REFRAMING ITALY

New Trends in Italian Women's Filmmaking

Bernadette Luciano and
Susanna Scarparo

REFRAMING ITALY

Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures

Editorial Board

Íñigo Sánchez-Llama, Series Editor
Brett Bowles
Elena Coda
Paul B. Dixon
Patricia Hart
Gwen Kirkpatrick
Allen G. Wood

Howard Mancing, Consulting Editor
Floyd Merrell, Consulting Editor
Susan Y. Clawson, Production Editor

Associate Editors

French
Jeanette Beer
Paul Benhamou
Willard Bohn
Gerard J. Brault
Thomas Broden
Mary Ann Caws
Glyn P. Norton
Allan H. Pasco
Gerald Prince
Roseann Runte
Ursula Tidd

Italian
Fiora A. Bassanese
Peter Carravetta
Benjamin Lawton
Franco Masciandaro
Anthony Julian Tamburri

Luso-Brazilian
Fred M. Clark
Marta Peixoto
Ricardo da Silveira Lobo Sternberg

Spanish and Spanish American
Maryellen Bieder
Catherine Connor
Ivy A. Corfis
Frederick A. de Armas
Edward Friedman
Charles Ganelin
David T. Gies
Roberto González Echevarría
David K. Herzberger
Emily Hicks
Djelal Kadir
Amy Kaminsky
Lucille Kerr
Howard Mancing
Floyd Merrell
Alberto Moreiras
Randolph D. Pope
Francisco Ruiz Ramón
Elżbieta Skłodowska
Marcia Stephenson
Mario Valdés

PSRL volume 59

REFRAMING ITALY

New Trends in Italian Women's Filmmaking

Bernadette Luciano and
Susanna Scarparo

Purdue University Press
West Lafayette, Indiana

Copyright ©2013 by Purdue University. All rights reserved.

∞ The paper used in this book meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America
Template for interior design by Anita Noble;
template for cover by Heidi Branham.
Cover photo: film clip from *Un'ora sola ti vorrei,* dir. Alina Marazzi, Bartlebyfilm, Venerdi, 2002. Reproduced with permission of the director.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Luciano, Bernadette.
Reframing Italy : new trends in Italian women's filmmaking / Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo.
pages cm. — (Purdue studies in Romance literatures ; v. 59)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Includes filmography.
ISBN 978-1-55753-655-6 (pbk. : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-61249-295-7 (epdf) — ISBN 978-1-61249-296-4 (epub)
1. Women motion picture producers and directors—Italy. 2. Women in the motion picture industry—Italy. 3. Motion pictures—Italy. 4. Women in motion pictures. 5. Motion pictures and women—Italy. I. Scarparo, Susanna, 1970– II. Title.
PN1995.9.W6L73 2013
791.43'6522—dc23 2013021721

Contents

vii **Acknowledgments**

1 Chapter One

Introduction

- **9** Reframing Tradition
- **12** Reframing History
- **16** Reframing Society
- **20** Framing the Industry

23 Chapter Two

The "Girls" Are Watching Us: Reconsidering the Neorealist Child Protagonist

- **25** Re-appropriating Neorealism
- **27** Re-appropriating the Father–Son Relationship: *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*
- **34** Situating Girls in the Neapolitan Cinematic Landscape: *Domenica*
- **40** Impermeable Boundaries for an Island Girl: *L'isola*
- **46** Conclusion

49 Chapter Three

Reconfiguring the Mother–Daughter Relationship

- **51** A Mother's Love: *L'amore di Màrja*
- **55** The White Space of Motherhood: *Lo spazio bianco*
- **59** Searching for a New Language: *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*
- **65** The Political Is Personal: *Un'ora sola ti vorrei, Di madre in figlia,* and *Il terzo occhio*

81 Chapter Four

Reinventing Our Mothers: Gendering History and Memory

- **86** Literary Mothers: *Christine Cristina* and *Poesia che mi guardi*
- **96** Gendering Politics: *Il resto di niente* and *Cosmonauta*
- **106** Reframing Feminism: *Vogliamo anche le rose* and *Ragazze la vita trema*
- **115** Conclusion

117 Chapter Five

Migration and Transnational Mobility

- **119** Relocations and Dislocations: *La stoffa di Veronica, Sidelki,* and *Il mondo addosso*

131 Mobile Encounters: *L'appartamento* and *Come l'ombra*
136 The Fantasy of Racial Mixing: *Bianco e nero* and *Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar*
148 Conclusion: Reconfiguring Home
153 Chapter Six
Women at Work: Negotiating the Contemporary Workplace
157 An Economy in Transition: *Signorina Effe*
164 The Violence of the New Economy: *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*
171 Framing a Precarious World: *Riprendimi*
175 Documentaries by and about Women and Work: *Invisibili* and *Uno virgola due*
185 Conclusion
Framing the Film Industry
195 Appendix
A Conversation with Contemporary Italian Women Filmmakers: Online Supplementary Material
Interviews with Selected Women Filmmakers
196 An Interview with Alina Marazzi
197 An Interview with Antonietta De Lillo
198 An Interview with Costanza Quatriglio
199 An Interview with Francesca Pirani
200 An Interview with Paola Sangiovanni
201 An Interview with Marina Spada
202 Credits
203 Notes
215 Works Cited
233 Filmography
241 Index

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, we thank Italian women directors, who continue to make films despite all odds. We are profoundly indebted to all of those who shared their insights and experiences with us. We are particularly grateful to Francesca Pirani, Alina Marazzi, Antonietta De Lillo, Costanza Quatriglio, Paola Sangiovanni, and Marina Spada, who agreed to discuss their work in the interviews filmed in Rome in December 2010 and to have them included as the digital file that accompanies the book.

The anonymous reviewers of the manuscript engaged carefully and thoughtfully with our work. We thank them for their incisive observations, helpful suggestions, and enthusiasm for the project. We would also like to thank the Libreria del Cinema in Rome, for the stimulating debates that contributed to this book and to their assistance in helping us with source materials. We thank the many friends and colleagues whose generosity, encouragement, and support were invaluable in the writing of the book. Klaus Neumann read the full manuscript and offered insightful comments and invaluable editorial advice, and Gwyn Fox assisted with the index. Martina Migliorini, Stefano d'Amadio, and Francesca Pirani filmed and edited the interviews in Rome. Martina Depentor and Ellen MacRae assisted with the translating and subtitling back in Auckland, and Tim Page contributed his music, countless hours to the production of the video, and assistance with the book cover.

Special thanks also to our research assistants Teresa Tufano and Monica Rogers. Teresa conducted preliminary interviews in Italy, and Monica assisted with the preparation of the manuscript. We are also grateful to everyone at Purdue University Press and PSRL for their enthusiasm and support for the project: special thanks to our editor Elena Coda, to Purdue University Press director Charles Watkinson for his assistance with the video material, and to Susan Clawson for her sharpness and intelligent copyediting.

We are grateful to our respective institutions—The Faculty of Arts and the School of European Languages and Literatures at the University of Auckland and the Faculty of Arts and the School of Languages, Cultures, and Linguistics at Monash University—for the periods of sabbatical and research leave that enabled us to conduct the interviews and research that were fundamental for the book.

Parts of Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 were published as "Costanza Quatriglio: In Search of the Invisible," *Studies in European Cinema* 8.2 (2011): 115–27; "'I bambini si guardano': The Documentaries of Costanza Quatriglio," *Studies in Documentary Film* [P], (Bristol, UK: Intellect) 5.2–3 (2011): 183–96; "The Personal Is Still Political: Films 'by and for Women' by the New *Documentariste*," *Italica* 87.3 (2010): 488–500; "'Vite sospese': Representing Female Migration in Contemporary Italian Documentaries," *Italian Studies* 65.2 (July 2010): 192–203, http://www.maney.co.uk/journals/its, and http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/its; "Gendering Gendering Mobility and Migration in Contemporary Italian Cinema," *The Italianist* 30 (2010): 165–82. We thank these journals for their permission to include content from these articles.

Finally, we wish to thank Steele Burrow and Klaus Neumann for being on call for emergency readings and consultations in the gestation of the book, and we thank our sons, Alexander Luciano Burrow and Claudio Scarparo Neumann, for patiently enduring our endless cross-Tasman conversations. We thank you also for accompanying us to Rome during our periods of research and writing and sharing with us the excitement and challenges of life in Italy.

Chapter One

Introduction

On the eve of International Women's Day 2010, Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to win an Oscar for Best Director for her Iraq war drama *The Hurt Locker*. Announcing the winner, Barbra Streisand exclaimed, "the time has come" (qtd. in Quinn 1), implying that women had finally broken through the celluloid ceiling. Only the third woman ever to be nominated for an Oscar in the Best Director category, Bigelow eludes and rejects the designation of woman filmmaker. As a pioneer in the male-dominated world of action movies, she likes to think of herself "as a filmmaker rather than as a female filmmaker" (Weaver). At the same time she acknowledges the obstacles faced by women filmmakers and indeed all women professionals:

> There's really no difference between what I do and what a male filmmaker might do. [...] We all try to give the best performances we can, we try to make our budget, we try to make the best movie we possibly can. So in that sense it's very similar. On the other hand, I think the journey for women, no matter what venue it is—politics, business, film—it's a long journey. (CBS/AP)

When in 2007 Jane Campion joined fellow winners on the stage at Cannes, her producer observed, "You saw everyone who won a Palme D'Or up on the stage, and there was one woman," one in a "sea of men."[1] When Campion had won the Palme D'Or at Cannes in 1993 for *The Piano*, many then, as in 2010, had thought that it was a watershed moment for women directors. But there is no magic wand that could reconfigure the industry: all of the films in competition for the Palme D'Or at the 2012 Cannes film festival were directed by men. Then, there was widespread protest against the absence of female filmmakers in competition

at Cannes; for example, a letter published in *Le Monde* and signed by leading women filmmakers lamented that "men love depth in women, but only in their cleavage" (Allen). In his response, the chair of the committee responsible for the selection, Thierry Fremaux, referred to the "lack of female directing talent" (Allen).

The controversy surrounding Cannes in 2012 demonstrates that although women are making more films than ever before, it is still difficult for them to gain the level of recognition their male counterparts enjoy (Levitin, Plessis, and Raoul 26). As Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis, and Valerie Raoul argue, while statistics highlight an increase in women making films internationally, the numbers can be deceiving; many women filmmakers have only managed to make one film and have struggled to secure funding, particularly for major projects (10). According to Martha Lauzen, "In 2012, women comprised 18% of all directors, executive producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films" (Lauzen 1). Of these, only 9% directed the top 250 films. This means that 89% of these films "had no female directors" (Lauzen 1). Lauzen also points out that "Not one woman has ever been hired to direct an event picture with a budget of more than $100 million—the kind of film most valued by the Hollywood machine" (qtd. in Abramowitz).

The situation in Italy is much the same. As Paola Randi, a promising young award-winning Italian director, argues, the major obstacle faced by women filmmakers is the industry's lack of trust. The all-powerful (and predominantly male) producers do not believe that women are capable of managing a sizable budget or a large film crew, and for this reason do not entrust them with major projects destined for a large mainstream audience (Randi). Deborah Young, a renowned film critic and the only female director of an important Italian film festival, confirms Randi's statement:

> There is a certain amount of truth to the fact that entrusting women with a position of power and spending money and having influence […] there is still something cultural that doesn't really like that, there is something cultural there that is against it. And in spite of the fact that Italy had a strong political movement, probably stronger than in America […] somehow feminism has never made the practical inroads that one would imagine […] you know a Western European country, a wealthy

> country, full of money and yet somehow women are not seen as leaders […] to be a leader you have to be really very strong and you have to have a lot of connections and somehow women in this country, they lack either one or the other. (Interview)

The Italian National Institute of Statistics reports that the number of women directors in Italy has increased significantly, with women representing 20% of the profession (30% if assistant directors are included), but women still need to prove themselves. Francesca Archibugi speaks for herself but also for other women filmmakers: "Quando sei una donna tendono sempre ad accorciarti la statura, rispetto ad un regista maschio. Cioè prima di riconoscerti uno status di persona che ha delle cose da dire, devi faticare di più" ("When you're a woman they always tend to cut you down, compared with a male director. That is, before they'll recognize your status as a person who has things to say, you have to work harder") (Mascherini 172).[2]

The attitudes of producers are shared by male directors, regardless of their generation. For example, when asked why there are so few women directors, Marco Limberti, born in 1969, suggested that genetically women are not suited to the role:

> Io trovo che nel dna della donna c'è qualcosa che fa sì che le donne siano più indicate a fare certi mestieri […]. L'aiuto regista è un incarico che la donna svolge molte bene, produzione in generale […] Le registe donne però salvo qualche rarissima eccezione non sono gran che adatte, però questo non toglie niente, perché se ce li smistiamo bene gli incarichi fa sì che ognuno lavori meglio nel ruolo che sta facendo. (Mascherini 174)

> I find that in women's DNA there's something that makes them more suited to certain professions […] Assistant director is a role that women perform very well, that's true of production roles in general. […] As directors however, apart from some extremely rare cases, women are not very well suited, but that's not a problem, because if we delegate the tasks appropriately everyone works better in the role they're carrying out.

Women filmmakers have also been the victims of film studies, which "tends to ignore or omit women's films—not consciously, but because the theory that informs the discipline is still largely only concerned with male filmmakers" (Martin 29). In Italy even

successful women directors have been marginalized both by film critics and in histories of Italian cinema. Women have been overlooked throughout the history of Italian cinema, although since its early days they have been involved in directing, producing, writing, and acting. But, as Monica Dall'Asta suggests, "il clima misoginista nel quale si trovavano ad operare […] non contribuì certo a creare le condizioni ideali perché i loro talenti potessero esprimersi ed essere pubblicamente riconosciuti" ("the misogynist climate in which they found themselves operating […] certainly didn't help create ideal conditions which would allow their talents to be expressed and be publicly recognized") ("L'altra metà" 10).

The case of Francesca Bertini exemplifies how women's contributions, particularly as directors or co-directors, have often been disguised. As a diva, Bertini enjoyed public acclaim. However, despite the major part she played in directing her films, her name was never associated with that role (Dall'Asta, "Il singolare" 63). In her recent book, *Non solo dive: pioniere del cinema italiano*, Dall'Asta argues that in her days Bertini was probably the most powerful woman in the Italian film industry, more powerful than the majority of men in the sector. She was involved in the selection of actors and narratives, and made decisions about technical issues, editing, and publicity (Dall'Asta, "Il singolare" 63).[3] She lamented that Bertini was never acknowledged for her contribution to the "invention" of neorealism, even though she had been a driving force behind *Assunta Spina*. Bertini's claims were confirmed by *Assunta Spina*'s (acknowledged) director, Gustavo Serena. In an interview with Vittorio Martinelli, he recounts that Bertini was

> così esaltata dal fatto di interpretare la parte di Assunta Spina, che era diventata un vulcano di idee, di iniziative, di suggerimenti. In perfetto dialetto napoletano, organizzava, comandava, spostava le comparse, il punto di vista, l'angolazione della macchina da presa; e se non era convinta di una scena, pretendeva di rifarla secondo le sue vedute. (qtd. in Martinelli, *Il cinema* 56)

> so happy about playing the role of Assunta Spina, that she became a volcano of ideas, of initiatives, of suggestions. Speaking in perfect Neapolitan dialect, she organized, she commanded, she rearranged the extras, the point of view, the camera angle; and if she wasn't convinced by a scene, she expected it to be redone according to her views.

Bertini herself thought that the history of Italian cinema, which had left her out, ought to be rewritten in its entirety (Dall'Asta, "Il singolare" 70). Her call for a different history has largely remained unanswered. As recently as 2009, Gian Piero Brunetta, Italy's most respected film historian, made no mention of Bertini's extensive contributions nor of those of Elvira Notari, the first and most prolific Italian woman director (Brunetta). The brilliant work of scholars such as Giuliana Bruno, who wrote the first monograph about Notari's extraordinary career as director, producer, and founder of her own production and distribution company, has done little to change the fact that the history of Italian cinema continues to marginalize films made by women.[4] Women's contributions to Italian cinema, when acknowledged, are presented in much the same way in which women writers have traditionally been represented in histories of Italian literature, as the authors of minor or minority works. Women filmmakers are either discussed as a marginal group or as isolated cases; the history of Italian cinema is supposedly about fathers and sons, with occasional exceptions that prove the ostensibly universal (male) norm.[5] For example, in a section titled "Fathers, Sons, and Nephews," in which Brunetta discusses cinema from the boom years to the years of terrorism, he refers to significant contributions by Liliana Cavani and Lina Wertmüller, who, however, remain invisible in the heading.

With *Reframing Italy* we are responding to Bertini's challenge to rewrite the history of Italian cinema. We thereby follow in the footsteps of a growing number of scholars who have attempted to correct the misconception that, a few exceptions aside, women generally do not make films. Since 2000, there have been monographs and edited collections about Mexican, African, French, German, Middle Eastern, and Arab women filmmakers, about women filmmakers in early Hollywood, and about experimental filmmaking by women. Although there are chapters in English-language histories of Italian film and scholarly articles about some of the more widely recognized contemporary women filmmakers, such as Cristina Comencini, Francesca Comencini, Roberta Torre, and Francesca Archibugi, no monograph has been dedicated to the work of this new generation of filmmakers and their significant oeuvre. Written for an English-speaking public, *Reframing Italy* fills a major gap both in cinema studies and in studies of cinema's engagement with contemporary Italian society.

Although our study does not assume any essential differences between men and women, it highlights the ways in which women's experiences and relationships to society and history affect their filmmaking. The films that we discuss range from more experimental documentaries to mainstream features directed at a wider audience; yet *Reframing Italy* is not intended to provide a panoramic overview, which explains the absence of analyses of films by notable directors such as Sabina Guzzanti and Roberta Torre. Rather, this book is a thematically based analysis supported by case studies. We argue that the filmmakers we discuss foreground women's perspectives. Many of our subjects are aware of the difficult position they occupy as women making films; however, the Italian women filmmakers of the new generation rarely identify with feminism, which they see as something belonging to a previous generation of Italian women. This attitude toward a feminism that is being conflated with the women's liberation movement is consonant with attitudes in other Western countries, in which postfeminist discourses have become the dominant framework in discussions about gender. As Elana Levine observes, "'Postfeminist culture takes feminism for granted, assuming that the movement's successes have obviated the need for its continuation" (138).

Unresolved tensions with feminism emerged repeatedly in our conversations with women directors. Antonietta De Lillo, for instance, while aware of the women's movement's significance, would not define her awareness as feminist:

> Essere donna mi ha creato del disagio nel sentire il disagio altrui. Relazionarmi con una difficoltà dell'altro, non mia. Il femminismo, io ero troppo giovane per averlo vissuto. Anzi da giovane io lo vedevo come aggressivo, anche anti-femminile, invece poi penso che hanno avuto un gran ruolo. (Interview with Scarparo)
>
> Being a woman has created an uneasiness in me, in sensing the uneasiness of others. To relate to someone else's hardship, not my own. Feminism, I was too young to have lived through it. In fact, when I was young I saw it as aggressive, even anti-feminine, but now I think that they played an important role.

