

Italian Novelists: A Critical Survey of Long Fiction

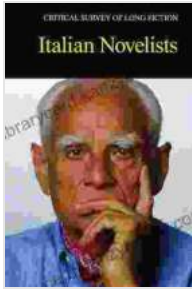


Italian Novelists (Critical Survey of Long Fiction)

by Carl Rollyson

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Italian literature has a rich and storied history, with a tradition of long fiction that dates back to the Middle Ages. From the epic poems of Dante Alighieri to the modern masterpieces of Umberto Eco, Italian novelists have produced some of the most enduring and influential works of world literature.

This critical survey provides an overview of the most important Italian novelists and their long fiction masterpieces. We will explore the historical and cultural context in which these works were written, as well as their literary significance and impact.

The Middle Ages

The Italian literary tradition begins in the Middle Ages, with the works of Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarca, and Giovanni Boccaccio. These three writers are known as the "Three Crowns" of Italian literature, and their works had a profound influence on the development of Western literature.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an epic poem that tells the story of the poet's journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The poem is a masterpiece of allegory and symbolism, and it has been praised for its beauty, its depth of thought, and its powerful vision of the afterlife.

Petrarca's *Canzoniere* is a collection of love poems that celebrates the poet's love for his beloved Laura. The poems are known for their exquisite beauty, their lyrical grace, and their exploration of the themes of love, loss, and longing.

Boccaccio's *Decameron* is a collection of 100 stories that are told by a group of young people who have fled Florence during the Black Death. The stories are full of humor, wit, and social commentary, and they provide a vivid portrait of Italian society in the fourteenth century.

The Renaissance

The Italian Renaissance was a time of great cultural and intellectual ferment, and it saw the emergence of some of the greatest Italian novelists of all time. These include Ludovico Ariosto, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Torquato Tasso.

Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is an epic poem that tells the story of the knight Orlando, who goes mad after he is rejected by his beloved Angelica. The poem is a masterpiece of wit, fantasy, and adventure, and it has been praised for its vibrant characters and its imaginative storytelling.

Machiavelli's *The Prince* is a political treatise that offers advice on how to acquire and maintain power. The book is known for its ruthless realism and its amoral perspective, and it has been the subject of much controversy over the centuries.

Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* is an epic poem that tells the story of the First Crusade. The poem is known for its beautiful language, its stirring battle scenes, and its exploration of the themes of love, honor, and duty.

The Enlightenment

The Italian Enlightenment was a time of intellectual and social change, and it saw the emergence of some of the most important Italian novelists of the eighteenth century. These include Pietro Metastasio, Carlo Goldoni, and Vittorio Alfieri.

Metastasio's *drammi per musica* were wildly successful throughout Europe and helped to establish Italian opera as the dominant form of musical theater. Goldoni's comedies were known for their realism, their humor, and their social commentary. Alfieri's tragedies were written in a neoclassical style and explored the themes of love, honor, and freedom.

The Nineteenth Century

The Italian nineteenth century was a time of great political and social upheaval, and it saw the emergence of some of the most important Italian novelists of the era. These include Alessandro Manzoni, Giovanni Verga, and Luigi Pirandello.

Manzoni's *The Betrothed* is a historical novel that tells the story of two young lovers who are caught up in the political turmoil of seventeenth-century Italy. The novel is known for its realism, its vivid characters, and its exploration of the themes of love, faith, and forgiveness.

Verga's *The House by the Medlar Tree* is a naturalistic novel that tells the story of a poor peasant family in Sicily. The novel is known for its stark realism, its unsentimental portrayal of poverty, and its exploration of the themes of family, honor, and tradition.

Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is a modernist novel that explores the themes of identity, reality, and illusion. The novel is known for its innovative structure, its psychological depth, and its exploration of the nature of theater and performance.

The Twentieth Century

The Italian twentieth century was a time of great literary experimentation, and it saw the emergence of some of the most important Italian novelists of the era. These include Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, and Susanna Tamaro.

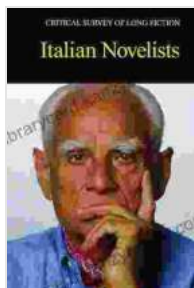
Calvino's *Invisible Cities* is a postmodern novel that explores the themes of memory, identity, and the nature of reality. The novel is known for its poetic language, its imaginative storytelling, and its exploration of the human condition.

Eco's *The Name of the Rose* is a historical mystery novel that tells the story of a group of monks who are investigating a series of murders at a medieval monastery. The novel is known for its complex plot, its rich symbolism, and its exploration of the themes of knowledge, faith, and the nature of reality.

Tamaro's *Follow Your Heart* is a popular novel that tells the story of a young woman who is struggling to find her place in the world. The novel is known for its realistic characters, its heartwarming story, and its exploration of the themes of love, loss, and self-discovery.

The Italian literary tradition is rich and diverse, and it has produced some of the greatest novelists of all time. This critical survey has provided an overview of the most important Italian novelists and their long fiction

masterpieces. These works are essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the history and development of Italian literature.



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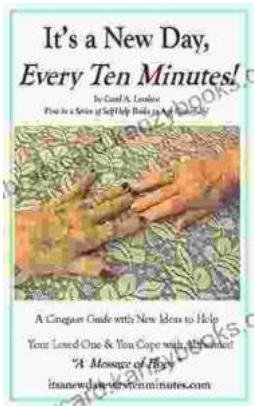
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