ongoing manner. In a word, Roberto Ludovico's “Una farfalle chiamata Solaria” tra l'Europa e il romanzo, represents an impressive work of scholarship and an invaluable addition to the critical tools with which to study Italian literary history in a decisive decade.

C O R R A D O F E D E R I C I  
Brock University


This important volume illustrates the depth of women's contributions to Italian theater, a contribution rarely explored either in texts examining female authors or those discussing theater in general. As such, Cavallaro has done a valuable service to Italian literary studies, giving voice to those playwrights whose works have been little known and seldom researched. In her critical introduction, Cavallaro offers a cogent overview of women’s theatrical production from the 1930s to the 1960s, making explicit how these authors paved the way for the more familiar names of feminist theater, such as Dacia Maraini and Franca Rame. She points out as well that the treatment of female characters in the works of these earlier playwrights often challenged traditional expectations of female behavior and female roles. Cavallaro provides a brief biography of the four authors under study, followed by an English translation of a representative work by each. The volume concludes with a helpful appendix listing both published and unpublished works by these authors.

Cavallaro begins with Paola Riccora, pen-name of Emilia Vaglio Capriolo (1884-1976), who began by translating and adapting French farces for the Neapolitan stage before turning to writing her own dramas. Riccora’s plays focused on middle-class protagonists, caught up in domestic troubles that were often resolved by a poignant ending. She is best known for her drama Sarà stato Giovannini which was performed by the famous de Filippo siblings (Eduardo, Peppino and Titina) and their theater company in 1933. This successful collaboration was followed by others, including *Angelina mia!, La bottega dei santi, Lontananza,* and *Io e te,* all staged in the 1930s. Riccora’s best work was written in the 1930s, although she continued to create plays into the late 1960s. *Sarà stato Giovannini,* a comedy revolving around family betrayals, seductions, and social class, is reproduced here, demonstrating Riccora’s skill in portraying multi-layered characters against the background of trenchant social commentary.

Anna Bonacci (1892-1981) is recognized primarily for her drama *L’ora della fantasia,* staged in the early 1950s throughout Europe, and resulting in both an Italian and an American-film adaptation. The play, translated and reproduced in this volume, highlights the dominant theme of Bonacci’s works: that of living out, albeit briefly, a particular fantasy or desire. *L’ora della fantasia* treats this theme through the use of an age-old plot device: a married couple each deceiving the
other. But because Bonacci paid particular attention to the development of the two archetypal female characters—the angel and the monster—the play offers a modern take on women’s roles and opportunities. Interestingly, both the Italian film adaptation, Mario Camerini’s 1952 *Moglie per una notte*, and the American version, Billy Wilder’s 1964 *Kiss Me, Stupid*, tamed down the extramarital goings-on and provided a more conventional ending.

Both Clotilde Masci (1918-1985) and Gici Ganzini Granata, pen-name of Carlotta Ganzini (1920-1986) began their careers in all-female educational theater, although their later works embraced different genres. Masci collaborated with Catholic publishing houses, gathering accolades and prizes for her work. While these all-female works tended to promulgate the Church’s position on the necessity of marriage for women, Masci’s later dramas reveal a more complicated, often pessimistic portrayal of both the institution of marriage and that of spinsterhood. Her plays, written for the most part before the height of the feminist movement in Italy, offers no alternative to the more restrictive aspects of traditional female roles. *Le escluse* (1950), presented in this volume, depicts "the contrast between the sad and lonely life of those who have never married, and the bad memories of those who have" (256).

Like Masci, Gici Ganzini Granata also contributed to the Catholic magazine *Scene femminili*, with all-female dramas highlighting the importance of marriage and motherhood. After the annulment of her own marriage, she went on to write for the *Angelicum*, a children’s theater company in Milan. In the last stage of her career, Ganzini worked for national television and radio networks, writing everything from puppet shows to serial dramas. The short comedy included in this volume, *Gli uomini hanno sempre ragione* (1958), belongs to the first part of her career, but is a departure from her other works, which promote traditional values for young women. This play, which imagines a school devoted to teaching girls how to be good wives, is shot through with irony and caustic humor, drawing attention to the perils of marriage rather than to its advantages.

As Cavallaro points out, these four playwrights examined the condition of femaleness in Italy before the rise of the women’s movement, allowing for a more systematic examination of the genealogy of female authors. This is a groundbreaking, fascinating book and will undoubtedly encourage more in-depth studies of these authors, their works, and Italian women’s theater in general.

*Laura A. Salsini*

*University of Delaware*


Da diverso tempo gli studiosi di emigrazione mettono in dubbio il valore degli scritti autobiografici come fonte storica o quanto meno spiegano che l’unica possibilità è affrontarli leggendo fra le righe, cercando di strappare all’autore sopratutto quello che ha voluto nascondere. Questo testo non offre certo un argomento contro tali avvertimenti. L’autore, nato nel 1929, medico per famiglie a Fairfield