Discussing *Di madre in figlia* (*From Mother to Daughter*, 2004), Fabiana Sargentini holds feminism's theoretical and detached approach to understanding life responsible for her reservations about

it. Although she appreciates feminism's benefits and influence, she sees it as something belonging to the past and not to her present:

> Hai detto "femminista" e va benissimo, però è come se queste cose che abbracciano di più un gruppo, teoriche, e che sono state necessarie in un momento storico, escono fuori ed esistono in me, e anche nelle mie storie, come una cosa vissuta, interna, […] come un materiale che in qualche modo ti ha cresciuto, ed è dentro la tua carne, e non è però […] come dire, non passa per il cervello, non è intellettualistico, è interno, vissuto, già elaborato, però più con pelle, la pancia, col corpo, col cuore più che con la testa. (Interview with Tufano)
>
> You said feminist and that's great, but it's as if these things embraced by a theoretical group and that were necessary in a historical moment, come out and exist in me, and also in my stories, like something lived, internal, […] like a subject that has formed you, and is inside your flesh, but it's not… how can I explain it, it's not filtered by the brain, it's not intellectual, it's visceral, lived, already worked out, but felt more on your skin, in your stomach, in your body, with your heart rather than your head.

Alina Marazzi, who made *Vogliamo anche le rose (We Want Roses Too*, 2007*)* to understand and engage with the legacy of the women's liberation movement, feels she has benefited from feminism but is not part of it:

> Quando sono cresciuta io quella fase del femminismo pubblico in Italia era già finito. Magari per motivi di studio ti trovavi a leggere un libro, ma sono circuiti abbastanza chiusi in Italia. Io ho vissuto cinque anni a Londra e quando sono tornata negli anni ottanta quella roba non era molto accessibile. Sicuramente sono figlia di quella generazione, e quindi anche il fatto che abbia potuto accedere a questo tipo di lavoro, che abbia anche pensato di poter fare film significa che comunque le condizioni erano date perché io potessi fare una libera scelta. (Interview with Scarparo)
>
> When I grew up, that phase of public feminism in Italy was already over. Perhaps you would find yourself reading a book for your studies, but they are fairly closed circles in Italy. I lived in London for five years and when I came back in the eighties that stuff wasn't very accessible. I'm certainly the daughter of

> that generation, and as a result, the fact that I was also able to get this kind of job, that I had even considered myself capable of making films means the climate at the time made me able to choose freely.

Notwithstanding their complex relationship to feminism, it is useful to view these filmmakers in a perspective framed by feminist theories while recognizing that their works arise out of postfeminism and out of a suspicion of teleological narratives of redemption. They engage with the social conditions of contemporary Italy and with women's multifaceted position within society in ways that would not have been possible without the feminist movement of the 1970s. At the same time their films are intricately bound by a complex relationship to a cinematic tradition that remains highly patriarchal. Hence, our theoretical framework is linked to feminist discourses on the subordinate and subaltern condition of women as producers and as subjects of aesthetic production. Their work, we suggest, suffers from a form of double marginality. Women filmmakers often embody degrees of subordination and marginality within the industry. In addition, when the subject matter of their films focuses on women, many spectators and critics consider their films marginal, accusing them of lacking universal appeal.

The concept of framing is central to the marginalization of women in cinema. Gilles Deleuze defines framing as a system that "*includes everything which is present in the image*—sets, characters and props" (*Cinema 1* 13; italics in original). Within this system, the frame is sometimes "conceived as a dynamic construction in act [*en acte*], which is closely linked to the scene, the image, the characters and the objects which fill it" (14) and is crucial to what Deleuze calls "the angle of framing" (*Cinema 1* 16) and "the out-of field" (*Cinema 1* 17). The angle of framing is an optical system that produces multiple and moving points of view, carefully arranging the elements in the frame, orchestrating their movement and the frame's relationship with its constantly shifting boundaries. "Out-of field" refers to "what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present" and is determined by "a mode of framing" (*Cinema 1* 17). Deleuze builds on André Bazin's earlier argument that the film frame is not a passive container but an active signifier; because the views within the frame are perpetually shifting, the frame's organization of those views is forever in the

process of making new significations. These new significations evoke an out-of field, which testifies to "a more disturbing presence, one which cannot even be said to exist, but rather to 'insist' or 'subsist,' a more radical Elsewhere" (*Cinema 1* 18).

The title of our book, *Reframing Italy*, alludes to this understanding of cinematic framing as an on-going process of creating new meanings that leads to a reframing of contemporary Italy from a female-centered perspective. We consider the notion of reframing on three levels: first, how women filmmakers have reframed cinematic tradition by appropriating and rethinking ways of imagining Italy through realistic cinema and less conventional cinematic modes and by challenging traditional representations of women through female-centered narratives; second, how they have reframed women's history by rendering the history and stories of women and relationships between women visible in the cinematic space; and third, how these filmmakers are addressing pressing social issues through films that reframe Italy by engaging with changing national and transnational contexts from a position of gendered marginality. In the conclusion, we discuss how women directors and women from other professions in the industry are "framing" their relationship to an industry that continues to make it difficult for women to make and distribute films.

Reframing Tradition

The position of "women's cinema" in Italy needs to be understood in terms of the filmmakers' relationship to hegemonic traditions, as women filmmakers are not working in a vacuum but within an established cinematic tradition forged almost entirely by great "fathers." The filmmakers we interviewed, while for the most part sharing Bigelow's rejection of the label of "woman filmmaker," repeatedly attributed the challenges that they faced to their position as women in a male-dominated industry and to the absence of female role models. Marina Spada defines the context in which Italian women live and work:

> Il nostro è un ambiente molto maschilista, come tutti, alla scuola del cinema le insegnanti donne sono meno degli insegnanti uomini, come nelle università, come nel Parlamento [...] e poi, sai, quelle che ci sono mica è detto che siano rappresentative di un modo di pensare al femminile, anzi! E' proprio un modello

> di riferimento, se tu non hai modelli femminili di riferimento, per anni le donne al potere avevano come modelli di riferimento i maschi. (Interview with Tufano)

> Ours is a very chauvinistic environment, like them all. In film school there are fewer women teaching than men, as is the case in universities, in Parliament [...] and then, you know, even the women that are in those positions do not necessarily represent a "woman's" way of thinking! It really is a question of model, if you don't have female role models, for years the women in power had men as role models.

Working across a number of genres, self-reflexive women filmmakers are interrogating the predominantly male cinematic tradition based on male role models, their marginalized position within it, and their identification with the conditions of equally marginalized subjects projected onto the screen.

Women filmmakers' accommodation and appropriation of the realist and neorealist traditions and their cinematic "fathers" is an obvious starting point for our discussion. The shadow of neorealism has loomed large for scholars, critics, filmmakers, and audiences. Subsequent generations of Italian filmmakers have (consciously or subconsciously) regularly tried to re-appropriate and renegotiate neorealist stylistic elements, themes, and mood and to re-engage with neorealism in metacinematic, parodic, or otherwise imitative ways. In Chapter 2 we focus on the appropriation—and indeed subversion—of one of the central tropes of neorealist cinema—the representation of the child against the backdrop of a changing Italian landscape. Filmmakers have returned in multifarious ways to the representation of the child's gaze as something distinct from the adult way of looking at the world. Although the—usually male—child has always been present in Italian cinema, in recent decades there has been a proliferation of films featuring a child protagonist (who, again, is usually male) or a child's point of view. These films often present doubly marginalized figures that force both the adults within the film and the adult spectator to reassess the dominant perspective. We see, for example, the Holocaust (in *La vita è bella / Life Is Beautiful*, 1997), history (in *L'uomo che verrà / The Man Who Will Come*, 2009), or immigration (in *Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti / Once You're Born You Can No Longer Hide*, 2005) through

the eyes of children. Films such as *La guerra di Mario* (*Mario's War*, 2005) and *Le chiavi di casa* (*The Keys to the House*, 2004) feature a child plagued by physical or psychological illness, while Neapolitan street urchin films such as *Certi bambini* (*Certain Children*, 2004) and many of Francesca Archibugi's films self-consciously challenge the notion of childhood innocence.

The woman filmmaker most noted for her representation of children, Francesca Archibugi, has been making films featuring child protagonists surviving in conflicted or dysfunctional familial environments since the late 1980s. Her most recent film, *Questione di cuore* (*A Matter of Heart*, 2009), revisits the landscape of Italian neorealism and pays homage to the Italian and international cinematic traditions that formed her. One of its many subplots deals specifically with the legacy of filmmaking, as the screenwriter protagonist, a surrogate father of sorts, teaches the craft of writing cinematic stories to a young boy.

In their foregrounding of young girls as potentially central figures in the shaping of new Italian landscapes, Wilma Labate, Costanza Quatriglio, and Francesca Comencini have cited and subverted the neorealist tradition. In *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* (*Mobbing*, 2004) Comencini replaces De Sica's father–son relationship with a mother–daughter dynamic. Reworking the style of realism, she creates what Ruby Rich has called realist feminist cinema (283). Establishing a new and subversive perspective through her use of the double camera (the director's hand-held camera and the on-screen surveillance camera) and of the mirror, Comencini's reframing reminds us of how women have been fashioned by the camera, and structures a female-centered relationship connecting director, character, and spectator. Moving beyond the postwar concern about the crisis of patriarchy and the symbolic loss of father figures, she proposes a new cinema for a new national setting.

Similarly, Quatriglio's *L'isola* (*The Island*, 2003), set on the Sicilian island of Favignana and focusing on one year in the life of 10-year-old Teresa and her older brother, Turi, engages with the tradition of neorealist cinema by locating the narrative on the social and geographical margins of Italy. In *L'isola* there are clear references to Luchino Visconti's *La terra trema* (*The Earth Trembles,* 1948) and Roberto Rossellini's *Stromboli, terra di Dio* (*Stromboli,* 1950). Unlike its predecessors, however, *L'isola* uses the perspective of a carefree young girl on the verge of adolescence

to explore the rituals, landscape, and contradictory nature of the island's boundaries.

Labate's *Domenica* (2001), featuring a young orphan girl skillfully negotiating a pulsating Naples, recalls and reinvents the orphan children and urban landscapes depicted in the realist Italian cinematic tradition from neorealism, to Pier Paolo Pasolini, to Gianni Amelio, to the more recent wave of films by Antonio Capuano and his contemporaries that are featuring Neapolitan street children. In *Domenica* the orphan girl emerges as a tough, street-savvy child able to elude institutional-masculine authority.

Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing, *L'isola*, and *Domenica* are set at the beginning of the twenty-first century, have female protagonists who are not yet adults, and share narrative similarities. They are "road" movies of sorts, featuring young women forging their own identities and conditioning others as they traverse changing cinematic and geographic landscapes.

Reframing History

Chapter 3 looks at how women filmmakers, following in the footsteps of Italian women writers, have explored women's private history through the renewed engagement with the mother and the mother–daughter relationship. The films discussed in this chapter suggest new ways of recuperating the mother and different modes of telling women's stories, in some cases through self-reflexive films that deliberately address the spectator as female.

Over the past ten years, a number of documentaries have experimented with different aesthetic modes of engaging with the mother. Our discussion of Alina Marazzi's *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (*For One More Hour with You*, 2002), Sargentini's *Di madre in figlia (From Mother to Daughter,* 2004*)*, and Susanna Nicchiarelli's *Il terzo occhio* (*The Third Eye*, 2003) suggests that the search for the mother and the mother's perspective, which underpins these documentaries, is still a political project informed by the practice of *partire da sé*, whereby the filmmaker takes herself as a starting point in her search for agency and subjectivity.

Marazzi's *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, as the title suggests, is about a daughter's desire to be once again in the company of her deceased mother, if only for an hour. In her carefully constructed and meticulously edited film, Marazzi uses letters, diaries, and medi-

cal records to highlight the contradictions between her mother's troubled life, which ended in suicide, and her grandfather's joyous and serene rendering of that life through home movies. Marazzi ultimately questions the grandfather's (and, in turn, the male filmmaker's) authority through a reworking of his images that reclaims and re-creates the mother from the daughter's point of view.

Unlike the autobiographical and intimate *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, Sargentini's *Di madre in figlia* orchestrates a chorus of voices that reflect multiple and often contradictory perspectives on the mother–daughter relationship. Sargentini juxtaposes and intertwines excerpts from interviews with mothers and daughters of varying ages and social backgrounds, revealing similarities and tensions between them through the discussion of topics such as sexuality, food, clothes, conflicts, and love.

In Nicchiarelli's *Il terzo occhio,* the most self-reflexive of the three documentaries, the mother–daughter relationship is explored through the more overtly self-conscious blurring of the boundary between fact and fiction. This mockumentary is built around a narrative structure that recounts the exchanges between six women in a health spa. In this "esperimento tutto al femminile" ("completely feminine experiment")—as Nicchiarelli labels it—the members of the all-female film crew also become protagonists within the film, highlighting the fact that we are watching a different kind of film, one that is indeed by and for women.

Of the feature films dealing directly with mother–daughter relationships and female genealogies, we discuss Anne Riitta Ciccone's *L'amore di Màrja* (*Màrja's Love*, 2002), Cristina Comencini's *Il più bel giorno della mia vita* (*The Best Day of My Life*, 2002), and Francesca Comencini's *Lo spazio bianco* (*The White Space*, 2009). Framed as a coming of age film about Alice, *L'amore di Màrja* is primarily about the relationships between female subjectivity, transnational movement, and the societal and geographical boundaries that confine women. The love referred to in the title is ultimately the gift that Màrja passes down to her daughters—a desire to resist patriarchal law and an attempt to give legitimacy to the maternal legacy.

Cristina Comencini's *Il più bel giorno della mia vita* focuses on three generations of mothers and daughters: the widowed Irene and her children and grandchildren struggle to make sense of their desires, sexualities, and family roles. Through the gift of a video

camera, the hope for the future and for a new cinematic gaze is left in the hands of young Chiara, who represents the possibility for new configurations of women's stories on screen.

Francesca Comencini's *Lo spazio bianco* shifts the attention from the institution of motherhood and mother–daughter relationships to the complex and intimate account of the experience of bringing a daughter into this world. As her premature baby daughter remains suspended between life and death, Maria's rebirth as a mother is also suspended. In this interim "white space" Maria waits and slowly learns how to make sense of her new identity as a mother vis-à-vis her other multiple identities as a teacher, lover, friend, and independent woman.

In Chapter 4, we move from "stories" to "history," from the exploration of the reappropriation of biological mothers to an interrogation of the ways in which women filmmakers have recuperated their historical and literary mothers. Feminist scholarship in general and women's history in particular have become increasingly interested in biography. Barbara Caine argues that the growing interest in biography among general readers and scholars gave rise to what has been described as a "biographical turn" in the humanities and social sciences. According to Caine, such a turn "involves a new preoccupation with individual lives and stories as a way of understanding both contemporary societies and the whole process of social and historical change" (*Biography* 1).

In the cinema, biography takes the form of various types of biographical films: the Hollywood biopic, the European-style biofilm, as well as experimental works that represent lived lives in a more fragmented and less linear fashion (Rosenstone, *History* 93). The films we discuss in this chapter—Stefania Sandrelli's conventional *Christine Cristina* (2009), De Lillo's more elaborately constructed *Il resto di niente* (*The Remains of Nothing*, 2004), and Nicchiarelli's coming-of-age historical drama *Cosmonauta* (*Cosmonaut*, 2009)—can be loosely linked to all of these categories. We expand the discussion of historical films by analyzing documentaries that focus on the lives of individuals, such as Antonia Pozzi in Spada's *Poesia che mi guardi* (*Poetry That Watches Me*, 2009), the four protagonists in Paola Sangiovanni's *Ragazze la vita trema* (*Girls, Life Is Trembling*, 2009), and the three diarists in Marazzi's experimental *Vogliamo anche le rose* (*We Want Roses Too,* 2007).

Sandrelli and Spada utilize the biographical film to re-inscribe literary mothers—Christine de Pisan and Antonia Pozzi,

respectively—into the Italian tradition. Sandrelli uses Christine's story as an example of female achievement that resonates in the present, aligning her with the tradition of feminist biography. Although her film conforms to mainstream cinematic practices, it also attempts to construct the writer and philosopher Christine de Pisan as a kind of everywoman: a mother trying to protect her children and to survive, as well as a woman who displays solidarity for other women.

Attempting to reconstruct and bring into the present the long-forgotten poet Pozzi, Spada's *Poesia che mi guardi* constructs a fictional character, the filmmaker Maria (whose name recalls Spada's own, Marina), who reads Pozzi's poems, visits the places dear to the poet, and introduces her works to young street poets. Through the autobiographical character of Maria, Spada establishes relationships between the past and the present and between the poet and the filmmaker. Like Christine de Pisan, Pozzi becomes a literary mother for Italian women in the present.[6]

De Lillo and Nicchiarelli use the biographical and the coming-of-age film to rethink Italian political history from a gendered perspective. De Lillo reinterprets the Neapolitan Revolution in light of Eleonora Fonseca's story. Through the representation of a marginal and inauspicious episode from the past told from the point of view of a marginalized female character, the film reclaims Fonseca as a historical and cinematic subject.

Nicchiarelli's first fiction film, *Cosmonauta,* also foregrounds the relationship between public and private and the gendered politics of revolutionary change.[7] Nicchiarelli places a fictional young woman at the center of a narrative that reconfigures and reframes the history of Italian Communism. In the narrative, the fictional coming-of-age account of Luciana as a communist intersects with her interest in the first woman in space, the Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova. Through its often comedic representation of family, community, and political hierarchies, the film casts a critical eye on the many obstacles that women faced in the "revolutionary" 1960s.

Whereas Sandrelli, Spada, De Lillo, and Nicchiarelli inscribe women into Italian literary and political history by reframing the perspective of individual women who struggled alone with societal constraints, Marazzi and Sangiovanni re-invent the tumultuous and complex history of the 1960s and 1970s by placing the women's liberation movement at the center of their narratives. Marazzi's

and Sangiovanni's films, with different degrees of self-reflexivity, create a dialogue between public and private, between story and history. Both use the documentary to focus on the construction of memory and of historical narratives, making editing and cinematic artifice part of the narrative.

Marazzi juxtaposes excerpts from the diaries of three women from different geographical, cultural, and social milieus with period photographs, picture stories, home movies, television footage, experimental films, advertisements, music, and animation. The images and the diaries comment on each other, often ironically, by way of allusion, inference, synecdoche, and metaphor. Marazzi's desire to reconfigure, recodify, and demystify official history calls for a shift from a representational to a self-reflexive documentary style through which the discourses of documentary and history unsettle each other.

Sangiovanni constructs her documentary around the stories of four women, also from diverse backgrounds. First-person narratives of the protagonists' growing awareness of themselves as gendered subjects accompany memories of their involvement in demonstrations and campaigns on divorce, abortion, and violence against women. Unlike the more experimental *Vogliamo anche le rose*, *Ragazze* uses archival images to link the women's stories and construct a linear narrative with clear connections between images and events. Whereas Marazzi constructs historical meanings through juxtaposition, irony, and allusion, Sangiovanni elicits emotional understanding through a more explicit attempt to illustrate the process of remembering in the making of history.

Remembering women's contribution to history, as well as creating and re-creating women's history, rests on the missing female perspective that lies at the core of all these works. Without being able to draw on what Spada has called "modelli femminili di riferimento" ("female role models"), these filmmakers show how women have appropriated the camera and reframed history, thus creating a place for women's stories.

