to Giambologna's colossal equestrian statue of Cosimo, who hailed it as their own Trojan horse or new Marcus Aurelius. Gibbons judges its impact in context of the disciplined decorum required in the art of riding as appropriate to great rulers.

All of these contributions intersect at the figurehead Cosimo, a very paradigm of Werner Gundersheimer's 'Big Man,' the leader who envisages himself as 'part of a great continuum, extending deep into the past and far into the future.' In his sweeping, visionary view of rule, mental constructs of history are absorbed by this astute prince and his legacy to future generations is constructed.

GABRIELLE LANGDON
University College, Dublin

***Gender and the Italian Stage: From the Renaissance to the Present Day.* Maggie Günsberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1997. Pp. xi, 275.**

The vibrant character and popularity of Italian theatre since the period of Machiavelli have inspired erudite studies on disparate subject areas as well as prominent inclusions in encyclopaedic international histories. Yet this genre has not received sufficient or adequate analysis in areas of feminist thought and gender awareness. Günsberg's text not only corrects this evident defect, but also offers up-to-date interdisciplinary approaches to produce a set of feminist readings in which gender interacts with a number of social categories in general, and age, family, and class in particular.

The thread which unites these six chapters is the attention paid to the element of materialism in association with feminist critique that recognizes the importance of the economic sphere for understanding women's social position in relation to their age, race, colour, class, familiar and working status. Each chapter penetrates deliberately and eloquently in the interface between ideology and culture evidencing patriarchy's adherence to and cultivation of gender difference as oppositional rather than relational. This volume covers a broad span ranging from the early "capitalist market economy" of the Renaissance to the plays of Franca Rame written and performed in the industrial capitalist post-boom years.

While changing socioeconomic climates visibly affected gender representations through the past five centuries, patriarchal ideology has changed only superficially. The evident and intriguing dichotomy between the vicissitudes, trends, attitudes affecting gender in midst of social evolution versus the rather constant and stable portrayal of these on stage is the fundamental concern of each chapter. The first ("Waiting in the wings: female characters in Italian Renaissance comedy"), assesses the role of female characters maintaining as focus of interest, as in chapter two ("Gender deceptions: cross-dressing in Italian Renaissance comedy"), the interface between gender portrayal and stage conventions. Basing her analyses on the corpus by Aretino (1525), informed by Cinquecento's epistolary texts and recent scholarship, Günsberg is able in these two and following chapters, to surface new and intriguing evidence to support her conclusions. No female char-

acter dominated the stage to the extent of her male counterpart; further, high social, economic, and intellectual status increased marginalization to the extent that, as in social life so on stage, women seem passively to "wait in the wings." In addition, emphasis on sumptuous costuming (as on set designs, music and choreography) further relegated females to being visual materialistic tokens deprived of voice.

The next two chapters bring the critical discourses from the eighteenth to the late nineteenth century through the communal theatre of Goldoni ("Artful women: morality and materialism in Goldoni"), the realistic theatre of Verga, and the decadent strain of D'Annunzio's stage ("Masterful men: difference and fantasy in D'Annunzio"). The essential difference in the theatre of these disparate authors and periods is that the values epitomized by the comedies of Goldoni, on virtue, reason, happiness and materialism are in direct opposition to those of Verga's sharp realism and D'Annunzio's upper-class superman of will and action, passion and tragic heroism.

As a result, in part, of a preponderance of indoor settings and moral communal themes, the comedies of Goldoni can be best understood by keeping in view the 'virtue' vs. 'vice' dichotomy of female characters. These words having a special patriarchal resonance in eighteenth-century Europe and Venice especially, lead to female sexual behaviour being a major focus for patriarchal interest in Goldoni's theatre. In like manner, D'Annunzio's willful and power-seeking men cannot be examined adequately without considering as well their relations with femininity. In the end, for the angelic and the artful women of Goldoni, marriage beckons to restore moral/patriarchal order. And yet, Goldoni's female characters also demonstrate that femininity cannot be fully circumscribed by a value system alien to its interests. So too, masculinity in D'Annunzio can never completely fulfil the role with which patriarchy seeks to identify it.

