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THE LITERARY AND HUMAN LEGACY OF CLARA SERENI

Edited by

Giulia Po DeLisle, Susan Briziarelli

8) Si chiama "passa giovane" e volta
distanza le gambe sul canale, e ven
de il mondo ma ne fa meno ter
to di quello che è. Si chiama "frania
giovane" ogni nuovo passo avanti
della civiltà. Si chiama "passa gio
vane" le decisioni di procacciare per
gli altri, avendo, come unico beneficio
personale, la coscienza di aver fatto il
proprio dovere di individuo.
Per questo è il contenuto
di tutto questo, ma la rifiutiamo.

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The Literary and Human Legacy of Clara Sereni

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About the editors

Susan Briziarelli is currently Associate Provost of Faculty Support and Global Affairs and Associate Professor of Italian at Adelphi University, New York. She earned her undergraduate degree in Italian at Rutgers University and her Ph.D. in Italian Literature at Yale University. Her research interests are in the area of twentieth-century women writers, with publications on Elsa Morante and Grazia Deledda. She has also published on Italo Calvino and the detective fiction of Leonardo Sciascia. She is a co-translator, with Giovana Miceli Jeffries, of Clara Sereni's 'Casalinghitudine' ('Keeping House').

Giulia Po DeLisle is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Italian Language and Culture at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Her fields of interest include Women's Studies, Motherhood Studies, Life Writing, Contemporary Italian Literature, and Italian Cinema. She has worked extensively on Clara Sereni and is the author of 'Scrivere la diversità: autobiografia e politica in Clara Sereni' (Cesati, 2012). She is co-editor with Eugenia Paulicelli of the special issue of the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* dedicated to 'Film, Fashion, Costume in Italy and Beyond' (13:1-2, 2025), and with Laura Lazzari of 'Unmasking (New) Maternal Realities. Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum in Global Literature, Cinema, and Media' (Palgrave, 2025). She has published articles on abortion in Italy (Palgrave, 2022) and on Italian women filmmakers Cristina Comencini and Alina Marazzi (*Forum Italicum*, 2018), Rossella Schillaci (Palgrave, 2021) and Susanna Nicchiarelli (Vecchiarelli Editore, 2022).

Summary

Clara Sereni lived an extraordinary life in extraordinary times. Born in Rome in 1946, she grew up in a prominent family of Jewish intellectuals whose influential role in Italian politics and in the anti-fascist resistance could not but inform Sereni's own future social and political engagement. Coming of age during the turbulent Sixties, Sereni embraced the struggle for women's rights, social justice, and political reform, championing Eduardo Galeano's notion that utopia always stands at the horizon, and one must keep walking to reach it.

Activist, journalist, writer, translator, but also musician, disability rights champion, home-maker, and wife; her multiple and often conflicting roles emerge in a rich and multifaceted writing, increasingly balanced between the public and the private, history with a capital "H", and personal memoir.

Her first major success, 'Casalinghitudine (Keeping House)', explores the juncture of the public and the personal as important historical moments merge with her workaday memories of cooking. Her remarkable historical novel 'Il Gioco dei Regni (The Game of Kingdoms)' traces her family history from the early 20th century through the post-war period, chronicling their personal lives and their involvement in Italian politics and Jewish intellectual life. Subsequent works such as 'Taccuino di un'ultimista' ('Notebook of a Meek Woman') and 'Passami il sale' ('Pass me the Salt') tackle the difficulties of negotiating life as a political figure, wife, and mother of a disabled son. In works such as 'Eppure' ('And Yet'), 'Le Merendanze' ('Afternoon Snacks') and 'Una storia chiusa' ('A Closed Story'), as well as 'Il lupo mercante' ('The Mongering Wolf') and 'Via Ripetta 155' ('155 Ripetta Street'), she again intertwines private experiences and public circumstances, raising questions related to gender, class, disability, the elderly, and sustainability.

This is the first volume that brings together the critical aspects of Clara Sereni's work, providing a comprehensive view of the writer, the intellectual, the politician, and the woman.

As we reflect on the 20th century, Sereni's long-spanning writing career stands as an important document of its struggles, its conflicts, and, like Sereni herself, its enduring idealism.

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