Reframing Society

In this section we look at the encounter between contemporary cinema and two topical issues: immigration and precarious labor. Chapter 5 addresses transnational mobility and migration through

a discussion of documentaries and fiction films that foreground the complexities of the migration experience. A distinction needs to be made, however, between the fiction films, which are primarily interested in imagining ways in which Italians make sense of their new national landscape, and a large number of documentaries that have attempted, particularly within the last ten years, to draw attention to the difficulties and specificities of transnational mobility and migration experiences in Italy.[8]

The chapter begins with a discussion of documentaries that challenge widespread media and public discourses on migrants, which customarily portray them as dehumanized criminals. In this chapter, we turn to three documentaries, *Sidelki/Badanti* (*Caregivers*, 2005) by Katia Bernardi, *La stoffa di Veronica* (*Veronica's Thread*, 2005) by Emma Rossi Landi and Flavia Pasquini, and *Il mondo addosso* (*The Weight of the World*, 2006) by Costanza Quatriglio, which pay attention to the specificity of each individual migrant and his or her story. This interest in individual lives underpins the ethics, aesthetic, and politics of these films.

Despite their difference in terms of style, narrative structure, and content, the documentaries discussed in this chapter engage directly with the challenges presented by new transnational forms of mobility. *La stoffa di Veronica* focuses on a 38-year-old Romanian woman who is serving an eight-year jail sentence in Venice for human trafficking, but who refuses to see herself as a "criminal" in need of rehabilitation. The documentary focuses on her talent and creativity; the word *stoffa* in the title holds a double meaning, cloth (referring to the dresses sewn by the prisoner) and talent. *Sidelki* and *Il mondo addosso*, by contrast, are choral documentaries, with a multidimensional approach to the representation of the experience of women and unaccompanied minors. *Sidelki* explores the motivations behind the radical choices made by the women interviewed and the emotional impact of their migration experiences. Similarly, *Il mondo addosso* foregrounds the personal experience of child migration and focuses on the problems and challenges facing unaccompanied minors who arrive in Italy from countries such as Romania, Moldavia, and Afghanistan. The emotional trauma depicted in this film is specific to migrants of this age group who occupy a particularly vulnerable and lonely position.

We follow the analysis of the documentaries with a discussion of fiction films that shift the attention from specific migration

experiences to encounters between migrants and Italians. We take Francesca Pirani's *L'appartamento* (*The Apartment*, 1997), which was one of the first films to explore the new phenomenon of migration to Italy, as a point of departure for a close examination of more recent dramatic and comic films: Spada's *Come l'ombra* (*As the Shadow*, 2006), Cristina Comencini's *Bianco e nero* (*Black and White*, 2008), and Laura Muscardin's *Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar* (*Billo*, 2008).

L'appartamento claims a provisional space for migrants in a multiethnic national landscape. In the film, however, this space for difference within the confines of an apartment surrounded by hostile Italians is only a temporary haven for the protagonists. Spada's *Come l'ombra* focuses on the friendship between a Milanese woman and a newly arrived Ukrainian immigrant. The latter is a figure problematized by both history and cinema and her portrayal corresponds to what Àine O'Healy sees as ambivalent and even contradictory visual strategies in representations of women in the Italian cinema of migration: "the woman is configured by the logic of the gaze as both innocent victim and alluring erotic object" (O'Healy, "Border Traffic" 41). Comedies such as *Bianco e nero* and *Billo* endeavor to expose social and racial stereotypes as outmoded, using such assumptions as a pretext for a comic critique of Italian society. Comencini's *Bianco e nero*, which revolves around a passionate affair between a Senegalese woman and an Italian man, is the first mainstream Italian film to feature interracial romance. Unlike the other feature films explored in this section, Muscardin's *Billo* devotes almost the same amount of time to the protagonist's country of origin as to Italy, his host country. The film depicts the migrant experience through visual representations of the protagonist's relationship with both cultures. Like *L'appartamento*, these three films, while seemingly taking for granted the presence of migrants in the new multiethnic Italy, provoke reflection on the marginalization or incorporation of threatening and threatened "others."

Chapter 6 focuses on another social issue that has become a dominant preoccupation in Italian cinema: the new postindustrial economy and precariousness. A term of widespread use in Europe and other postindustrial societies, *precariousness* has come to refer to the condition of unstable work, sometimes called "flexible" or casual work, that has been the product of neoliberal labor market

reforms dating back to the late 1970s, which have strengthened the managing and bargaining power of employers.

In this chapter we focus on three recent films to highlight the tensions and contradictions of women's position in a postfeminist "feminized" labor market, which claims to place a high premium on female values yet renders the workplace increasingly inaccessible and unsustainable for women. Wilma Labate's *Signorina Effe* (*Miss F*, 2007), Francesca Comencini's *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*, and Anna Negri's *Riprendimi* (*Good Morning, Heartache*, 2008) rely on documentary techniques to call attention to the relationship that their narratives and protagonists bear to reality. Labate's retrospective *Signorina Effe*, in addition to being a film that looks back at a watershed moment in Italian labor history, is also a stark reminder of changing working conditions that resulted in society's failure to provide educated women with the kinds of roles that their feminist mothers had fought for. Francesca Comencini's *Mobbing* is a condemnation of an economic system that renders the working life incompatible with the private life and isolates, divides, and conquers women who are supposedly protected by laws that recognize and respond to the demands that family responsibilities place on working women. Finally, Negri's *Riprendimi* adopts a film-within-a-film strategy to look at the pressure that unreliable work and day-to-day existence have on the lives of workers in the film industry, historically a precarious industry par excellence. The film describes a society in which precariousness, even when it facilitates flexibility, has negative outcomes and results in a "precariousness in life" that disrupts and threatens personal relationships.

In addition to feature films, there have been many documentaries on women and the workplace. Silvia Ferreri's *Uno virgola due* (*One Point Two*, 2005) and Tania Pedroni's *Invisibili* (*Invisible*, 2002), for example, are about the discrimination suffered in the workplace by working mothers who have struggled to keep their jobs and to negotiate public and private roles. These documentaries reflect on the same issues that emerge in the feature films we discuss. Notably, the "mobbing" (workplace harassment) that women are often subjected to when they attempt to reconcile motherhood and work is a major theme of Ferreri's film, whereas the problematic reality of "flexibility" is central to Pedroni's documentary. All the films discussed in this chapter adopt a gendered

perspective that draws attention to the prevailing, yet often veiled, prejudices against women in the workplace, where they continue to come up against a long tradition according to which motherhood and a presence in the public sphere are incompatible.

Framing the Industry

In the concluding chapter we once more celebrate the achievements of Italian women filmmakers and assess the problematic situation of women working in the Italian film industry. Expanding our discussion to include women working in other sectors of the industry, we explore the connections between social conditions, the state of the film industry, and women's cinematographic practice. There is a tragic paradox at work in Italy today: during a decade in which Italian cinema was recognized for its new and innovative filmmakers, it became increasingly difficult for these filmmakers to actually make films. Silvio Berlusconi's 2011 budget cut Italy's single arts fund, the Fondo Unico dello Spettacolo (FUS), to its lowest level in twenty years.[9] Berlusconi also threatened to cut the tax incentives (tax credits and tax shelters) that many filmmakers have come to rely on to make their films.[10] At the opening of the 2010 Rome Film Festival, over 1,000 actors, directors, producers, and other film professionals invaded the red carpet and embarked on numerous other protest activities to draw attention to the damage the government was inflicting on the industry. The protesters attracted international attention and won support from cinema professionals worldwide. Production and distribution are also limited because the majority of films in circulation are produced by the television duopoly, Medusa and Rai Cinema (Ghelli 20). It is therefore difficult to engage in "un cinema critico e differenziato, che racconti i tanti volti del paese, liberandosi dell'imperativo commedico" ("a critical and diverse cinema, which speaks about the many faces of the country, freeing itself from the comedic imperative") (De Vincenti 5).

Considered against this backdrop, the fact that women have managed to make the films discussed in this book is nothing short of a miracle. Although the lack of government support and the problems of achieving widespread distribution affect all filmmakers, women are still in a more disadvantaged position,

struggling in a male-dominated industry that fails to entrust them with aesthetic and managerial power and a society and media that propagate stereotyped roles. Partially for these reasons, women filmmakers are slowly beginning to re-engage with central tenets of Italian feminism. They are self-consciously rethinking their position as they resist the models that have traditionally conditioned the female filmmaker, the female subject on screen, and the female spectator. As the case studies in this book show, contemporary women filmmakers, through a range of filmic styles, strategies, and practices, are launching a political critique of patriarchal attitudes and institutions that oppose change and are complicit in making it difficult, even in the twenty-first century, for women's films to be made and distributed.

Chapter Two

The "Girls" Are Watching Us

Reconsidering the Neorealist Child Protagonist

In the absence of female role models, contemporary Italian women filmmakers have found aesthetic models in the hegemonic cinematic tradition. Francesca Archibugi openly admits that her style has been directly influenced by her cinematic "fathers": "Mi vedo come la pronipote del neorealismo, la nipote della commedia all'italiana e la figlia dei nuovi anni 70" ("I see myself as the great-granddaughter of neorealism, the granddaughter of Italian comedy and the daughter of the new cinema of the 1970s") (Levantesi 25). Within the narratives of several of her films she refers to the cinematic tradition (Vigni 170); her latest film, *Questione di cuore*, pays direct homage to cinema past and present through cameo appearances by directors and actors, and by re-inhabiting the transformed Roman landscapes immortalized in the films of Rossellini, Visconti, Pasolini, and others (Vigni 170–71). In *Questione di cuore*, as in most of Archibugi's films, it falls to a child to highlight conflicted or dysfunctional familial environments,[1] but in this film the child is also positioned as the inheritor of the cinematic gaze. One subplot features the legacy of filmmaking, as one of the main protagonists teaches the craft of writing cinematic stories to a young boy. Archibugi is not alone in her open acknowledgment of the male cinematic tradition. In a recent article, Giovanna Taviani, filmmaker in her own right and daughter of one of the famed Taviani brothers, notes the desire among young filmmakers to re-engage with the realist and documentary style of the cinema of the past:

> Il "vedere," il "testimoniare," il "documentare" rientrano a far parte dell'immaginario […] il mondo artefatto della fiction cede il passo alla bruta materialità dell'esperienza […], e questa nega il primo grande assunto del postmoderno: la fine dell'esperienza

> e l'annullamento della realtà in finzione. Il reale *c'è* e costringe a fare i conti con le cose, non solo con le parole. Cambiano i canoni di rappresentazione, cambiano i modelli di riferimento. L'ultima generazione di cineasti torna a interrogarsi sul valore del realismo e del grande cinema del dopoguerra. Rilegge De Sica e Visconti attraverso Antonioni, ma anche attraverso Bresson e i Dardenne; torna a Rossellini attraverso Scorsese e il primo Pasolini [...]. Tenta di riallacciare il filo con i Padri, a lungo rifiutati o rimossi dalle generazioni più giovani. (111–12)

> Seeing, witnessing, documenting become once again part of the imaginary [...] the affected world of fiction gives way to the raw materiality of experience [...], and this negates one of the central assumptions of the postmodern: the end of experience and the erasure of reality in fiction. Reality exists and forces us to reconsider the things around us, not just the words. The canons of representation change, role models change. The current generation of filmmakers reconsiders the value of realism and of the great post-war cinema. They reread De Sica and Visconti, through Antonioni but also through Bresson and the Dardennes; they return to Rossellini via Scorsese and Pasolini [...]. They try to reconnect with the Fathers from whom previous generations had attempted to cut themselves off.

Archibugi's and Taviani's heralding of a new cinema, created by filmmakers strongly linked to a cinematic tradition and interested in interrogating reality through a self-reflexive reconsideration of their "fathers," is a useful starting point for the reading of films by contemporary women filmmakers. In this chapter, whose title references Vittorio De Sica's neorealist classic, we focus on three films—Francesca Comencini's *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* (2004), Labate's *Domenica* (2001), and Quatriglio's *L'isola* (2003)—that engage with the realist tradition by drawing attention to the relationship between fiction and the material world. These films reconsider the child protagonist. They also re-inhabit the landscape and question contemporary daily life via strategies inherited from Italian neorealism and other cinematic realisms. They serve as examples of how women directors have appropriated a neorealist tradition that sidelined women and girls and have carved out a space for women in cinema while problematizing the possibility of positive futures for young girls in the real world.

Re-appropriating Neorealism

André Bazin, one of the foremost critics of the time, defined neorealism as a cinema of fact or reconstituted reportage. There have been numerous and sometimes contradictory subsequent attempts to identify neorealism's characteristics. Generations of Italian filmmakers have (consciously or subconsciously) regularly returned to re-appropriate and renegotiate neorealist stylistic elements, themes, and moods and to re-engage with those films in metacinematic, parodic, or otherwise imitative ways. Neorealism's shadow has extended beyond Italy. As many contributors to a recent study on neorealism and global cinema suggest, the similarities between the historical and ideological context of Italy between the mid-1940s and the 1950s and that of today may explain the popularity of neorealism among contemporary politically committed filmmakers, Italians and non-Italians.[2] The neorealist themes (real-life stories of working class and "ordinary" people), the broader social historical context, the forms of production (use of real locations, non-actors, and "authentic" participants), and experimental realist aesthetics have been considered critical elements inspiring political filmmaking worldwide (Traverso 170).

From a stylistic perspective, neorealist films have been associated with the use of nonprofessional actors, on-location shooting, simple, improvised scripts, long takes, and diegetic sound. Critics have defined neorealism as a socially engaged or political cinema committed to exploring the war and postwar periods and the pressing social problems of the time while delivering a message of solidarity with oppressed classes and victimized individuals (Marcus 22). Gilles Deleuze argues that what defines neorealism is not content or filmic technique, but a new cinematic construct, a "time-image" that is distinct from the sensory motor situations of the action-image of earlier cinematic realisms (*Cinema 2* 2). The time-image suggests the uncertain and unpredictable nature of the cinematic situation, a wandering approach that moves away from traditional narrative conflict. (*Cinema 1* 200–05; Fisher 27)

The relationship between the characters and the landscape, that is, how the character looks at and experiences the world while meandering through it, is an integral element of neorealist cinema and is rendered often through deep focus compositions in long takes that give the impression of spatial realism (Wood 89). The

ambulatory, aimless movement central to these narratives explains the crucial role of the child in neorealist cinema, since "in the adult world, the child is affected by a certain motor helplessness, but one which makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 3).

The child "as a window to another, less familiar, way of exploring and viewing the social landscape" (Landy, *Italian Film* 234) has played a major role in Italian cinema. The gaze of the child has ranged from that of witness, innocence, hope, comprehension, and compassion to disillusion and recognition of the impossibility of change. Children have also frequently been symbols for the possibility of individual, social, national, and familial regeneration (Wood 177). In Italian neorealist films the child is often represented in one or more of these alternative perspectives and is usually, not surprisingly, a boy, who is often coupled with a father figure. In a cinematic tradition that was looking to create a new cinema for an alternative Italy, the father–son dynamic provided fertile ground. In a landscape of absent, dead, or ineffectual fathers, boys are left to carry the nation forward at the end of many neorealist films (*Roma città aperta / Rome Open City*; *Paisà/Paisan; Ladri di biciclette / Bicycle Thieves*). As Laura Ruberto suggests, "men, boys and masculinity generally become that on which a country depends for rebuilding itself after war. Likewise women, girls and femininity generally remain secondary actors in the building of that same society" (249). The cinematic world of neorealism is predicated on the relationship between men and boys, with little room for women or young girls (Ruberto 246). Female characters are more often than not relegated to the marginal roles of wife, mother, girlfriend, prostitute, or seductress. While figures like Rossellini's Marina in *Roma città aperta* seem to provide alternatives to stereotypes and survive as possible models for Italy's future, many potentially strong female characters tend to disappear from the film. This happens in the case of the mother in *Ladri di biciclette*, or of the pregnant Pina in *Roma città aperta*, who is shot, and falls to the ground, her skirt lifted, "objectified, made powerless, and at the same time eroticized" (Wood 93).

The films discussed in this chapter, *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing, Domenica*, and *L'isola*, engage with and challenge this neorealist agenda by adopting a *female* child's point of view. They have in common that they are both acknowledging and trying to come to

terms with the "fathers" of Italian cinema. All three are set at the beginning of the twenty-first century; their protagonists are young Italian women who inhabit a landscape that is significant to the film's project. The landscape, both urban and rural, contributed to Italian neorealist cinema's discourse of authenticity (Galt 57), its deployment of an anti-Fascist politics, and a reinhabiting of the national landscape (Steimatsky xi). Similarly in contemporary cinema it becomes crucial for denoting a transformed geographic, social, and cinematic space that proposes a new reading of its cinematic subjects.

Re-appropriating the Father–Son Relationship: *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*

Francesca Comencini's *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* replaces the father–son relationship with that between mother and daughter, focusing on its inherent affinities and tensions and the oppressive social climate that influences it. Initially conceived as a documentary, the film deals directly with issues regarding the representation of the real. Considering *Ladri di biciclette* as a pre-text to Comencini's film, our analysis focuses on how she develops and explores the mother–daughter dynamic in a contemporary context that appropriates and transforms De Sica's representation of the father–son relationship.

While the father–son dynamic features in several postwar films (*Sciuscià*, *Paisà*), it is perhaps nowhere more overt than in *Ladri di biciclette*, "the story of a walk through Rome by a father and his son" (Bazin 55). It is through this meandering, unsystematic walk through Rome in search of the stolen bicycle, the places visited, and the numerous encounters, that the relationship between father and son unfolds and is ultimately transformed. Filmed primarily outdoors, *Ladri di biciclette* represents Rome as a lived rather than monumental city: father and son scour the Porta Portese market for the stolen bicycle, enter a church unsympathetic to the needs of the poor, eat in a *trattoria* where they are unwelcome, pause in front of the football stadium, cross two bridges over the Tiber, and meet hostile crowds in city piazzas.[3] The detailed journey across Rome is mapped out in Christopher Wagstaff's comprehensive study. As shown in their exchanges and encounters, however, the father–son relationship is far from idealized. Instead the pairing

is used in this as in other neorealist films to explore the fragility of the traditional patriarchal family. Antonio is an adult who is too self-absorbed by material problems to notice the needs of the child, and the traditional view of the child as vulnerable and of the adult as protector is reversed. Bruno is not simply a companion in the search for the bicycle, but he also comes to his father's rescue on numerous occasions. While his father cannot seem to protect him from potential pedophiles in Porta Portese or other dangers, Bruno finds a policeman to prevent Antonio from being beaten up by a mob in Via Panico, and at the end of the film Bruno's presence allows Antonio to walk away rather than be apprehended as a thief.

The point of view in *Ladri di biciclette* is often that of Bruno, as in the scene in the *trattoria* where the eyeline-matching shot/reverse shots between Bruno and the rich boy at an adjacent table turn the attention of the film away from Antonio's economic plight to a future of ongoing class differences that are unlikely to be overcome. In the final scene, after Antonio has been publicly shamed for stealing a bicycle, Bruno looks up at his father with a wide-eyed gaze: it is a look of witness, of disillusion, and of the unlikelihood of change. As Antonio becomes object rather than subject of the gaze, he loses the status of the privileged male protagonist and is displaced by a child more capable of seeing and hearing, of crossing borders, and of navigating spaces, both foreign and familiar (Fisher 38).

The film is open to many interpretations. From a Marxist perspective, it denounces the many social institutions that do not provide the solidarity they should, implicates the colonization of the Italian screen by Hollywood cinema, and evokes sympathy for those on the lowest rungs of society, without, however, suggesting much hope for them. What little hope there might be lies in the father–son relationship. As Millicent Marcus concludes, "Psychologically, *Bicycle Thief* traces the evolution of the father–son relationship from disparity and dependence on external mediations to full self-definition and equality" (55).