The question of age as it relates to gender portrayal is the central interest of the fifth chapter dedicated to Italy's greatest playwright ("Patriarchs of the twentieth century, and prodigals: the generation gap in Pirandello"). Günsberg stresses that sociologists consider age, like gender, a category that is socially constructed and culturally specific; while age is often mentioned as an important factor in gender criticism, all too often there is no development of it as a meaningful contributing factor to the issues of gender. This chapter addresses this oversight—particularly crucial to Pirandello's theatre, charged as it is with dynamics of power struggle among generations and between genders. Günsberg's analysis penetrates to the core of patriarchal attitudes in Pirandello demonstrating how patriarchy continues to "police" its own male hierarchy in material as well as sexual concerns, marginalizing femininity, and specifically maternity. Age, ageing, the masking of these, how they relate to gender and class are examined in detail in numerous plays from the earliest (*La morsa*, 1898) to his last and unfinished *I giganti della montagna* (1931). Informed by the scholarship of eminent sociologists Günsberg's observations shed new light on Pirandello's works leading to some crucial social insights: "Age and generational difference links up with gender difference as far as the achieving of adulthood, or independent personhood through work, is con-

cerned 'Labour force participation became central to the attribution and withholding of personhood'. This is illustrated in *L'altro figlio*, ... dealing with disruptive emigration patterns that result in 'old people, *women* and children' being left behind"(190). Pirandello's 1909 essay "Femminismo," rationalizes his opposition to middle-class women working by idealizing domestic femininity and de-feminizing women who work. Pirandello founds his plays on dynamic dramas of male generation gaps emphasizing action (rather than looks, as in women). Thus, concludes Günsberg, for Pirandello the male is the doer, while the woman as body is "already and always an actress" (202).

Having sustained four centuries of patriarchal dominance, what different voices and opportunities have been possible to the Italian stage in the twentieth century? Among the most innovative and effective, the theatrical comedies and performances by world renowned Franca Rame (often with Dario Fo) are the focus for the last chapter, which from the onset broaches the problem of representations of femininity. Günsberg enumerates the issues confronting Rame as playwright, actress, director/producer of a theatre by, about, for women: how to divest this genre of that patriarchy that still held sway, and of the concept that the voice of men lives within women? After explaining the import of "female parts" and the nature of her collaboration with Fo, the chapter proceeds to unlock in a perceptive and systematic discussion issues around female subjects, notably those of subjectivity and femininity, particularly in the face of patriarchy's presumption of the male, but denial of the female subject. Prominent Western theories participate in this very important discussion, which culminates in the realization of a methodology that can offer feminism a mode of agency that is freed from constraints of patriarchal truth and morality about femininity. Rame's style of theatre, written, and also resulting from audience participation/suggestion, allows in part for the replacement of fixed female subjectivity with female subjectivity as an on-going process, "perpetually constructed and constructible" (213). In Rame's writings and performances, identity can no longer be perceived as monolithic or preordained as the (traditional) unified subject is replaced by multiple subject positions and identities. But although Rame's collective corpus succeeds in mapping out and underscoring the stages of Italian feminism (*autocoscienza*, *affidamento*, *politizzazione*—the personal as political), her plays, though addressing women of all ages, nevertheless remain bound to themes of marriage, motherhood, domesticity, sexuality. Other areas (career, vocation, choice, leisure) which also contribute to self-knowledge and development, are left unexplored in her theatre. Yet, notes Günsberg, this does not detract from her signal contribution to widening the scope of the feminine voice on the Italian and the international stage.

For its penetrating, lucid observations, its detailed scholarship, its overarching critical approaches to the subject of gender, age, class, feminism, Günsberg's study is a "must read" for students of theatre, cultural, and Italian studies.

VERA F. GOLINI

St. Jerome's University (Waterloo)