



## **Gian Antonio Stella. Passionately Writing on Immigration**

Natasha Lardera (October 29, 2007)



Editorialist and political, business, and society journalist, Gian Antonio Stella is now focusing his work on immigration.



Gian Antonio Stella, editorialist and political, business, and society journalist from Vicenza, has been writing for the Milanese newspaper, “Corriere della Sera” since he was a young reporter. Married, with a son, he is a passionate cook and a hopeless guitarist. He is a world traveler who sometimes lives in Rome, other times near Venice, or wherever he happens to be.

He has won several journalistic awards (starting with the “E” assigned by moguls such as Montanelli, Biagi and Bocca, moving on to the “Ischia,” and the “Saint Vincent” for his essays). He has written several books, among which the notable “Schei”, a reportage on the North East, “Dio Po / gli uomini che fecero la Padania” (God Po, the men who created Padania), a poisonous pamphlet on the Lega (political party who claims the supremacy of northern Italy), “Lo spreco” (The Waste), a poignant discussion on how Italy wasted at least two millions of the old liras, “Chic”, an ironic voyage among filthy rich Italians, “Tribù” (Tribe), a fun portrait of the right wing party that rose to power in 2001, and “L’orda, quando gli albanesi eravamo noi” (The Horde, When we Were the Albanians), a book on xenophobia and racism towards Italians that were emigrants.

We then arrive to “Odissee, Italiani sulle rotte del sogno e del dolore,” (Odysseys, Italians on the Road to Dreams and Pain) the work that has recently been at the center of events in New York City. This is the adventurous and touching story of our great grandparents, human beings who left their country in search of fortune, while facing a terrible obstacle: the Ocean.

These poor souls had to survive the terrible conditions of living on huge ships before arriving at their promised land. Those in the third class lived all together, grouped in large dormitories, eating food covered by rat waste, and singing popular songs to help time go by, songs that reflected their feelings, fears, and hopes.

Many of these ships never made it to their destination – the Sirio hit a wall of rocks because the captain had no map to follow, while the Principessa Mafalda was traveling with a broken motor. The Carlo Re was struck by a cholera epidemic, so it was not allowed to enter South America and was left roaming around while its passengers were all dying.

These are some of the stories that Gian Antonio Stella portrays in his work through his passionate writing, a representation of travel documents, tragedies, adventures, strong hopes and shattered dreams. The book is a harsh slice of life, an essential tool in understanding the Italy of today.

This work and everything concerning its author, is thoroughly analyzed on the web site [www.odissee.it](http://www.odissee.it)

The site provides several images of the protagonists of Stella’s stories, poems on the sea written by illustrious writers such as George Byron, Ernest Hemingway, Federico Garcia Lorca, and Gabriele D’Annunzio, words to some popular songs that were often sang on these long trips, and a useful forum where people looking for relatives, immigration documents, and other related data can communicate.



The site also dedicates a part to the theatrical representation of “Odissee”, entitled, “Odissee. Canti e storie di mari e migranti,” (Odysseys, Songs and Stories of Migrants and the Sea) a play created by the collaboration between Gian Antonio Stella, Gualtiero Bertelli and the Compagnia delle Acque theater group.

Masolino D’amico, famous Italian critic and writer for “La Stampa”, describes the play as “Ninety irresistible minutes of performance that every theater on the peninsula should welcome.”

The show successfully mixes together the words of Stella with old songs as well as new ones written by Bertelli, with touching slides, and unforgettable facts.

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