Francesca Comencini's *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* shares with *Ladri di biciclette* a critique of social and economic conditions that impinge on human relationships, and in particular on parent–child relationships in an urban Roman landscape that is a fundamental player in the narrative. The "mobbing" in the title refers to

a practice by which a company, typically one that has been bought by or is merging with another and needs to downsize its workforce, attempts to humiliate and alienate its long-time employees in order to get them to quit, rather than fire them, which would be illegal. Opting for "docufiction" rather than, as initially planned, a documentary, allows the filmmaker to represent the inextricable connection between public violence and private consequences. By juxtaposing a domestic narrative and a workplace narrative, Comencini highlights the effects mobbing has on a mother–daughter relationship and finally on the daughter, who by extension becomes a victim of the mobbing inflicted on her mother. The film's central narrative develops through a series of revealing office scenes that trace the trajectory and violence of mobbing. Initially, Anna is portrayed as a hardworking single mother: efficient, relatively confident about her work, and secure in her administrative job, but torn between family and work obligations. This image of a delicately balanced life, however, is short-lived, and the cumulative effects of various incidents of mobbing lead to a physical collapse, the culmination of the psychological violence perpetrated against her at all levels.

Unlike *Ladri di biciclette*, which conflates the father–son story and the futile journey through Rome in search of the bicycle, Comencini separates the two threads of the narrative—the workplace mobbing and Anna's relationship with her daughter, Morgana—in order to draw greater attention to the causes for the breakdown and recuperation of the mother–daughter relationship. Comencini further highlights the stress of balancing work and family in workplace scenes that reveal the incompatibility of the private domain and the workplace. The fact that the corporate world does not allow space for the family is represented through hurried and whispered telephone exchanges between Anna and Morgana. Women in the workforce are supposed to make themselves available to the workplace twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, which prevents them from fulfilling equally demanding family obligations.

The dramatic distinction between workspace and home-space is evidenced in the abrupt cuts between office and domestic scenes. While office life is filmed primarily through a blue filter, creating a cold and impersonal environment of sterile rooms, computers, and anonymous or hostile relationships, home life

is filmed in softer, orange tones that complement the warmth of the mother–daughter relationship. Despite difficulties, mother and daughter manage to support each other as they engage in domestic activities: cooking, reading, bathing, and going on the occasional outing. Unlike *Ladri di biciclette,* the development of their relationship takes place primarily within the confines of the domestic space, which traditionally belongs to women. Anna's and Morgana's mutual affection is conveyed in intimate close-ups of touching, kissing, caressing, and lying together in bed.

Comencini is careful, however, not to idealize the relationship or downplay the devastating effects of mobbing. In the film, tension grows between a mother and a daughter who are already stretched to the limits on account of economic difficulties. Anna, who alternates between the closed spaces of the firm and the equally closed, although more comforting, space of the apartment, becomes more and more estranged from the only person with whom she has any human contact, her daughter. As her health fails, so does her ability to sustain herself, let alone her daughter. Role reversal sets in as Morgana assumes the maternal role by nursing Anna back to health, nourishing her, and finally helping her put her shoes on, literally getting her back on her feet.

Unlike *Ladri di biciclette*, which as part of its critique of Fascism and patriarchy deliberately refuses to restore the figure of the functional father, Comencini insists on the resolution of the mother–daughter relationship. The different outcomes in the two explorations of parental behavior can also be linked to the fact that the ultimate responsibility for children in Italian society lies with mothers and not with fathers.

There are certainly affinities in the representations of the parent–child relationships in the two films. The recurring representation of a distracted father leading a concerned son aimlessly through the streets of Rome is repeated in representations of Anna with Morgana often walking behind her mother, who at times seems so preoccupied with the stresses of her job that she is unaware of her daughter's presence. However, unlike in *Ladri di biciclette*, in which Bruno is never given on-screen time to show his ability to navigate the urban space on his own, Comencini's camera often shows Morgana negotiating the urban landscape. The camera lowers to assume Morgana's point of view as she seems at ease with the changing demographic space associated with the

area around Piazza Vittorio where she lives: she interacts regularly with the street musician and has formed a strong bond with the immigrant owners of the shop where she purchases groceries against her mother's will. Morgana is comfortable in her multiethnic urban space, representing the possibility of more embracing attitudes to replace prevailing racial prejudices.

Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing highlights the self-sufficiency of its child protagonist and, like *Ladri di biciclette,* the issue of parental responsibility. While the representations of Antonio's oblivious neglect of Bruno assume comic overtones in the neorealist film, verging at times on the slapstick, parental neglect is a very serious issue in *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*, since protecting children is primarily the mother's responsibility. This very different focus is most obvious in the culmination of the child-at-risk scenes in the films, in which the parent's neglect of the child leaves the spectator expecting catastrophic outcomes. In *Ladri di biciclette*, the scene in which Antonio fears that his missing son may have drowned is powerful but relatively short. The viewer shares Antonio's anxiety when both are led to believe that Bruno, after walking away from his father, may have fallen into the Tiber and drowned. When this turns out not to be the case, Antonio is so relieved that he takes Bruno out for a Sunday lunch, only to immediately fall back into self-pity, lamenting his fate while Bruno is left to figure out the bill. The potentially tragic situation does not jolt Antonio out of his self-centered torpor, nor does it make him become a solicitous father.

In *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*, the threat to Morgana's safety comes at the end of the film, once Anna finds the strength to rebel against her bullying boss, who suggests that she is incapable of balancing her work and the needs of her daughter. For the first time, Anna challenges him and his judgments, rejecting the patronizing voice of the patriarchal corporate world and decides to put her daughter first at all costs. Comencini, however, leaves the spectator guessing whether or not Anna's actions have come too late. She doesn't arrive in time to take Morgana to her dance performance, and so the film emphasizes what had previously been only subtly suggested: that Morgana is ultimately a child and, without her mother's protection, a potential victim of the dangers of a violent society. Dressed in her feminine dance clothes and made up to look like a woman, she ventures off into the urban night on her

own. With the camera lowered to assume the child's point of view, Morgana appears even more the potential victim of the violence that threatens children and women.

The strident musical score that accompanies Morgana's descent into the bowels of the subway in search of her mother adds to the viewer's sense of anxiety, which is further heightened by a cut to an overanxious Anna fleeing from the office in search of her daughter. The same music accompanies Anna as she crisscrosses Rome to check all the places where Morgana might be, including their home. Here, even the empty bed where Anna is accustomed to finding her daughter after her extended days at the office accentuates Morgana's absence. Anna finally locates her daughter, safe in the home of the immigrant proprietors of the local store where Morgana buys her groceries. This double denouement couples the mother–child reunion with Anna's recognition of her racial prejudices. As she combs her daughter's hair, Anna re-appropriates her maternal role, empowered by her act of rebellion in the workplace and thankful for the safety of her daughter.

The reconciliation cannot be finalized, however, until Morgana shows a renewed belief in her mother. The film to a large extent also reflects the daughter's position in the mother–daughter relationship, fraught with both the desire to be like the mother and to break from her (a dynamic more fully explored in Chapter 3). Early in the film Morgana rejects her mother as a role model, seeing her tied to domesticity, immobility, and the need to be financially responsible. Instead she wants to be like her absent father, the archetypal Odysseus figure who roams the world. The film's resolution of the mother–daughter crisis, that is, the recuperation of the mother and the displacement of the father, can take place once Anna regains mobility, emerging from her paralyzed, bedridden state to mobilize against those who have mobbed her. Only then does Morgana's disclosure that she wants to take a journey *with* her mother, rather than take journeys *like* her father, reposition the mother as subject and role model.

The poignant final scene of *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* can be seen as an upbeat re-creation of De Sica's touching but problematic ending of *Ladri di biciclette*, in which Bruno takes his defeated father's hand as they walk, side by side for the first time, into the same crowd Antonio has encountered throughout the film. Antonio has no bicycle, no job, and little opportunity for success in the

world and no paternal authority (personal or symbolic), hence his face is omitted from the frame. The only glimmer of hope lies in his relationship with his son, which is, however, irreversibly altered as Antonio has, in Bruno's eyes, fallen from his pedestal of moral superiority. The ending remains open. On the one hand, Antonio seems to have no option other than to walk into the hostile crowd that has threatened and rejected him throughout the film. On the other, Antonio finally joins the crowd from which he distanced himself and against which he competed at the beginning of the film. For a son and father to be able to walk hand in hand, subverting the patriarchal hierarchies that oppress and disempower them, suggests the possibility of collective solidarity. As father and son walk away from the camera's gaze, De Sica is doing much more than ending a film that speaks of problems with social order and institutions. Rather, he denounces the Italian cinema industry and the spectacle of mainstream cinema, suggesting another kind of poetic and lyrical cinematic aesthetic (Wagstaff 397–98).

In the streets of a more contemporary Rome, Morgana grabs her mother's hand as she encourages Anna to run after her into a future more promising than the past. Anna is clearly still recovering from her trauma and has found a new job, but, despite Anna's legal victory, Comencini maintains a tone of guarded optimism. She features an Anna who, hesitant at first, runs off, not in front of, but behind her daughter, and who reassures her, "smettila di aver paura, ci sto io con te" ("stop being afraid, I'm with you"). The happy ending, which contrasts with the somber ending of the neorealist predecessor, is necessary in a film that calls on women to find the strength to fight and liberate themselves from the position of victims of violence.

While claiming that her interest is in the representation of reality rather than in realism as a representational mode (see interview in the DVD version of the film), Comencini's socially engaged film aligns itself with its neorealist predecessors in its exploration of the hard, everyday realities (in this case a single mother's attempt to balance her work with her family duties) that the media tends to gloss over—the kinds of stories that, like that of the stolen bicycle told by De Sica, might never make it into the press. Hence, in her depiction and condemnation of social institutions, Comencini explores contemporary variations of neorealist themes and adopts obvious conventions, ultimately displaying the "apparent rawness,

[…] emotional intensity, and […] focus on current political and social problems" (Sitney 6) associated with neorealist films.

Situating Girls in the Neapolitan Cinematic Landscape: *Domenica*

Labate's[4] *Domenica*, whose title refers to the name of its female protagonist, is a city film whose narrative unfolds across a well-defined geographical and temporal space. With the exception of three flashbacks that interrupt the chronological narrative, the events in the film take place over the course of a single day. A male police investigator, Sciarra, is summoned from premature semi-retirement (we later discover he is dying from an unnamed disease) to perform one final task for the Naples police department. He is to locate a young girl, Domenica, and deliver her to the city morgue so that she can identify the body of her alleged rapist. While the premise driving the story seems straightforward, Labate's film centers not so much on resolving a narrative problem as on developing the relationship between Sciarra and Domenica over the course of that day.

Sciarra and Domenica, two "orphans," as Labate describes them—a father without children and a child without parents (Rutiloni)—are drawn together by their status as isolated, marginalized figures. For Domenica, Sciarra comes to represent a father in multiple senses of the word, both familial and institutional, and stands for authority that is both longed for and mistrusted. The film is constructed around a series of incidents in which Domenica allows Sciarra into her world, only to repeatedly escape from him. For Sciarra, who picked her up on the street the night she was raped, Domenica represents a daughter, a figure to be protected from the dangers of a world that has already harmed her. Sciarra's emotional outburst when he finds Domenica alone with her boyfriend is the culmination of numerous displays of paternal behavior: his concern about her roaming the streets, his attempt to skirt the area where she was raped, his desire to protect her from potentially harmful boyfriends, and ultimately his wish to fulfill Domenica's fairytale dream and walk her to the altar. However, Sciarra, on the verge of departure and imminent death, cannot and does not need to "save" Domenica, who, despite her youth, seems equipped to survive a tough world.

Domenica's response to the challenges and obstacles of life are revealed in her interactions with the city. She is a contemporary female version of a prominent Neapolitan figure, the street urchin.[5] As filmmaker Antonio Capuano suggests, Naples has always had large numbers of highly visible children, boys in particular, who spend most of their days on the streets (O'Healy, "A Neapolitan Childhood" 14). The image of the *scugnizzo*, the archetypal Neapolitan urchin, is something of a postcard cliché, which implies that children, even very young ones, are a dynamic part of the cityscape. This figure of the Neapolitan child was notably present in the realist films of Elvira Notari in the early years of the twentieth century. Giuliana Bruno describes Notari's character of Gennariello as the epitome of the ethics and aesthetics of Neapolitan underclass youth, a figure later adapted by Pasolini, who in early films such as *Accattone* (*The Scrounger,* 1961), *Mamma Roma* (1962), *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew,* 1964), and *Uccellacci e uccellini* (*The Hawks and the Sparrows,* 1966) depicted him as typically small and thin, with black, bright eyes, and as sympathetic, naturally intelligent, and affectionate (186). Both Pasolini and Notari proposed images of the urban child as a savior figure.

Since the *scugnizzo* has free reign of the streets, he figures as a useful vehicle for the filmic exploration of the urban landscape: Domenica's movements through the streets escort the spectator on a tour of the city. Labate, who has a strong personal attachment to what she calls her second city, says that she wished to convey Naples's "uncontrollability" (qtd. in Rutiloni), an element not often rendered visible in the city's representation in Italian cinema. Naples has been alternatively vilified and idealized in the national imaginary (O'Healy, "A Neapolitan Childhood" 13). As Marcia Landy further notes, Naples is a major protagonist in postwar cinema, from neorealist films such as *O sole mio* (1945) and *Io t'ho incontrata a Napoli* (*I Met You in Naples,* 1946), to *Due soldi di speranza* (*Two Cents Worth of Hope*, 1952), *Processo alla città* (*City on Trial*, 1952), *Un marito per Anna Zaccheo* (*A Husband for Anna*, 1953), and *L'oro di Napoli* (*The Gold of Naples*, 1954). Neapolitan life in these films "is seen in images that highlight dislocation, unemployment, graft, and political corruption" (Landy, *Italian Film* 128). *Domenica* begins with a bird's-eye view of the city's port area, followed by a lower-angle shot of the same area, with the title of

the film, *Domenica*, superimposed on it, inscribed, as it were, on the cityscape. Subsequent shots of the historical center with recognizable landmarks clearly establish the setting of the film before a cut to an indoor close-up pan of a covered corpse in the sterility of the morgue establishes the narrative thread. The body, which is finally uncovered at the end of the film, provides a sense of closure to the film's overt narrative pretext: the resolution of a crime.

The film provides contrasting images of Naples—a crowded, loud, and bustling city when the camera zooms in to locate its protagonists, and an almost eerie empty urban space when the camera follows Domenica and Sciarra through its back alleys. The chaos contrasts with the more menacing form of Naples's "uncontrollability." Hidden behind the walls or lurking in corners of desolate streets and *piazze* are unseen dangers, a reality ignored by an already victimized Domenica and feared by Sciarra.

The film is characterized by long takes and frequent cuts. The camera's unpredictable position calls to mind Deleuze's analysis of neorealism as "a new type of tale including the elliptical and the unorganized, often what seem insignificant events and the uncertainty of the links between them and of the non-belonging to those who experience them in this new form of voyage" (*Cinema 1* 216). At times, in follow shots, the camera appears to let itself be led by the characters; on other occasions, it accompanies the characters in tracking shots, or is already present, as if waiting for them, before they walk into the frame. In his study on neorealist cinema, Wagstaff, like Deleuze, suggests that the major neorealist filmmakers opted for different strategies of camera movement. De Sica preferred the use of what Wagstaff labels the "follow shot" as a "way of weaving together a multitude of minor threads so as to assemble a total picture [. . .] a landscape into which he inserts his figure [. . .] with the overall purpose of articulating [. . .] how that figure experiences that landscape" (321). In contrast, Visconti and De Santis preferred the pan because their characters, rather than experiencing the landscape, are products of their settings (Wagstaff 333).

Labate's use of the camera invites us to think of Domenica as part of the landscape but also as capable of negotiating it, as fragile but potentially in control. The film gives her an agency that is not afforded to the figure of Sciarra, who represents institutional power. While the narrative is meant to be about Sciarra leading Do-

menica back to the morgue, countless detours interrupt the linear trajectory; Sciarra is led through the city by Domenica but repeatedly loses her: she eludes him, escaping through the alternative exit of a building, or with a pretense that she has to do a chore, or when he dozes off to sleep. As viewers, our attention turns to her as we watch her (with or without Sciarra) perform her everyday chores, participate in cultural rituals, and interact with others. All of these sequences provide the viewer with a sense of the many layers of the Neapolitan world, which highlight economic privilege and extreme poverty. Above all, the film provides a window into the world of children, particularly those in need of physical help and psychological support like the little orphan girls Domenica assists, the young autistic boy whom she visits and bathes, and the other streetwise children she frequents and who are her friends.

On their walk through the city, Sciarra and Domenica resemble their precursors, De Sica's father-and-son team in *Ladri di biciclette* and Rossellini's American GI, Joe, and Neapolitan street urchin, Pasquale, in *Paisà*. Like Rossellini's duo, Sciarra and Domenica are unrelated, and their relationship to the landscape is similar to that of Joe and Pasquale. Domenica, like Pasquale, knows and belongs to the city of Naples, while Sciarra, like Joe, is a "foreigner" and not completely at ease in the Neapolitan environment. While Joe is physically lost and needs Pasquale to guide him through the city, Sciarra is lost in a deeper, more disturbing way, as Domenica points out to him. Although he has lived in Naples for twenty years, he remains an outsider; he doesn't use local idioms and thus remains handicapped in his negotiations. He is literally marked as an outsider, as he is barred entry to private homes and local institutions to which Domenica, through her status as a local orphan, has easy access.

It is through the entry into these interiors that we encounter private and problematic aspects of the city. In the representation of cities, Landy suggests, interiors often reveal hypocrisy and desperation (*Italian Film* 131). In *Domenica*, the interiors represent disparity, ritual, and religion. In the palaces of the wealthy, where Domenica knows how to play the crowd, she receives handsome handouts from those belonging to a class who feel obligated to help her because she is an orphan. The police station, on the other hand, which is accessible to Sciarra, represents the chaos and disruption caused by new immigrants and ultimately the corruption

that is deeply embedded in the police force. The other major institution, the Church, offers hope to those for whom reality offers little. Domenica finds solace in the narratives and rituals of Catholicism: both in the suffering Santa Olivia, whom she plays in a theatrical performance, a martyr who survives endless crises but perseveres, and in the idea of holy matrimony. Domenica, at the tender age of 11, but already experiencing puberty, finds comfort in society's gendered myths as she approaches womanhood.

Domenica adds to the body of work dedicated to the representation of Naples and of children in Italian realist film. In recent decades other Italian films have focused on the relationship between women and Naples. Mario Martone's *L'amore molesto* (*Nasty Love,* 1995) and Antonio Capuano's *L'amore buio* (*Dark Love,* 2010), like *Domenica*, associate the city with sensuality and with violence inflicted on the female body. *Domenica* is characterized by the protagonist's feminized interaction with the city. Here too the violence that forms the backdrop of the film is sexual violence against females, like the violence experienced and repressed by Delia in *L'amore molesto* and by Irene, the protagonist of Capuano's *L'amore buio*. Both Delia and Irene, victims of sexual molestation and rape, never resolve their relationship with a city that is the site of the violence that victimized them. While Delia eventually finds closure in recalling the past that she had suppressed and Irene ventures into the "belly of Naples" previously unknown to her, both escape from the city that abused them. Delia lives in the North and returns home to Bologna, while Irene moves even further away, to San Francisco, to accompany her partner. Naples, as represented in these films, or at least the "belly of Naples," is a physically imposing public space where women are exposed to culturally accepted violent behavior by men, which erases the boundaries guarding privacy and lays claim to the female body.

