complex writer. The fantasy world she creates incorporates the culture of the years of lead, a time, according to Ortese in her essay *Linea d'Ombra*, "when political subversion was an everyday occurrence" (p.109), a time of evil and terrorism. Terrorist activities also inform Giancarlo Lombardi's essay "*Di buona famiglia*: Portrait of the Bourgeois Terrorist in Giuseppe Bertolucci's *Segreti segreti*", a film in which the director shows a "total collapse of a 'moral' center" (p.125) that leads, according to Lombardi, to a veritable civil war. The Red Brigades and cinema also figure prominently in Gius Gargiulo's study "In the Living Room of the Red Brigades: The Shrinking of the Italian Bourgeoisie and Its Intellectuals from Terrorism to Berlusconi's Tele-Existence." The piece fascinates for its semiotic nod to spatial elements and their importance in accepting or rejecting the status quo of the petit bourgeois, including by-terrorist factions such as the Red Brigades who, of course, professed extreme antibourgeois attitudes. Gargiulo's comments on the role of television in a shrinking and Berlusconi's bourgeoisie are particularly noteworthy. In "Bourgeois Portraits Inside-Outside: Family Groups in the Narrative Fiction of Gianni Farinetti", Nicoletta Di Ciolla describes Farinetti's concerns with contemporary Italy beset by alienation and anxieties which are located on both personal and societal stages. Finally, Lucamante's own essay, "A Dutiful Daughter: Francesca Mazzucato's *Hot Line: storia di un'ossessione*", studies a mediated bourgeoisie, patriarchal and conservative but at the same time transgressive. In this case it is the phone-sex hotline that allows the social "trauma that is never-ending and therefore, never resolved" (p.195) to mark the postmodern Italian bourgeoisie.

The volume is highly readable, but would benefit from additional editorial attention. Bibliographies are rich, and up-to-date. The book will indubitably arouse the interest of any academic who has pondered how valid Croce's assessment and definition of the bourgeoisie in Italy might ever have been, or if it still applies to Italian society today.

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Beatrice Barbalato. *Sisifo felice. Vincenzo Cerami, drammaturgo*. Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2009. Pp. 231. ISBN 978-90-5201-467-8. US.\$ 44.95.

Per il grande pubblico di oggi, il nome di Cerami è associato soprattutto a quello di Benigni, e ai successi internazionali nati dalla loro collaborazione, da *Johnny Stecchino* a *La vita è bella*. Molto noti sono anche altri lavori dell'autore romano, fra cinema, palcoscenico, e letteratura: da *Un borghese piccolo piccolo*, il romanzo