Robin Pickering-Iazzi. *Unspeakable Women: Selected Short Stories Written by Italian Women During Fascism*. New York: The Feminist P at The City U of New York, 1993. Pp. xvi, 119.

Pickering-Iazzi's compilation of short stories written by women during the Fascist era is gleaned from "la terza pagina" or cultural page of Italy's major newspapers between 1925 and 1939. Given the ideology of the times one might expect an exultation of the traditional nineteenth-century woman, redefined perhaps, though not politically aligned, as Mussolini's 'New Woman': monolithic mother, prolific, robust, and above all, domestic. Such is not the image portrayed, however, in this collection of noteworthy though, for the most part, marginalized Italian women writers.

That such a collection of stories should first appear in English translation and be compiled in the United States may reflect, as is suggested by its editor, the enduring influence of Italian literary criticism in matters of genre and taste. Indeed such works by women seem to have been less neglected by the repressive Fascist regime than during the post-war liberal democratic period. In this latter interval, in fact, there raged a virulent polemic between the pure or metaphysical, on the one hand, and social commitment in literature, on the other, to the detriment, by and large, of the latter. Contemporary Italian literary criticism, according to Pickering-Iazzi, may still reflect in part this traditional inclination towards "art for art's sake," thus relegating to a secondary role women's literary production which is decidedly social in content. Biography, or personal history, the basis of many of the stories here contained, would logically be omitted from an aesthetic which, while praising instinct, could not embrace that instinct expressed in other than classical form. The social struggle of the common man, no less than that of the common woman, will remain the domain of politics rather than of art and, as a consequence, it seems, omit women authors of the Fascist period from inclusion in literary anthologies.

The stories here collected raise the major issues and contradictions of the gender debate, albeit cautiously. The concept that women's traditional roles are biologically determined is questioned in personal, almost confidential, re-explorations of female identity. Patriarchal, if not outright Fascist models of women are still clearly recognizable, for example in Deledda's "Portrait of a Country Woman," but they are fluctuating models, traditional and idealized women on the verge of comprehending the possibilities and the dangers of real equality and power. The ironies of male domination are not merely identifiable but often painfully transparent. Yet the persistent internal barriers even among emerging and progressive women seem as yet only partially surmountable. What surfaces is ambiguity. Conclusions are often guarded, some left to the judgement of God, and some which, given the readership of the day, could have easily been interpreted in two ways.

In an age when punitive policies and reverse incentives were deployed to keep women from education and employment it is not unusual that the tone should be prudent. Nonetheless we find, in Deledda's "Grace," for example, a courageous and open discussion of the persecution faced by women who choose to write and the potential subversive power of female authors. Literary access to the traditional male realm of sexual politics, heretofore designed to keep women in their place, is blatantly challenged by Deledda as it had been by Ada Negri who cynically envisioned a woman writer as a man condemned to live in a woman's body. Women writers, however, might and would acquire an effective tool in the battle for emancipation as well as a safe haven in which to begin psychological rehabilitation, essential to the process of self-discovery.

As well as texts by Deledda and Ada Negri, the collection includes stories by contemporaries, Clarice Tartufari, Gianna Manzini, Amalia Guglielminetti and Carola Prosperi, all of whom, it is to be remembered, are writing in an era when, by Mussolini's own proclamation "women do not count" (6). Potentially and practically, however, the newly devised "terza pagina" would serve to substantially increase, less by way of its historical and cultural pretensions than by virtue of its entertainment value, male as well as female readership of Italy's leading newspapers: *Il Giornale d'Italia* in Rome, *Il Corriere della Sera* in Milan and *La Stampa* in Turin. It was a market to be wooed and the novel subject matter of women's lives attracted an avid, popular and a generally deprived readership.

Portrayed are non-conventional and often captivating females. Memorable indeed, for instance, is Negri's red-headed scamp in "The Captain," who succeeds in undermining in childhood the traditional commanding notions of female passivity and delicacy but who, by puberty, is broken and bridled as is proper for her gender. Time and again the stories reflect the intrinsic contradictions of acceptable female behaviour. Ideals of beauty, marriage and service to husband and family are weighed against basic intelligence, desire, and meaningful self-expression. In Guglielminetti's "Sensitivity" for example, the Ariadne myth is revisited and a modern Arianna rejects suitors who are incapable of valuing her for other than her external appearance. Again in Manzini's "The Pomegranate" the common syllabus of family relationships is recast in a less structured interconnection of mutual regard and unbiased coexistence.

The contribution of this however diminutive volume by Robin Pickering-Iazzi is of substantial importance not solely to the realm of feminist studies but to the field of Italian literary criticism. It is an important step in the reclaiming of marginalized Italian women writers, and, for contemporary women writers, another segment of their literary heritage by which to counterbalance the historical lack of recognition of the female imagination.

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Silvia Betocchi, ed. *Giuseppe Prezzolini: The American Years 1929-1962*. Symposium March 3, 1993, Casa Italiana, Columbia U. New York: S. F. Vanni. Firenze: Gabinetto G. P. Vieusseux, 1994. Pp. 115.

Il volume inaugura la nuova collana promossa da due benemerite case editrici: la Vanni di New York e il Gabinetto Vieusseux di Firenze. Era particolarmente appropriato che gli atti della giornata di studi, tenutasi alla Casa Italiana della Columbia University su un letterato fra i più rappresentativi della cultura italiana del Novecento, fossero pubblicati in collaborazione dalle case editrici delle due città: Firenze e New York, nelle quali Prezzolini più a lungo lasciò la sua orma di critico e di maestro.

Degli otto studi che compongono la raccolta, solo "Prezzolini as a Bibliographer and as a Friend" di Paul Oskar Kristeller risale al 1983 ed è la commemorazione, fatta alla stessa Casa Italiana, per l'anniversario della morte di Prezzolini. Kristeller, in termini precisi ne rievoca l'operato, volto a favore della raccolta di collezioni di letteratura e di storia italiana per le biblioteche della Columbia University, stabilendo uno dei primati in questo campo fuori d'Italia. Menzionato pure è il *Repertorio Bibliografico della storia e*