Domenica's relationship with Naples offers a multitude of feminine encounters with the city in both public and private spaces. Her character is a composite of images of a number of conflicting feminine positions, ranging from maternal nurturing roles to self-centered exhibitionist displays. On the one hand, she teaches the younger girls in the orphanage how to brush their teeth, she regularly bathes her young autistic friend, and she massages Sciarra's feet, claiming she understands and can cure his ailment better than the doctors. On the other hand, she performs in

a local theater company in the role of Santa Oliva and rehearses her lines in a public square; she plays an air guitar to the tune of a Prozac band song in a local mall; she poses for young adolescent boys aroused by glimpses of female sexuality; and she performs the part of promised bride to her immigrant boyfriend. Domenica, positioned between childhood and adulthood, experiments and rehearses the various models of womanhood accessible to her, repeatedly fashioning herself in front of a mirror where she tries to figure out who she is and what she might become.

Domenica's multiple identities suggest a younger version of Pasolini's *Mamma Roma*. Traversing their respective cityscapes, both films foreground the prostitute, the maternal woman, the theatrical performer. As spectators we are often placed in the position of the voyeur—throughout the film we follow Domenica through the streets of Naples, watching her from a distance and through a window, assuming the gaze that sometimes is shared by Sciarra, or as she watches herself in the mirror, “dressing up” for the male gaze, the voyeuristic gaze of the men watching her, the absent gaze of a constant threatening presence in the streets of Naples.

Domenica has a cinematic precursor also in Robert Bresson's *Mouchette* (1967), which according to Labate is an important intertext in many of her films (Rutiloni). There are obvious parallels between *Mouchette* and *Domenica* not only in the narrative structure—a story that only lasts a day and revolves around a young adolescent girl who has to fend for herself and ends up a victim of male violence—but also in the use of similar contexts and details, like the “entertainment” venues or fairgrounds where the young girls momentarily escape the seriousness of life and seek the company of the young boys. However, *Mouchette* is a film that spirals downward into the abyss, like other Bresson films that hold a tragic end for their protagonists. It is more similar in that sense to other works, like Rossellini's *Germania anno zero* (*Germany Year Zero,* 1948), in which Edmund, ultimately overcome by the sight of destruction all around him, plunges to his death. Labate, on the other hand, turns her female protagonist into a survivor. While at the end of the film the police investigator/father figure exits the screen, wearing the sunglasses Domenica had given him, disappearing on a ferry that will take him to Sicily and to his inevitable death, Domenica challenges what might appear to be an inevitable destiny. She remains steadfast, clinging to her dreams

and standing tall in her geographical and cinematic space. As she watches his ship depart into the night, she walks off screen, but her head, visible from behind, and then her tearful face move back onto the screen. She casts the pistachio nuts that Sciarra had picked up in the police station and had later given to her, into the sea. She performs a ritual, like that of throwing petals on a coffin, bidding Sciarra a final goodbye. In the seemingly insignificant details of pistachios and sunglasses, there is a sense of reciprocity, of generous exchange and of mutual tacit understanding. *Domenica*'s ending, marked by a stirring musical score that verges on the melodramatic, leaves us both hopeful and asking questions about the possible options for a young girl left ashore to re-inhabit her cityscape, looking out toward a distant horizon.

Impermeable Boundaries for an Island Girl: *L'isola*

Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing and *Domenica* are marked by the movement of pre-adolescent girls through a contemporary urban landscape, of which they are products and which they negotiate, and which is as much in transition as they are. In *L'isola*[6] the urban dynamism and temporal specificity of *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* and *Domenica* are replaced by a timeless, marginal rural landscape that was also instrumental to a certain kind of neorealist film, such as Visconti's *La terra trema*. Location was central to Visconti's project. As Steimatsky notes, Visconti in "Tradizione e invenzione" ("Tradition and invention") highlights the dramatic Sicilian backdrop: "an enclosed geographic form defined against the sea and the mainland, the Mediterranean island itself becomes an anthropomorphic embodiment of the past, both Homeric and Vergilian" (Steimatsky 102). In Quatriglio's film, as in Visconti's, there is a distancing from modernity and the evocation of universality, repetition, and communal culture linked to the natural environment. The feeling of insularity in the film positions the island as spatially and temporally removed from life on the Italian mainland.

Shot on location and with nonprofessional actors in leading roles, *L'isola* is set on the Sicilian island of Favignana, where Quatriglio spent her summer holidays as a child. As an adult and filmmaker she returned to the island to rediscover it through its inhabitants and their relationship to place, driven by the desire to

understand what it means to live on an island seemingly frozen in time and dominated by age-old occupations tied to the land and the sea, and where children begin to work at a very young age.[7]

Rather than follow a traditional narrative, the film fosters a sense of place and of the physical and social boundaries defined by the island. *L'isola* charts the life of the island and its inhabitants over the course of one year. This year is a crucial year in the formation of the two protagonists, 11-year-old Teresa and her 13-year-old brother, Turi, who learn to recognize, know, and accept their historically defined roles in the island community. Through its secondary characters, the film explores the ways in which the inhabitants of Favignana interact with the place and with each other and their commitment to a work ethic tied to the island's traditions and its natural surroundings.

The characters' relationship with the natural environment dominates the opening of *L'isola*, which contrasts with that of *La terra trema*. The opening of Visconti's film privileges community over geographical location. Before we see a single image we hear the mournful tolling of church bells. As the titles give way to the film's opening, the camera looks in toward the dark town center, panning left to right and then right to left, pausing to capture buildings and their roof tops and the church before continuing with a series of slow, wide panoramic shots over the landscape and eventually down to the sea. The camera then pauses to frame the row of approaching fishing boats returning with their nightly catch between two of the *Faraglioni*, the massive rocks that sit in the harbor of Aci Trezza, a small fishing village. Voices of townspeople announcing the fishing vessels' return are interspersed with the title that introduces the narrative: "La storia che il film racconta, è la stessa che nel mondo si rinnova da anni, in tutti quei paesi dove uomini sfruttano altri uomini" ("The story that the film tells is the same age-old story told in every country where man exploits man"). There is simultaneously a sense of order, repetition, and claustrophobia in the opening establishing shots. The images reveal the hierarchical structure of the community: the poor fishermen have their place below the merchants who exploit them, and the women have their place in a world clearly divided along gender and class lines.

By contrast, nature rather than social community dominates the opening of *L'isola.* The sound of the sea pre-empts the image

and is followed by Teresa's voice calling out to her grandfather, who never returned from a fishing expedition. The opening shot of the sea crashing against a gated barrier introduces the film's central preoccupation: the relationship between the inhabitants of the island and the surrounding water, and the gendered dimensions of this relationship. The fact that Teresa is the film's driving force and guiding conscience contributes to the film's feminized perspective.

In this coming-of-age film, a girl is portrayed in opposition to her brother, Turi. The narrative begins with a sequence of two shots, which capture Turi and Teresa fishing on the beach and then riding their bicycles across the island's landscape. These shots identify the main protagonists and establish the relationship between them and their island home. Unlike *La terra trema*, with its opening *L'isola* focuses not on the social hierarchies and labor issues of the adults of a small fishing community, but on the lightheartedness of childhood. In fact the film is about the freedom of youth but also about the boundaries of that freedom, about the passage from carefree childhood to adulthood and to the expectations that come with growing up. While Turi is a placid and inscrutable adolescent, Teresa is an exuberant and uncomplicated child. From the beginning of the film Teresa seems to be a carefree and irrepressible girl on the verge of adolescence, and there appear to be no boundaries to her movements. Her world contrasts with that of the women and girls in *La terra trema*, who belong inside the houses where they wait for the fishermen to come home, attending to household chores and to the men's needs.

La terra trema abounds in shots of enclosed women: at windows looking at or talking to men, and inside the house engaged in domestic activities. There are few shots of women outdoors, except for the sequence of very powerful images of black-shawled, despairing women atop a cliff who are looking out to sea in the vain hope that their men will return. While on the one hand, Teresa, like the girls in Visconti's film, is often framed behind windows, in door frames, or inside closed spaces, she repeatedly challenges that fixity. She looks out longingly but also acts upon her desire. Teresa is female mobility personified, constantly running off after her brother in search of the spaces and occupations available only to males. However, this does not imply that there are no rules in her world, but rather that we see her world through her perspec-

tive or via an observational camera that primarily focuses on her. Unlike in *La terra trema*, no dominating voiceover informs the spectator that her fate is sealed, for representations of Teresa challenge fixity. It slowly becomes clear, however, that there are limits to her mobility. While, in what becomes an act of initiation, Turi is forced to join his father and fellow fishermen in their tuna fishing expedition, Teresa can only read about tuna fishing in her books at school. Unable to participate on account of her gender, she persuades an old man from the village to take her to watch the men fishing tuna from afar. Teresa's limited mobility becomes a metaphor for the island, as the sea is a natural barrier that limits the mobility of its inhabitants.

This understanding of the sea as an impermeable prison wall is further emphasized by the sequences leading up to the tuna netting scene. In preparation for the tuna fishing season the men create what they refer to as *un'isola* (an island) with their nets. They drop the nets to the bottom of the sea, weighing them down with rocks extracted from local caves. This island forms another prison: under the illusion that they are swimming freely in the sea, the fish end up in the enclosed area and cannot escape. In a similarly deceptive way, the island of Favignana imprisons its inhabitants.

Turi's only option is to follow in the footsteps of the island's male inhabitants. Although he chooses the least confining of the male roles by becoming a sailor rather than a fisherman, he cannot escape the island on which he was born. The same is true for Teresa, as the island on which she roams freely will also erect more and more invisible barriers, becoming increasingly restrictive for her as she moves toward adolescence. As the film progresses and Teresa approaches womanhood, images of her swimming nymph-like in the sea are replaced by less androgynous representations of a more grown-up Teresa, standing with her friend on the shoreline, welcoming her "men" home from a night of fishing.

Teresa's gendered fate is reinforced by two powerful images of the sea that conclude the film. The old man who agrees to take Teresa to watch the tuna kill, solicits her help in borrowing a tractor to demolish the wall that was built in front of her grandmother's house and is blocking her view of the sea. The shot of the morning after the demolition shows an empty space where the wall once was and beyond it a view looking out to sea. As a result of this subversive heroic action, the grandmother's unobstructed view

to the horizon has been restored. The film then cuts to another scene of liberation, featuring Turi enacting his choice, on a boat with another sailor, lifting anchor and heading off to sea. The sea exhibits its double meaning in these final images of freedom. On the one hand, it is a limitless space that brings the grandmother's gaze and Turi beyond the boundaries imposed by modernity (the constructed wall) and the rituals of the island. On the other, this seemingly open and optimistic ending contrasts with our awareness that Teresa will inevitably lose her childhood freedom. While her vision, like her grandmother's, might still extend beyond the island, she remains confined to the roles and expectations imposed on her by social conventions. Unlike Turi, who is able to sail away, she will remain on the island, following in the tradition of her mother, and of her mother's mother, and of the women of *La terra trema*.

While Quatriglio's film is about the impermeability of invisible boundaries in its content and imagery, stylistically it explores the permeability of the boundaries between fiction and reality. Wagstaff argues that even for the neorealists the boundary between fiction and fact was porous: "The neorealists inherited a tradition in which 'realism' in the sense of penetrating behind the particular to the universal did not give a high priority to the distinction between documentary and fiction film" (74). *L'isola* experiments with the restrictions of cinematic genres and pushes the boundaries between documentary and fiction. An example of this crossover is the tuna-fishing episode. In the fictional narrative, this episode functions as the moment when Turi must make the passage from boy to man and assume his role as a fisherman. Quatriglio absorbs fiction into documentary when she films the fictional Turi among the line of actual fisherman engaged in their annual tuna netting season.[8] Quatriglio turns a documentary-style gaze on the fishermen and their pre-modern work ritual, capturing them chanting traditional songs as they haul in their nets and showing footage of the tuna being harpooned.

In this scene, there is a clear reference to the tuna-fishing sequence in Rossellini's *Stromboli*. The uncanny resemblance between these two scenes also draws attention to the timeless repetition of events: one recorded by Rossellini in 1951, the other some sixty years later. In both cases the fictional story, while tied to the male narrative, includes a watching female: Teresa indirectly aligns

herself with the figure played by Ingrid Bergman in Rossellini's film, reminding us of the position that women occupy in Italian cinema and in traditional patriarchal societies.

Drawing attention to the slippage between fiction and documentary, Quatriglio includes moments when the real-life reactions of the actors become part of and indeed intensify the fictive narrative. This is the case, for example, in the scene in which the grandmother starts crying in a conversation with her granddaughter, Teresa. While the episode is part of the fictive narrative, the tears of the nonprofessional actor playing the grandmother are real, a result of the long preparation for the scene with the director (online interview with Scarparo). At other times, real events come into play that were unforeseen by the director and ultimately become part of and indeed alter the fictional narrative. For example, in one scene a mechanic asks two young boys to write down an address for him. In the script he was simply meant to convey information. The director had not known beforehand that one of the boys was illiterate. The difficulty of writing and the resolution of the problem add a further dimension to the recounting of the narrative. The film's blending of fiction and fact is part of its project to tell a story steeped in a real Sicilian landscape that is evoked as a timeless, enclosed mythical space.

Sicily has a long history of literary and cinematic representation linked to both its political culture and geographic landscape: "The cinema has disseminated images of the Sicilian landscape with implied or overt portraits of the political cultural and social landscape portraying a land given over to corruption, brigandage and archaic and destructive rituals and traditions" (Dickie 28). *L'isola* does not belong to the strand of Sicilian cinema that is composed of political films about deeply embedded feuds or the Mafia. It is more in tune with documentaries that, from the age of silent cinema to the postwar period, explored the unique culture and geography of Sicily, particularly in relation to the sea: Panaria Film's *Cacciatori sottomarini* (*Underwater Hunters*, 1946), *Isole di cenere* (*Ash Islands*, 1947), and *Bianche Eolie* (*White Aeolian Islands*, 1947), Vittorio De Seta's *Lu tempu di li pisci spata* (*The Time of the Swordfish*, 1955) and *Pescherecci* (*Trawlers*, 1957), and Pino Mercanti's fiction film *Malacarne* (*For the Love of Mariastella,* 1946), whose main protagonist is also called Turi. *L'isola* also resonates with contemporary films that represent small fishing communities

frozen in time and provide an almost ethnographic panorama of local culture and dialects, like Vincenzo Marra's *Tornando a casa* (*Sailing Home,* 2001) and Emanuele Crialese's visually stunning *Respiro* (*Breath*, 2002).

Conclusion

Neorealism represents a body of Italian films in which landscape becomes a privileged site of meaning: marginal or rural landscapes are often central to the films' project of reclaiming Italy for an anti-Fascist identity, as opposed to being simply highly monumental recognizable landscapes (Galt 56). The neorealist re-inhabiting of lived urban and rural landscapes is tied to the reconstruction of Italy (Steimatsky). The films we have considered in this chapter continue to refashion the landscape. While *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* and *Domenica* imagine a changing landscape marked by precarious labor relations and a changing demography that features new immigrants, *L'isola* focuses on the interplay between a timeless landscape and the life cycles of the film's young protagonists.

All three films depict the landscape as a feminized space. Marginal urban spaces, geographic margins, and the domestic are traversed by the female child who engages with these scapes and seeks her place within them. *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing, Domenica*, and *L'isola* all feature young female protagonists who feel at home in the spaces they inhabit, but who are sometimes also instrumental in changing them. The films' endings suggest movement and the possibility of change. *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* ends with the beginning of a new journey. *Domenica* and *L'isola* end at the border with the sea; as Domenica watches the ship sail away, she remains on shore but looks out to a world that is open to her. *L'isola* ends with a seascape, with a new outlook across the horizon, which visually refuses closure. The films' three protagonists are positioned in the Italian landscape and create a previously unconsidered space for women. Having the final word, they raise unresolved and at times disturbing questions about the future of women in an Italian national space that is still determined by patriarchal institutions and rituals.

In their adherence to realistic and neorealist conventions, the filmmakers discussed in this chapter are engaging with the debate

over the problematic relationship between realism and feminist cinema. While for decades many feminist film critics had insisted that realism runs counter to a feminist aesthetic and that "counter-cinema," or experimental cinema, was a necessary political practice, current theoretical debate has redefined the boundaries of feminist films. Teresa de Lauretis, for example, argues that the formalist definitions of the 1970s have been rendered obsolete: alternative feminist films "are those which engage the current problems, the real issues, the things actually at stake in feminist communities on a local scale" and "address a particular [audience] in its specific history of struggles and emergence" ("Guerillas" 17). The films examined in this chapter adhere to this definition, displaying characteristics of a new feminist cinema of "corrective realism" that transforms the nature and the narrative workings of traditional realism and neorealism (Ruby Rich 283). They adapt an established cinematic tradition to suit stories by and for women. Comencini and Quatriglio push the envelopes of documentary and feature film. Indeed, by embedding documentary elements into fiction, by creating situations that draw attention to the impossibility of separating fact and fiction, Quatriglio reinvents the realist film.

By quoting the neorealist masterpieces, the filmmakers establish a continuum between the projected past and the spectator's present. By moving beyond the postwar concern about the crisis of patriarchy and the symbolic loss of father figures, they also enable the emergence of the feminine and create a new cinema for new national landscapes. In this "other" cinema, if not in the material world, there is a place for othered women, the mothers and daughters absent in the neorealist precursors.

Chapter Three

Reconfiguring the Mother–Daughter Relationship

In 1976, Adrienne Rich in her groundbreaking *Of Woman Born* recuperated the mother by focusing on the mother–daughter relationship as crucial to the daughter's identity (Ingman 186). Since then, a growing number of Anglo-American and Western European feminist critics have been concerned with "rethinking cultural locations for the maternal body" and have focused on the imaginary and symbolic configurations of the maternal legacy (Humm 177). This interest in the maternal legacy has also inspired many women to write about female experiences and to explore and construct their identities in dialogue with their biological and symbolic mothers.[1]

In Italy, in the last thirty years, feminist philosophers and literary critics have theorized the need for women to (re)discover and/or (re)create their subjectivities in a search for a female genealogy.[2] The literary production of many Italian women writers, from Sibilla Aleramo to those writing today, however, demonstrates that the dialogue with the mother is fraught with complexities. As Laura Benedetti argues in her analysis of motherhood and Italian literature, the theme of motherhood is problematic because "the mother hardly seems a suitable topic for literary creativity [...]. Too weak socially to act as a positive role model, and at the same time too closely linked to her biological role, the mother proves incapable of posing a challenge to society" (5). Locked in a relationship marked by fear, the daughter's relationship with her mother in Italian culture has traditionally been configured in terms of a destiny of maternal sacrifice, as anticipated by Aleramo's *Una donna* (1906).

Motherhood gained center stage in the novels of Italian women writing in the wake of Aleramo. According to Robin Pickering-Iazzi, motherhood has been a "central interpretative image for

twentieth-century women writers, designed to express female existence in its personal and social dimensions" (325). While Aleramo prefigured a protagonist trapped within a socially imposed maternal role and the disparity between institutionalized motherhood and the experience of mothering, novels by twentieth-century women writers such as Dacia Maraini, Fabrizia Ramondino, and Oriana Fallaci began to explore alternative notions to the traditional values of institutionalized motherhood. As Pickering-Iazzi argues, these writers "refute the ideology of motherhood as women's biological destiny and primary source of identity," with Fallacci, in particular, proposing the potential of the mother–child relationship to transform the nature of society and culture (325).

In the twenty-first century, Italian women filmmakers are well placed to reconsider issues concerning the position of the daughter and her renewed desire to engage with the mother. In this chapter, we consider documentaries and feature films—including Anne Riitta Ciccone's *L'amore di Màrja* (2002), Francesca Comencini's *Lo spazio bianco* (2009), Cristina Comencini's *Il più bel giorno della mia vita* (2002), Alina Marazzi's *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (2002), Fabrizia Sargentini's *Di madre in figlia* (2004), and Susanna Nicchiarelli's *Il terzo occhio* (2003)—that offer new perspectives on the mother–daughter relationship.

The productive tension in the mother–daughter relationship is the central focus of the films discussed in this chapter. As in much female literary production, in these films the position of the daughter and her renewed desire to engage with her mother is fraught with contradiction. The mother's destiny does not necessarily prefigure the daughter's, since the women's movement has created for the daughter alternative social paths to choose from.

The representation of new possibilities open to daughters is reinforced in the feature films by Ciccone, Francesca Comencini, and Cristina Comencini. Ciccone's film explores the frustration and the grief that dominate the ways in which women often experience the mother–daughter relationship in a male-dominated society, from the point of view of the daughter. By contrast, Francesca Comencini's film reflects on motherhood from the perspective of a mother who waits for her premature daughter to be born or to die. Cristina Comencini's film focuses on three generations of mothers and daughters, presenting a child protagonist who ultimately appropriates the camera to offer the promise of a feminized gaze on the world.

By means of a close examination of the documentaries by Marazzi, Sargentini, and Nicchiarelli, we argue that the new options open to daughters free the mother from her position of weakness within a patriarchal framework that devalues her authority by depriving her of institutional and social power. We suggest that the oeuvre of a new generation of women filmmakers may not be overtly feminist but increasingly foregrounds a desire to engage, create, and conceive of female subjectivity on screen. As in the case of the three documentaries discussed, the results are often intimate, self-reflexive films that engage the female spectator by blurring the boundaries between documentary and fiction and between the intimately private and the public, and which ultimately challenge traditional representations of women in Italian cinema.

A Mother's Love: *L'amore di Màrja*

Based on the play *Amarsi da pazze* by writer and director Anne Riitta Ciccone, *L'amore di Màrja* is both a daughter's coming-of-age story and an account of her mother's social disempowerment and mental illness.[3] The narrative begins in the mid-1970s and is set in a small town in Sicily. Told from the point of view of Alice, the eldest daughter, the film recounts the disastrous consequences for mother and daughters of their parents' decision to move from Finland to Sicily. In search of work, the family leaves their idyllic life in a commune in the mother's native Finland to join the father's traditional family in a small town in Sicily. As a tall, blonde, and carefree woman, the mother, Màrja, is marked as deviant by the patriarchal and closed community of her husband's home town. Her visit to the local beach clad in a revealing bathing suit and her joyful dance at a mid-summer evening celebration precipitate her downfall. Her husband's family and the local residents criticize her relentlessly, disturbed by her presence. Her husband, Fortunato, reverts to traditional Sicilian social customs, becoming increasingly jealous and intolerant of Màrja's difference. When Fortunato leaves to work overseas, Màrja becomes progressively fearful and paranoid because of the way she is treated in the community and slowly descends into madness, leaving her two daughters to fend for themselves.

Reviewers described the film as "strano" ("strange"; Gallozzi, "Una 'hippy'"), "sincero" ("sincere"; Porro, Nepoti), "accorato, dove si avverte una certa urgenza personale" ("afflicted, where you

sense a certain personal urgency"; Nepoti), "piccolo" ("small"; Gallozzi, "Una 'hippy'"; Selleri), and "pieno di ingenuità" ("full of naivety"; Selleri), but also "imbarazzante" ("embarrassing") and riddled with stereotypes (Fittante). For most reviewers, the film's sincerity is a reflection of the overtly autobiographical nature of the narrative. They argue that the film's intent is to comment on the daily racist discrimination suffered by Màrja on account of her cultural and physical difference: she is simply too white, too tall, too blonde, and too free. As one reviewer comments, "Una finlandese in Sicilia" is "quasi un ossimoro" ("A Finn in Sicily" is "almost an oxymoron"; Porro). For most reviewers, the film's message and relevance lie in its critique of intolerance and discrimination against newcomers and those who question social conformity.

What the reviews do not consider, however, is that the film links discrimination and marginalization to the de-authorization of the mother and the mother's language. The film highlights the threat to patriarchal power at a time when the feminist movement in Italy was questioning that power and the social order it dictated. The film begins with a medium shot of a young girl who screams, "non voglio, non mi importa niente, non lo voglio un papà e voi siete cattive, cattive! Diventerai vecchia e lui ti lascerà, diventerai come la nonna!" ("I don't want to, I don't care at all, I don't want a father and you're bad, bad! You'll get old and he'll leave you, you'll turn into Nonna!"). As she turns to leave the room and the image transitions, with a dissolve, to an empty corridor in a house from the past, the narrator begins to talk about her mother, remembering her passion for life and creativity. The voiceover that will become the narrating voice of the film belongs to Màrja's older daughter, Alice. The young girl who did not want her mother to marry is Màrja's granddaughter, whose mother is Sonia, Alice's younger sister. Sonia's daughter was born in Sicily when Sonia was a teenager. Her birth was the catalyst for Màrja's and Sonia's return to Finland.

The narrating voiceover conflates the director with her protagonist, thus reinforcing the idea that the film is Ciccone's autobiographical account. This understanding has two consequences: it gestures toward some sort of authenticity, or to what a reviewer called "una certa urgenza personale" ("a certain personal urgency"; Nepoti); and the use of a female voiceover by a female filmmaker potentially relegates the film to one for a niche audience, as it tells

a woman's story about mothers and daughters, which supposedly appeals to women only. Significantly, as previously noted, the reviewers disregard the focus on motherhood, choosing to interpret the film as a story about gender-free intolerance.

Whereas the film also criticizes intolerance vis-à-vis outsiders, the film's ideological tension focuses on Alice's understanding and interpretation of Màrja's struggle to reconcile her roles as mother and wife with her desire for self-fulfillment and personal development. By juxtaposing the intense mother–daughter relationship between Màrja and Alice with Màrja's treatment by the community in the small Sicilian town, Ciccone highlights the destructive impact of patriarchy on that relationship. Before the move to Sicily, the mother was able to nurture and protect her daughters. The patriarchal environment in which she finds herself, however, leads to increasing paranoia and depression and to an eventual inversion of the mother's and daughters' roles. Initially, Màrja attempts to perform her maternal role, cooking and cleaning while also continuing to create for her daughters a domestic space in which they can escape from the oppressive social environment. However, the increased pressure of life in Sicily (standing as a metaphor for patriarchy) sets her apart from her daughters. As the voiceover comments, "Cucinare, pulire, fare la spesa, contare i soldi, contare l'acqua, stare in casa, adeguarsi. Le sue mani si stavano rovinando e lei aveva sempre paura di sbagliare qualcosa, ma non si lamentava mai" ("Cook, clean, buy the groceries, count the money, watch the water usage, stay home, play along. Her hands were being ruined and she was always afraid of getting something wrong, but she never complained"). Eventually, Màrja is taken to a clinic and pumped full of antidepressants and other drugs that make her sleep most of the time.

Motherhood forces Màrja to stay in Sicily. Following Fortunato's announcement that he is planning to work abroad, Màrja starts to pack her bags as the two argue in their bedroom. In a sequence composed of medium and close-up shots, Fortunato says, "Prendi la tua borsa e vattene via ma le bambine devono rimanere qui. Devono andare a scuola, e poi la legge è dalla mia parte, lo sai" ("Take your bag and get out, but the children have to stay here. They have to go to school, and the law is on my side, you know"). The *mise-en-scène* of this sequence, with the camera positioned at a slightly low angle in the reverse shot framing Fortunato's threats,

confirms Fortunato's power over his wife. The camera then cuts to a close-up of Alice as she listens to her parents' argument. This sequence shows how patriarchal law turns Màrja's love for her daughters into a vehicle for humiliation and mortification.

As a consequence, Màrja's maternal legacy is fraught with contradictions. Her daughters search in vain for the mother they had known before their move to Sicily. In a confrontation between mother and daughter following Màrja's return from a psychiatric clinic, Alice accuses her, "Tu lo fai apposta, non fai niente per stare meglio, non ci pensi a noi!" ("You do it deliberately, you don't do anything to get better, you don't think of us!"). When Màrja replies that she has sacrificed her life for them, Alice retorts in frustration, "Non mi frega niente della tua vita. Io voglio la mia mamma" ("I don't give a shit about your life. I want my mom"). A despondent Màrja then confesses, "Non sono più quella, non posso essere più quella" ("I'm not her, I can't be her anymore"). In this sequence shot, the inversion of roles is conveyed visually by a long shot in which Alice, as the dominant figure, stands up in front of her mother, who sits on the floor, looking up at her daughter. In these reverse-angle exchanges, the camera is then lowered to frame Alice in a low-angle medium shot as her mother replies in a series of slightly high-angle medium and close-up shots. These camera angles visually foreground the disempowerment of the mother and the empowerment of the daughter.

As the visual representation of this sequence shows, Màrja's descent into "madness" undermines her ability to mother, devalues her authority, and weakens her maternal legacy, thus contributing to the complex process that Julia Kristeva called the "disidentification" of the daughter with the mother (497). Màrja's increasingly fractured relationship with her daughters recalls the Milan Women's Bookshop Collective's contention that the androcentric structure of patriarchal societies belittles the mother–daughter relationship. They argue that "the relationship between mothers and daughters has no form in patriarchal society" and that it is "therefore conflictual and mothers and daughters are both losers" (14). The patriarchal preference for the power of the father over the authority of the mother fuels the conflict between mother and daughter. The distinction between authority and power is crucial. According to Diotima philosopher Annarosa Buttarelli, we lost access to the original meaning of the Latin *auctoritas*, which comes

from the verb *augere*, and which refers to the ability to make others grow and prosper, to nurture, and, literally, to augment (87). In the patriarchal symbolic order, the authority of the mother that is derived from her nurturing role has been displaced by the power of the father, *potestas*, meaning "force and right." Buttarelli points out that *auctoritas* ("authority") is linked to *agere* ("to guide, discuss, and conduct"), whereas *potestas* ("power") is linked to the verb *gerere* ("to administer, govern, and have the faculty to act despite opposition from others") (Buttarelli 88). Under the weight of the patriarchal order, Alice's mother has lost the *auctoritas* to guide her daughters, and their relationship becomes framed entirely within the confines of the *potestas* of the symbolic order of the father.

Although unable to recognize Màrja's authority, Alice is able to leave Sicily—and thus, to some extent, patriarchal oppression—and forge a new life. The birth of a daughter will inspire Sonia also to leave, taking her mother with her; whereas motherhood had kept Màrja in Sicily, for Sonia, motherhood will become the catalyst for change. In the final scene of the film, three generations of women are reconciled with each other and with the world around them. Having left Sicily behind, Alice in her voiceover comments: "L'amore di Màrja ci ha regalato un mondo in cui nessuno potrà mai raggiungerci. Un rifugio, un mondo di pace, un mondo nuovo" ("Màrja's love gave us a world where no one will ever be able to reach us. A refuge, a world of peace, a new world"). This utopian ending proposes a new understanding of the mother's love, intended as a space that resists patriarchal law and in which the maternal legacy acquires legitimacy. To be able to reach this new understanding, however, the protagonists had to leave Italy behind. This suggests that legitimacy for the maternal legacy is still not possible in Italy.

The White Space of Motherhood: *Lo spazio bianco*

Adalgisa Giorgio argues that "recent narratives that have offered glimpses into the mother's mind suggest that, if women have deconstructed the 'institution' of motherhood, they are still baffled by the 'experience,' especially when they bring daughters into the world" (149). Francesca Comencini's *Lo spazio bianco* focuses on the complex and intimate experience of bringing a daughter into

this world. Based on Valeria Parrella's novel, Comencini's film tells the story of a birth that is also, potentially, a death for both mother and daughter. The daughter, Irene, is born three months premature and must spend months in an incubator fighting for her life. Her mother, Maria, awaits her daughter's (second) birth, which will be marked by Irene's ability to breathe independently. As Irene remains suspended between life and death, so does her mother, who tries to understand whether she is also being born as a mother or if her new identity also runs the risk of dying along with her daughter.

Maria is over 40, lives by herself in Naples, and teaches evening classes to underprivileged adult students. After she becomes pregnant, the child's father, Pietro, who has a young daughter of his own, ends the relationship. Maria decides to keep the baby and to raise her by herself, with some help from her best friend and colleague, Fabrizio. Accustomed to being self-reliant and in control of her life, Maria finds it difficult to spend long days in the hospital waiting to find out whether the premature Irene will live or die.

The film starts with a medium shot of Maria dancing by herself and to her own tune. This nontraditional establishing shot foreshadows Maria's solitude but also her conflicting desire for independence and companionship, since dancing suggests a partner. The tension is sustained throughout the *mise-en-scène* of the film by the predominance of medium and close-up shots of Maria on her own, walking, talking on the phone, smoking, framed against stark images of sky and sea, or looking out at the city from her home or the terrace at the hospital.

The tension of unresolved desires and fears is also evoked by the rhythm of the film's narrative pace: cross-cutting between the time before and after Maria's premature labor, slowing down with blurred sequences at the neonatal ward, and reducing dialogue to a minimum. Moreover, dream sequences and non-diegetic music, all by female singers whose words take the place of those that Maria cannot utter, contribute to Comencini's attempt to evoke visually and through music Maria's experience of motherhood, conceived and experienced as a white space.

The white space has several meanings. Literally, it refers to the clinical setting of the neonatal ward, which in the film is conveyed by gray lighting and blurred sequences.[4] At the narrative level, it refers to the space that Maria advises her student, Gaetano, to

insert in his writing at the final exam for the *licenza media*. When Gaetano whispers, "Mi sono bloccato—non riesco ad andare avanti" ("I'm stuck—I can't go forward"), and Maria replies with a grammatical instruction, "Mettici un futuro" ("Put it in the future"), he insists that he would rather "metterci un presente" ("put it in the present"). He explains: "Io già vengo dal presente, però vorrei finire e avrei bisogno di uno nuovo" ("I already come from the present, but I'd like to finish it and I'd need a new one"). Gaetano needs the present tense, as he is writing about the experience of losing his fingers: "tre dita che sono la mia libertà, perchè la mia normalità di prima era una pietra" ("three fingers which are my freedom, because before my normality was like a stone"). To this, Maria replies, "mettici uno spazio bianco e rincomincia a scrivere quello che vuoi" ("Insert a blank space and start again. writing what you want"). "Ma si può fare?" ("But can you do that?"), asks Gaetano.

His question foregrounds the central theme of the film: will Maria be able to use the experience of bringing a daughter into the world as a means to re-create herself, in the future rather than the present tense, in dialogue with the daughter? Accordingly, as the loss of his fingers allows Gaetano to interpret his previous normality as an obstacle to freedom, Irene's unorthodox birth delivers Maria her freedom. Maternity becomes liberating. Comencini says that "libertà e maternità sono due parole irrinunciabili" ("freedom and motherhood are two indispensable words"; qtd. in Almonte). At the film's screening in Venice she explained that "La maternità non è in contrasto con la libertà, ma anzi ne è un'amplificazione. È che forse, nel tempo, l'abbiamo trascurata" ("Motherhood is not the opposite of freedom, but in fact it's an amplification of it. And maybe, in time, we have come to overlook that") (qtd. in Gallozzi, "Onora la madre").

Irene is a name derived from the Greek word *eiréné* ("peace"). Peace is a state of mind that Maria is unable to achieve and that refers directly to the notion of a white space. It is also the name of Maria's mother, suggesting that Maria wants to establish a female genealogy, returning to her mother to name her daughter. The female genealogy, however, can exist only within the confines of the white space, since outside of this female space patriarchal law defines such genealogy as "illegitima" ("illegitimate"). This is, in fact, the label assigned to Irene when Maria tries to record her birth at

the relevant government office; there she is told that a daughter without a father is *illegitima*, irrespective of whether or not she has a mother. The white space, which legitimizes the mother and defies patriarchal law, becomes a metaphor for the filmmaker's reframing of the experience of bringing a daughter into the world from the point of view of the mother.[5]

The white space is also a space in which women come together and experience solidarity. This idea is conveyed in a dreamlike sequence that shows the mothers dancing, clad in their green gowns, framed by a high-angle shot that adds to the sense of the collective experience the women share within the confines of the white neonatal ward. Slowly, they abandon their cubicles and, moving away from their babies' incubators, dance with each other as the camera moves in to focus on their affectionate embraces and gentle touching of each other's heads and faces. The sequence featuring the mothers' dance of love and support for each other cross-cuts to a series of medium to close shots of Maria, invoking the increasingly close bond she develops with the mothers of the other babies in the neonatal ward. The scene, contrasting with the film's opening shot of Maria dancing alone, suggests the process of relinquishing her old self and adopting a new, still fragile, still developing identity. This sequence supports Alberto Crespi's suggestion that "È leggittimo leggere 'lo spazio bianco' come un' allegoria delle donne dell'Italia di oggi: donne in attesa—di rispetto, identità, ruolo sociale—ma capaci di lottare, di tramandare solidarietà e cultura (non è un caso che Maria sia un'insegnante)" ["It's legitimate to read 'the white space' as an allegory of women in today's Italy: women waiting—for respect, identity, a social role—but capable of fighting, of handing down solidarity and culture (it is not a coincidence that Maria is a teacher)"].

The cinematic allegory of desire for respect is particularly significant in light of Francesca Comencini's role in the protest movement *Se non ora quando* ("If Not Now, When?", which is also the title of Primo Levi's 1982 novel) that emerged approximately two years after the release of *Lo spazio bianco*. Prompted by Berlusconi's alleged involvement in illegal activities involving minors, prostitutes, orgies, and pimps and his blatant disregard for women, Francesca and Cristina Comencini were among the founders of the movement and helped organize its first widely attended demonstrations that took place on Sunday, February 13, 2011, across Italy and around the world. In a manifesto signed

by more than 50,000 women in just one week, the Comencini sisters openly denounce "the indecent, repetitive representation of women as a naked object of sexual exchange" in the Italian media, arguing that this representation degrades the rich and multifaceted nature of women's life experiences (qtd. in Kadri).

The figure of the magistrate who comes to live in Maria's apartment block and with whom she shares rare moments of friendship is another example of a woman struggling to reconcile motherhood and a commitment to social justice. Having left her three children behind, she has moved temporarily to Naples to investigate the death of a colleague and close friend.[6] Protected, but also isolated, by her bodyguards, the magistrate, like Maria, lives in limbo. She is suspended between her competing desires for justice and civic duty, and for a reunion with her children. Even though the magistrate is forced into a non-space, in that she cannot fully inhabit either desired role, she inspires her daughter to follow in her footsteps, as she tells Maria, "Mia figlia si è iscritta a giurisprudenza, vuole fare la magistrata" ("My daughter is studying law, she wants to be a judge").

Like Maria, the magistrate is also establishing a female genealogy, in this case one in which the daughter validates her mother's legacy through legal institutions. The daughter's choice to become a judge like her mother brings hope that the genealogy of the mother can be legitimized not only within the confines of the white space, but also through a law that belongs to women as well as men. Ultimately, the magistrate fails. Her case is transferred to another district, and she is powerless in the face of the legal system she serves. The viewer is left with the possibility offered by the daughter that her mother's desire for change can be made concrete by the new generation. As for Irene and Maria, the ending is hopeful, albeit somewhat ambiguous. Irene will leave the white space of the neonatal ward, and Maria declares herself ready to take on the challenge of motherhood, welcoming the new self that will emerge from such an experience.

Searching for a New Language: *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*

Through a different and more mainstream cinematic style, the quest for a "new self" is also central to Cristina Comencini's *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*. The film focuses on the lives of the

widowed Irene and her children and grandchildren. Irene has devoted her life to caring for her husband and children and now lives in the family home (a decaying villa in Rome) surrounded by family photographs. She spends most of her time watching old family movies shot by her husband. Her daughters are emotionally frustrated. Sara is a single mother constantly concerned about her son Marco's whereabouts and sexuality and unable to engage in meaningful relationships with men. Rita is torn by the desire to pursue an extramarital relationship and the hope of saving her marriage. Her daughters, 8-year-old Chiara and teenager Silvia, struggle with life-changing events—the ritual of first communion for the younger daughter and the experience of first love and sex for the adolescent. Irene's son, Claudio, while a successful lawyer, is ill at ease with his homosexuality and unable to commit fully to his lover, Luca.

The story is told primarily from Chiara's point of view. Since cinema's beginnings in Italy, children have often functioned as innocent martyrs (Landy, *Italian Film* 234) and have often been symbols for the possibility of individual, societal, national, and familial regeneration (Wood 177). Since the Neapolitan silent films of Elvira Notari, children have also been portrayed as streetwise but generous, often able to help others in need (Bruno 184). As discussed in the previous chapter, neorealist films such as De Sica's *Sciuscià* (1946) and *Ladri di biciclette* (1948) and Rossellini's *Germania anno zero* (1948) and the Neapolitan episode of *Paisà* (1946), as well as more contemporary films, feature the child as a narrative device to comment on and critique both adult behavior and the complex relationship between the individual and social institutions such as the Church and the family.

In contemporary middle-class Rome, Chiara seems to possess the redemptive function of the child in the neorealist tradition and to serve as "a narrative device of the child who observes, without understanding, the adult world of her parents" (Wood 180). Baffled by her family's state of discontent, as everybody around her struggles to come to terms with the meanings of love, sexuality, and desire, she asks God to help her family members rediscover "the truth": "Gesù, ti faccio una preghiera per la mia prima comunione. I miei parenti, li vedo tutti così strani. Aiutali a ritrovare la verità, come dice padre Giovanni. Grazie" ("Jesus, I pray to you for my first communion. My relatives, they all seem so strange to me.

Help them rediscover the truth, like Father Giovanni says. Thank you"). Much to Chiara's horror, her prayers seem to be heard, and her relatives do come to unveil the truth, with seemingly devastating consequences. As Chiara eventually learns, "the truth" does not bring the peace promised by the Gospel but rather chaos, grief, and, in her parents' case, impending separation.

The potential threats posed by the revelation of "the truth" are unveiled in the central scene when the family meets for their weekly Sunday lunch at Irene's home. On this occasion, the surfacing of family secrets leads to a series of confrontations between parents and children, and husbands and wives, which are revealed to the audience via Chiara's detached point of view. The camera, positioned next to Chiara's place at the table, follows Chiara's gaze around the table as Irene discovers that Claudio is homosexual and that she has inadvertently invited his boyfriend, Luca, to join them for lunch. The conversation, framed in a medium shot, includes several reverse shots, which clearly establish Chiara's point of view.

Following the departure of Claudio and Luca, the family moves to the living room to discuss Irene's reaction to her discovery of Claudio's sexuality. A panning, hand-held camera and a series of reverse shots verify that we are witnessing the family's conversation through an eavesdropping Chiara, who peers through doors and from behind the furniture. The observed characters are framed from behind or from the side, turning the viewers into voyeurs as the camera pans slowly from Irene to Rita to her husband and to Silvia. Chiara, standing in the doorway and positioned between two rooms, then turns toward the second room, where Marco (Sara's son) accuses his mother of mistrusting him and preventing him from developing a relationship with his uncle for fear that he too may become gay. The camera, lowering itself to assume Chiara's point of view, frames Sara and Marco sideways in a medium shot as they confront each other, enacting a reversal of roles in which the son identifies the reason for his mother's unhappiness: "Non ti fidi di nessuno. È per questo che sei sola mamma" ("You don't trust anyone. That's why you're alone, mom").

The emphasis on Chiara's "watching" of this sequence recalls the title of Vittorio De Sica's *I bambini ci guardano* (*The Children Are Watching Us*, 1944). In De Sica's film, a young boy witnesses the breakdown of his parents' marriage, brought about by his mother's infidelity, which subsequently leads to his father's suicide.

As O'Healy points out, this representation of what was perceived to be "adult weakness" has often been interpreted as a moral critique of Italian society ("Are the Children" 121).

In Comencini's case, however, the child's gaze also functions on another level. Chiara (whose name not coincidently means clarity, suggesting clarity of vision) does not watch people around her in order to teach the audience a moral lesson. Rather, she proposes a new and distinct view of the world in a cinematic language that frames her perception of reality. Counter to her desire to reinterpret "the truth" is her grandmother's desire to hold on to an absolute truth, a patriarchal vision, created for her by, and contained in, her husband's home movies.

Irene's attempt to uphold her husband's vision of an idealized nuclear family complicates her relationship with her children. In effect, Irene needs to watch and re-watch her husband's movies because she does not have a vision (and, therefore, a language in which to articulate such a vision) of her own. The casualty of a patriarchal world, Irene is unable to fulfill the mother's role beyond that of giving care and nourishment: namely, that of giving language. As some Italian feminist philosophers argue, "the mother gives life and nourishment but also language to the world" (Dominijanni 207).

By upholding her husband's "language," Irene deprives her daughters of a language in which to speak. The loss of the mother's language leads to inevitable self-estrangement for the daughters, who are caught between their mother's vision of a world shaped by the father and their own inability and indeed lack of desire to sustain that vision. Consequently, Irene's daughters become ambivalent sisters and mothers, struggling to support each other and their children. We can see this in the domestic scenes featuring Sara's and Rita's unsuccessful attempts to engage meaningfully with their children. Particularly in Sara's case, her inability to connect emotionally with others prevents her from helping her teenage son deal with his emotional isolation and leads to a gradual inversion of roles. This becomes clear in the confrontation previously mentioned and is exemplified in a scene in which Sara gets drunk when she discovers that her newly found male friend is actually her brother's client, who is accused of murdering his wife, and needs to be carried to bed by her son.

Similarly, Rita cannot bridge the gap that separates her from her daughters. In the spacious and seemingly ordered apartment they

share, mother and daughters never kiss affectionately or embrace, nor are they framed within close proximity of each other. Despite the superficial goodbye kisses and the fact that Silvia shares with her mother the excitement of her first love, Rita is ill at ease with her role as mother and wife, and in her struggle to find alternative ways of being, she and her daughters become estranged.

Estrangement between mothers and children is at least in part due to the women's self-estrangement. Posing the question, "What is a woman?" Adriana Cavarero argues that whereas "man" is a human being with his own language, "woman" speaks a language that she does not own. Hence, speaking someone else's language prevents women from becoming subjects of language, condemning them to self-estrangement (Cavarero, "Per una teoria della differenza" 54). For many decades Italian cinema has condemned women to self-estrangement.

To address this state of affairs, standing as a metaphor for women filmmakers (and for Cristina, the filmmaker, as the daughter of the celebrated director Luigi Comencini as well), Chiara's desire to reinterpret the truth is a search for a cinematic language in which to speak, a language that can lead to subjectivity. Feminist film critic Janet R. Welsch suggests that to facilitate the development of our own language we first need to understand our adoption of patriarchal languages and to learn to use and adapt these languages. By language, we mean the Italian notion of *linguaggio* (which in English can also be translated as "discourse") and which in "its acquisition as well as its relation to subjectivity, to self-identity and self-realization, has been a central issue in feminist theory and feminist film research and a major concern of the feminist movement during the past twenty-five years" (Welsch 162).[7]

Both the search for and the nature of this new language are made clear in the closing sequence of the film when on the day of her first communion Chiara is given a video camera by her family. Armed with that gift, Chiara effectively becomes the creator of a new and alternative way of seeing, which reveals rather than conceals. Upon presenting the video camera to Chiara, her mother says: "adesso li fai tu i filmini" ("now it will be you making the home movies"), alluding to the fact that Chiara's home movies will replace those of her late grandfather. Her grandmother adds, "così saranno più realistici" ("so they will be more realistic"), thereby acknowledging that her husband's home movies created and perhaps imposed on her a view of the world that she no longer shares.

From that point until the end of the film, Chiara's hand-held camera follows the various characters and offers a tentative conclusion to their interrelated stories: Luca and Claudio are reconciled and welcomed into the family, Sara and Marco have come to a new understanding, Sara is filmed making an appointment with the mysterious man she met on the phone, and Rita informs her mother that she will be leaving her husband. As we follow Chiara's film, which becomes a film within the film, the spectator is allowed to see what she sees, perceived and constructed through the lens of her camera. Unlike the previous sequence, in which the spectator observes the world through Chiara's eyes, in this final sequence Chiara actually takes charge of the camera and, therefore, of framing the story of the family. The gift of the video camera turns Chiara from the child who watches into the storyteller entrusted with creating the new story. Hence, in the ultimate inversion of roles, Rita and Irene need Chiara to make the home movies to create for them a vision of who they could be, a space of subjectivity.[8]

The film ends with a close-up shot of Chiara filming an image of herself that is reflected in the rear-view mirror of her parents' car. The use of the mirror to reflect Chiara's self-fashioning inverts the tradition that has made women into visual objects (as discussed in Mayne) and suggests that Chiara, unlike her mother and grandmother, is equipped (thanks to her family's gift) to forge her own vision of the world. At the same time, the use of a rear-view mirror combines the desire to look forward with the need for a retrospective understanding of traditional cinematic configurations of women.

The gift of the video camera is crucial: it becomes a means by which the women of three generations validate each other's stories and rewrite the tradition that had been imposed on them by the patriarch of the family. Cristina Comencini endows her child protagonist with the ability to acquire a new way of seeing that may in turn allow her to create a new cinematic language. In *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*, the last image of the world observed through the lens of a camera held by a young girl points to a new vision of the future. Comencini proposes a view of the world that enters into dialogue with and adapts an existing cinematic tradition inherited from her biological and cinematic fathers. As Welsch suggests, "Since using patriarchal languages means entering into

dialogical relation with them, we can also expect to change them, not radically or quickly, but gradually and continually, to effect shifts in meaning that give us greater visibility and equality" (169).

The Political Is Personal: *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, *Di madre in figlia,* and *Il terzo occhio*

While Comencini may propose a cinematic environment within which the female protagonist and the female director might claim a language of their own, her own films, those of her sister, Francesca, or those of the younger Ciccone are not able to create such a language. As in *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*, the camera is passed to a new generation of female directors, such as Marazzi, Sargentini, and Nicchiarelli, who will gradually carve out a space for female realities in the Italian cinematic canon. These self-reflexive filmmakers, who are part of what Vito Zagarrio calls the "New-New" Italian cinema, engage in a hybrid style of documentary filmmaking that plays with the boundaries of fact and fiction, exploits new technologies, and shows signs of greater "consapevolezza, maturità; talento, aggressività e forse di un po' più di disincanto" ("knowledge, maturity; talent, aggression and maybe a bit of disenchantment"; Zagarrio 19).

For Italian women filmmakers, documentaries are often an easier option, given the culture of the film industry, which, as discussed in the Introduction, makes it very difficult for women to break through the "celluloid ceiling."[9] The need to negotiate with male institutions and to reconcile personal goals and aspirations with the pragmatic search for production funds and distributors has brought many filmmakers to a cinematic genre that allows them to bring to the screen films that might otherwise never be financed or produced because of the overtly personal nature of the issues they address. It is not unlikely, in fact, that many women attempting to make films that deal with aspects of their lives would still be accused, as they were in the 1970s, of "navel gazing," the kind of accusation that led to the feminist battle cry that the personal is political.

Marazzi's *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, Sargentini's *Di madre in figlia*, and Nicchiarelli's *Il terzo occhio* are part of a growing number of experimental documentaries, both in Italy and internationally, that increasingly call into question the possible role of the camera

in creating a version of the way it really was, and questioning what in the past was often the didactic role of documentaries.

What we consider new in these films are the ways in which the filmmakers' concern for the private and the intimacy of personal relationships, which may seem like a retreat from the public, is in fact a political reflection on female agency. The political effectiveness of these films resides in the filmmakers' attention to the female spectator and to their making the kind of cinema that allows them to engage with a different social subject, a perspective virtually nonexistent in films representing women as the object of the male gaze. As Teresa de Lauretis points out, "what is at stake is not so much how to 'make visible the invisible' as how to produce the conditions of representability for a different social subject" (*Alice Doesn't* 7–8). In attempting to produce such conditions, each of these interventionist filmmakers, to varying degrees, calls our attention to the construction of this new subject and our relationship to her through a constant negotiation between the on-screen and off-screen identities of the filmmakers and their subjects.

The documentaries by Marazzi, Sargentini, and Nicchiarelli discussed in this chapter prioritize female subjectivity (of both authors and spectators), which is conceived as a position "in a network of power relations of which sexual difference is a major constitutive factor" (Smelik 3) along with class, age, and geographical location. This position needs to be understood in terms of the filmmakers' relationship to hegemonic cinema traditions,[10] as Italian women filmmakers are not working in a vacuum but are slowly attempting to produce the conditions of representability for de Lauretis's "different social subject" within an established cinematic tradition forged almost entirely by "fathers" for the most part uninterested in addressing the spectator as female.

For these filmmakers, the creation of a space in which to represent and create a different social subject and to address the spectator as female is tied to the search for self, which in turn is linked to the search for the mother and the re-evaluation of the mother's perspective. The search for the mother's words and the act of giving them value both require a political practice that the philosophers of Diotima have called *la pratica del partire da sé* ("the practice of beginning from oneself"),[11] which grants centrality to women's politics. By politics, in this case, we do not mean institutional politics and the aim of integrating women into soci-

ety by creating space for them in the "male" world (in parliament, political parties, churches, the media, the universities, and so on), risking "the self-confinement of the female subject" (Muraro, "La politica" 1). Rather, we mean a new understanding of oneself and of the world that must *necessarily* be reconfigured and rethought beginning from one's gendered experience (as someone who is either a man or a woman).

The *pratica del partire da sé* leads to a practical philosophy that, according to Luisa Muraro, is a self-determined process of critical understanding and sociocultural change. It subverts the categories of Western thought and makes it possible for women to occupy the position of speaking subjects *as*—rather than *in spite of* being—female (de Lauretis, "The Essence" 16–17). In our discussion of Marazzi's *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, Sargentini's *Di madre in figlia,* and Nicchiarelli's *Il terzo occhio* we argue that the search for the mother and the authorization of the mother's perspective is still a political project. In line with the practice of *partire da sé*, the filmmakers of these documentaries take themselves as a starting point in their search for agency and subjectivity.[12]

The "monstrous chain"[13] of which Aleramo so powerfully wrote a century earlier, and which persisted in Ciccone's *L'amore di Màrja*, is broken by Alina Marazzi's *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*. In this autobiographical documentary, a daughter uses her voice (both literally, by speaking as if she were her mother, and metaphorically, by making a film about her mother's life) to turn her mother's life into the example of dignity previously invoked by Aleramo as an unattainable aspiration. Marazzi explains: "To tell the story of my mother with these old films is for me to give dignity to the memory of the person who gave me life. I consider it a present for myself, for her, for all parents and children" (Marazzi, "Synopsis"). For her the private story gains political significance also through its telling: "To make something personal became through sharing it with others a political issue" (interview, Scarparo).

As the title suggests, the documentary is about the daughter's desire for a brief reunion with her mother. Given the impossibility of being literally reunited with her mother, Alina turns to her mother's letters and diaries, and to home movies shot by her grandfather, which she had not "dared look at" (Marazzi, "Synopsis") since her mother's suicide at the age of 33, when Alina was 7 years old. The film starts with the sound recording of a 45 rpm

record with the "real" voice of her mother pretending to rebuke her children, Alina and Martino, for not eating their soup. This opening sequence is significant because it is one of the few images of Alina herself in the documentary, thus introducing her (and not just her mother) as subject of the film, and because this image is the only recorded memory Alina (and, therefore, the viewer) has of her mother's voice speaking directly to her. Assuming a clearly playful tone, the typical maternal mantra "*mangia, Alina, mangia*" ("eat, Alina, eat") already suggests an aberration of the traditional mother–daughter relationship.

As the film begins, Luisa Hoepli Marazzi, also known as Liseli or Luisella, has just returned from Switzerland (although the viewer is not aware at this stage that she has been released from a psychiatric hospital). The images show a happy mother on an outing with her husband and young children. Liseli's laughter is followed by the words of the song "Un'ora sola ti vorrei," which is also the title of the film. From this point onward, the mother's actual voice is silenced, and a voiceover, by Alina, goes on to read an imaginary letter from her mother to her, in which the mother writes: "Voglio raccontarti la mia storia adesso che è passato così tanto tempo da quando sono morta" ("I want to tell you my story now that so much time has passed since I died"). The ensuing posthumous account interweaves readings of Liseli's letters and private journals with medical reports from psychiatric hospitals. As Marazzi explains, "Through these words it is possible to reconstruct her whole life in the different times: childhood, love, family, illness, existential malaise" (Marazzi, "Synopsis").

While Marazzi laments that most of her life her "mother's name has been ignored, avoided, hidden […] her face also," the reconstruction of Liseli's life is only partially made possible by means of the grandfather's home movies (Marazzi, "Synopsis"). While Marazzi is indeed able to finally "see" her mother and trace her family history in the amateur 16-mm films shot by her grandfather between 1926 and the 1970s, the readings of Liseli's letters, personal journals, and medical records that speak of anguish and of a sense of unease tell a story that is consistently different from that portrayed in the images shot by Liseli's father of happy holidays and smiling family members. In her film, Marazzi is able to highlight the contradictions between Liseli's troubled voice and her father's joyous and serene images: the compilation of dissonant words and images creates meaning through parataxis.

The fact that Marazzi takes on her mother's voice in the documentary implies an overt appropriation of the authorial voice. Often the authorial voice in expository documentaries—the so-called voice of God or voice of authority—has a didactic function. Usually, this voice "addresses us directly, it lays out its point of view explicitly. Instead of using the voiceover to argue for a position that says 'see it this way,' this can be a galvanizing voice or a reassuring one, but its tone provides us with a ready-made point of view to which we will, it is hoped, subscribe" (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* 48). In Marazzi's documentary, however, the voiceover is that of the daughter who reads the words of the mother, thus claiming authority for both herself and her mother. It is a complex voice because it speaks in the first person, assuming an autobiographical stance whose "truth," however, relies on diaries, letters, home movies, and hospital records. These are by and large open texts, making the complexity of her mother's subject position visible, mainly because these texts reveal tensions and contradictions in the words spoken but also in the ways in which the images (the grandfather's images, in particular) remain open for interpretation.

By alternating a reading of Liseli's letters and journals with a reading of her medical records, and accompanying these with the footage shot by her grandfather, Marazzi creates two stories within a story. One is about her mother's struggle to live up to social expectations and to conform to the behavioral norms expected of women of her social class. The other focuses on and implicitly calls into question established understandings of mental illness that invariably create oppositional binaries between the healthy and the diseased, whereby one group, the healthy, relies on its opposite, the diseased other, to support a belief in and assert its normality. Liseli's difficulty in finding her place in the world, which is shared by other women living in patriarchal societies, is understood by herself and others as an aberration to be treated with drugs and lengthy periods of hospitalization.

A third narrative thread concerns the relationship between image and referent and conjures up the complex relationship and interdependency of being and being seen. Once again, this is revealed in the juxtaposition of the footage of Liseli as seen by her father, from birth to adolescence, to marriage and motherhood, with the narrative constructed from Liseli's words as selected and spoken by her daughter. In the space created by the juxtaposition

of images and voiceover, the story of Liseli's vulnerability is constructed as a story of disempowerment experienced by those who are looked at in relation to those who look at them. It is clear from her diary and letters that Liseli was struggling with her attempt at self-fashioning while resisting others' attempts to fashion her, including her father's camera. Whereas the camera focuses on her body and attempts to capture her face in close-ups, she does not allow herself to be read by these close-up shots. She remains distant, elusive, and forever an enigma, particularly for the daughter who attempts to find her in these images. Hence, the father's footage of his daughter is an ambiguous gift to a granddaughter in search of her mother.

Finally, by including footage of herself, Marazzi also reminds us that she, in turn, appropriates these images also to make sense of her own story. This is evident in the shot that shows pictures being thrown one on top of the other, a shot shown repeatedly in the film to highlight the daughter/filmmaker's search for meaning in the extant images of her mother. Meaning, or at least provisional meaning, is thus created through the daughter's selection of these images and assemblage of them into footage that will tell her story.

Marazzi's desire to establish continuity between her story and her mother's story extends to the representation of the relationship between her mother and her mother's mother. This is conveyed on numerous occasions on which Marazzi juxtaposes shots of Liseli and Marazzi's grandmother. For example, a sequence of shots in which first Liseli's mother and then Liseli are shown in the same maternal act of washing a child also features Liseli's words, recited in the voiceover, that reveal her anxiety and insecurities about mothering. This sequence is followed by one in which close-up shots of Marazzi's grandmother looking at the camera and then off screen to the right alternate (as reverse shots) with similar shots of Liseli also looking straight at the camera and then turning her head to look off screen to the left. The composition of these shots is almost identical, creating a mirroring effect. This is one of many instances in which Marazzi's careful editing and juxtaposing of images generates the possibility of a rereading of the images originating from the grandfather's footage. Marazzi essentially creates a visual dialogue between mother and grandmother, which complements the verbal dialogue implicit in the letters she reads (written by her mother for her grandmother). The dialogue be-

tween her mother and her grandmother may of course not have happened in the first place. Thus Alina invents a genealogical thread through her manipulation of images, one that suggests an underlying common anxiety about mothering. As Liseli (through Marazzi) comments when talking about her own mother's feelings about motherhood, "Non ho mai veramente saputo come lei, la nonna, si sentisse nei suoi nuovi panni di madre. Se anche lei come me avesse avuto paura di deludere i suoi figli" ("I have never really known how she, Nonna, felt in her new shoes as a mother. If she too, like me, would have been scared of disappointing her children").

By filling the gaps and appropriating her grandfather's images, Marazzi disrupts the patriarchal narrative and establishes a series of new relationships. Given that she clearly positions herself as daughter, both as filmmaker of her documentary and also as spectator of her grandfather's home movies, her search for the mother and her creation of maternal authority address the spectator from a female point of view. Hence, the documentary's political project is not so much to create realistic images of women that lead the daughter to discover the essence of who her mother really was, as to create the conditions of representability for a mother–daughter relationship that question the framework of paternal authority and reclaim the authority of the mother's words.[14]

The search for the mother and the daughter's attempt to understand and to valorize the complex process of identification with the mother are also at the heart of Sargentini's *Di madre in figlia*. Unlike Marazzi's documentary (and indeed many of the literary works of the last century that explored the mother–daughter relationship) in which the writer/director/narrator must literally re-create the dead mother and bring her back to life,[15] the mothers in Sargentini's documentary are all alive and able to speak in their own voices. Protagonists in their own right, the women, many of whom assume the positions of mothers and grandmothers, as well as of daughters, speak openly and frankly in front of the camera to an implied but absent interviewer. The "talking head" format, rather than offering expert opinion as it so often does in documentary, is used to foreground women's experiences. Although the predominance of close-up and middle shots establishes intimacy with the women interviewed and emphasizes the intensity of their emotions, Sargentini carefully avoids the sentimentality typical of

reality television that she describes as “la televisione del dolore” (“the television of despair”). In an interview, she explains,

> per me è fondamentale che emerga soprattutto il rispetto di queste persone […] la grande fiducia che mi danno nel raccontarmele, quindi è esattamente l’opposto dei *reality show* […] perché in realtà tutte le volte che ti ho detto che c’è stata emozione reciproca io non sono lì cinica che “zoommo” sull’occhio, sulla lacrima, […] magari basta vedere un’espressione del viso per capire che dietro c’è un dramma, ma non necessariamente stare lì a esplicitarlo […] credo che venga fuori comunque, magari da una piccola parola, da una frase, da un occhio che guarda una cosa, da, […], una complicità che scatta col “davanti” che sono io, e che poi diventa lo spettatore. (Interview with Tufano)

> for me, the most important thing is that respect for these people emerges […] the great trust that they place in me in telling me their stories, is exactly the opposite of reality television […] because in truth, every time that I’ve told you that there was mutual emotion […] I’m not there, cynical, “zooming in” on eyes, tears […] perhaps it’s enough to see a facial expression to understand that there’s a drama behind it, but not necessarily to be there to explain it […] I think that it comes out all the same, perhaps from a short word, from a sentence, from an eye looking at something, from, […] a complicity that clicks between what is “in front” of the camera, me, and that then becomes the spectator.

The complicity with the female filmmaker and, by implication, with the spectator addressed by the film as female is a central strength of the documentary, creating productive tension and foregrounding the complex and ambivalent answer to a seemingly simple question: “How are you like your mother and how is your daughter like you?” The editing of the interviews makes clear that despite their desire to be different, mothers and daughters are also alike. At times their similarities are conveyed by a gesture or a facial expression, and at other times they are made explicit by the daughters’ relationships with their own children.

The careful editing of the film results in a juxtaposition of interviews that accentuates both the pain and the pleasure of the mother–daughter relationship, which, in the words of one of the women interviewed, is “in assoluto il rapporto più affascinante e terribile” (“undeniably the most fascinating and terrible relation-

ship”). The exploration of this relationship begins with a rather confusing shot of women’s hands collecting what we later learn are blindfolds from a basket on the ground. The film’s interviews are interrupted by this on-going game of blindfold, but the fact that the women are actually playing this game becomes clear to the viewer only halfway through the documentary. The game functions as a physical manifestation of the daughters’ psychological search for the mother; it consists of blindfolded daughters ‘looking’ for their mothers and having to resort to finding them through other senses: touch and smell. Significantly, the very last image of the documentary, following the closing credits, is of the filmmaker herself looking for her mother and, upon finding her, crying out, “Ti ho trovata!” (“I found you!”).

As the daughters gradually find their mothers, the spectators’ blindfolds are also removed as we come to understand the various relationships between the women interviewed. These revelations position the spectator as an active participant in the game, forcing her to rethink and perhaps re-watch the documentary, to reinterpret the women’s words in light of their daughters’ or mothers’ often contradictory or inconsistent comments. But above all, the game of blindfold invites us to resist facile conclusions; it allows space for multiple subjects and multiple interpretations. The documentary therefore assumes an open and circular structure that encourages conflicting and evolving interpretations of the stories these women tell and, more broadly, of all life histories and the attempts to document them.

As in Marazzi’s documentary, in *Di madre in figlia* the narrative advances through the accumulation of information and through the spectator’s active participation in making sense of the information presented, especially since there is no voiceover to direct our viewing and listening. The game of blindfold helps us to finally understand who is who and who belongs to whom and to work out the genealogical relationships between the women interviewed. The game is also a visual expression of the daughter’s desire to find or perhaps rediscover and see her mother differently. In the search for a new vision of the mother, the blindfold is crucial. Rather than impairing the daughter’s vision, it allows her to search for and to recognize and discover the mother using means beyond the confines of a cinematic vision, which, like language, may not be hers.

The blindfold also symbolizes the obstacles to identification with the mother. As we have seen in Ciccone's film, the daughter's identification with the mother in a framework of paternal authority often results in what Julia Kristeva describes as the daughter's complex process of "disidentification" from the mother. This "disidentification" from the mother leads to the subject's becoming a sexual object of a man (that is, the father) but also to her identification with the father as a symbolic figure "that allows the subject to speak, to think, and to take part in society" (Kristeva 497). Hence women "take part in the symbolic order, but only as outsiders" (Kristeva 497). Sargentini's game of blindfold alludes to the daughter's attempt to create a new symbolic order by giving what the Milan Women's Bookshop *Sottosopraverde* defines as "real strength within our relationships to that ancient relationship," the relationship with the mother, which has no form in patriarchal society (14).

In her overtly self-reflexive *Il terzo occhio*, Nicchiarelli explores the mother–daughter relationship by crossing the boundary between fact and fiction. Set in a health spa in the Apennines, the film's narrative is constructed around the exchanges among six women: a mother (who is also Nicchiarelli's actual mother) and her two daughters (played by Nicchiarelli and her sister), a psychotherapist, an actress, and another young woman (played by the film's producer). The members of the all-female film crew also become protagonists within the film on the various occasions when the camera turns away from the narrative to focus on the filmmaker and the crew. This technique makes us never forget that we are watching a film. It also highlights the film's peculiar nature: one that is by and for women. The women behind the camera do not just temporarily emerge before our eyes, but in Nicchiarelli's experiment were instrumental to the scripting of the story; they joined Nicchiarelli and the cast in the brainstorming and writing sessions that took place off the set during the period of shooting at the spa. Equally important was the fact that an all-female technical crew assured a predominantly male-free environment, which, according to Nicchiarelli, allowed the women to speak more freely and spontaneously, not inhibited, as they might otherwise have been, by the presence of men: "La mia convinzione era che la troupe dovesse essere solo femminile non soltanto perché eravamo

in accappatoio, ma perché basta la presenza di un uomo a far cambiare l'atteggiamento di una donna" ("My conviction was that the crew should be all female, not only because we were in bathrobes, but because it only takes the presence of one man to change a woman's attitude"; Interview with Tufano).

The film is framed by two encounters with symbols of male authority, one aggressively resisting and the other debunking his position of power. One of the first scenes records each of the women's initial encounters with the male spa doctor in which she reveals her reason for seeking treatment. During her discussion, the psychotherapist in the group openly challenges the doctor's authority, asking to see his credentials, questioning the lack of services offered by the spa, and refusing to succumb to his patronizing and defensive responses. In a similar vein, the film's penultimate scene depicts the intrusion of a man into the women's world. During their final night at the spa, the women overtly break the rules of the spa by going for a swim in the pool after hours. They are caught and reprimanded by the authoritarian voice of one of the male staff, which tells them that they cannot stay and must leave the pool area. In this scene the women rebel as a female collective (as opposed to opposing the doctor individually, as in the interviews at the beginning of the film): they use their bodies as a weapon against the man, who is rendered powerless by his unflinching respect for boundaries of decorum. Since he cannot force the naked women to get out of the pool while he is there, he fails to enforce the rules and is driven off.

While these framing scenes suggest that the film denounces male authority, most of the film's scenes attempt to capture a cloistered female world in a style that is deliberately self-reflexive. From early on, an intimacy and complicity develops within the group of women featured in the story, fostered by the shared physicality of the spa treatments. As a result the film establishes a link between a woman's corporeality and female interiority, which is suggested by the film's title: "the third eye." On one level it refers to one of the spa's New Age treatments, Sinovara, the pouring of oil on the forehead to stimulate "the third eye," the eye that looks within, and allows the "patient" to return to her origins by reliving memories or embarking on a psychological journey. The treatment is meant to cure anxiety and stress by inducing a deep state of relaxation. In

this avowedly self-reflexive film, however, "the third eye" is more than the eye that looks inside; it is also intended as the eye of the camera and/or the eye of the spectator.

The film, shot with a DV-cam, provides the hand-held camera feeling of "real." Sudden cuts from one scene to the next, which do not always seem connected, the lack of a single narrative thread, and sudden shift in topics and themes discussed by the women make the film appear fragmented. Like Sargentini's documentary, Nicchiarelli's "docufiction" has women addressing questions on aspects of the female experience from different generational and experiential perspectives. At times the hand-held camera moves shakily in on individual women, bringing the spectator close to each woman and her very personal story. At other times it moves back and captures women in two and three shots, suggesting instead the growing intimacy between them.

The spa treatments become the backdrop for conversations in which the women literally and metaphorically "bare" their innermost feelings and doubts about themselves, about female development, womanhood, aging and sexuality, and female pleasure. In representing the concerns of women from different generations who benefit from this intra-generational dialogue, the film gives each woman the opportunity to speak from her experience and from her position as mother or daughter and as a female subject defined by her body, which she recognizes as conditioning her relationship to herself and to the world. The film represents new ways in which women can talk about themselves and experience their bodies through open discussions of sexuality, sensuality, and love. The psychotherapist, for example, engages in a discussion on sexual pleasure by challenging the prevailing idea that female pleasure derives primarily from the act of love making. She reveals that for her, greater pleasure comes from vigorous physical activity in the gym than from an orgasm resulting from love making with her partner.

Nicchiarelli's mother speaks from the often-unexplored position of an aging woman in a society in which a woman's youthful body image is highly valued. She acknowledges a loss of confidence in herself that runs parallel to a loss of love for her body, a body that she had lost contact with as a result of the aging process: "Quando il tuo corpo non è più giovane, è terribile, vuoi dimenticarlo. Ti disamori da te stessa" ("When your body is no longer young, it's

terrible, you want to forget it. You fall out of love with yourself."). The spa experience reintroduces her to her body and teaches her to love her body through the treatments and caresses that revitalize her. The rediscovery of her body is a step in the mother's revalidation of herself. The spa context and its highly self-centered treatments also prompt her to step out of the sacrificial maternal role. In a scene toward the end of the film, when her daughters approach her to seek her advice, she surprisingly retreats from her maternal role. Although she claims to have been a good mother to her daughters when they were young, she now asserts the right to live her own life, to put her own needs and desires first: "Che una generazione viva in funzione dell'altra—eh no! Non è cosi. Io c'ho una vita sola da vivere, ognuno di noi una ce l'ha. Ora, te ne posso dare mezza. Basta. Sono oltre la metà" ("That one generation lives depending on another – no! It's not like that. I only have one life to live, each of us has one. Now, I have given you half of it. Enough. I'm past the halfway mark"). Unlike in Marazzi's film, in which the daughter gives her mother a voice and authority, in Nicchiarelli's film the mother authorizes herself. While she states in her entry interview that she has come to the spa in order to give something to her daughters, she ultimately gives the gift of subjectivity to herself and by extension breaks "the monstrous chain."

In authorizing the mother, *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, *Di madre in figlia*, and *Il terzo occhio* respond to the theoretical challenge of how to represent the heterogeneity in relationships between mothers and daughters and the social processes that supposedly make them all women, or mothers or daughters. In *Di madre in figlia*, this awareness is conveyed by the juxtaposition of the interviews and their contradictory and complex messages. While less experimental than the other two documentaries, the use of the more conventional and realist talking head interviews is supported by Waldman and Walkers' critique of the 1970s and 1980s feminist scholarship that is advocating an "anti-realist" position. They claim that "realist" forms are valuable for soliciting audience identification (65). Documentary maker and feminist critic Alexandra Juhasz further argues that "realist" strategies are complex and varied and that rather than suggesting a fixed reality, they may "express an opinion about what this reality means, what it feels like, how it functions, or how it might change" (194–95). This complexity is reinforced in *Di madre in figlia's* ambiguous final image, when,

upon finding her mother, the filmmaker's exclamation "Ti ho trovata" betrays relief for having found her mother but also anxiety centering on the impossibility of holding on to what may be termed the essence of her mother and of getting to know her as she really is. The impossibility of really knowing the mother suggests that a clear understanding of the mother is less significant than a relational knowledge of her, born in and within her relationship to the daughter.

In Marazzi's film, although the daughter wishes to understand and to know her mother, the strength of the film rests on the creative power generated by the daughter's desire for her mother and her search for the mother. Marazzi has questioned the father's authority and through a rereading and reworking of his images has re-created and authorized the mother. *Il terzo occhio* more overtly disputes patriarchal authority. Framed by two encounters with males that question their authority, Nicchiarelli's film, in validating the relationships between women, ultimately acknowledges a woman's right to free herself of the bond and to reacquire her subjectivity. The mother–daughter chain loses its rigidity and its unidirectional dimension, as it also suggests a reciprocity whereby the daughter in the end not only literally and metaphorically embraces the mother, but also expects a role reversal as perhaps part of a different biological destiny than the one so familiar to us. In the closing scene of the film, Nicchiarelli, filmmaker and daughter, embraces her mother as they walk away together, ready to embark on a new phase of their relationship.

Finally, what seems in all three films to be an intimately personal journey that starts from a necessity to reconstruct one's past and to understand oneself and the world beginning from one's gendered experience becomes political through a self-reflexive documentary style that invites the off-screen viewer to engage in a similar practice to what is represented on screen, and to do so by *partendo da sé* ("beginning from oneself").

Marazzi, Sargentini, and Nicchiarelli join the ranks of women directors who, while not avowedly feminist, "have […] chosen to tell stories that explicitly or implicitly challenge […] dominant representations of female identity" (Hankin 60). They stand for Sonia's daughter in Ciccone's *L'amore di Màrja*, the magistrate's daughter in Francesca Comencini's *Lo spazio bianco*, and Chiara in Cristina Comencini's *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*. In these films,

change for women comes from the creation of a female genealogy that recognizes maternal authority. In *L'amore di Màrja*, Alice asks her niece to "pensa[r]ci bene a quello che ti ho raccontato" ("think hard about what I've told you"), that is, to reinterpret the mother's and grandmother's stories in light of an understanding of Màrja's love as "un mondo nuovo" ("a new world"), a new way of being in the world. In *Lo spazio bianco*, it is hoped that by following in her mother's footsteps, the judge's daughter may be better equipped to bring about changes in society that her own mother, deprived of a mother to emulate and still deeply enmeshed in a patriarchal society, had not been able to effect. Finally, in *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*, Chiara is given a camera to create new cinematic configurations of women. Making use of a filmic mode more accessible at both technical and production levels, Marazzi, Sargentini, and Nicchiarelli have begun to challenge dominant representations of female identity through the documentary form, validating the maternal legacy and reframing the mother–daughter relationship on their own terms.

Chapter Four

Reinventing Our Mothers

Gendering History and Memory

A preoccupation with the past and its portrayal on screen has been a common feature of many Western cinematic traditions. The New German Cinema, the French *cinéma de qualité*, and much of the so-called New Italian Cinema have turned to the past to reflect on national anxieties generated by social and cultural transformations. In these films, memory and the compelling desire to remember are configured as unresolved national traumas, and the screening of the past becomes a means by which to question national identity and its relationship to official history.

This is particularly true for the films of the New German Cinema (ca. 1969–90). Joan Dagle writes that "one of the persistent issues confronting this West German film movement is the cultural failure (and the need) to come to terms with the Nazi past, to confront history, the problem of how to work through the 'amnesia' of the postwar period in an effort not only to present that which has been repressed but also as a means of constituting an individual and social self/identity from the fragments of a divided nationality" (27). In postwar Italy, the desire to imagine a shared national history on screen dates back to films such as Visconti's *Senso* (*Livia,* 1954) and *Il gattopardo* (*The Leopard,* 1963) and Rossellini's *Viva l'Italia* (*Garibaldi,* 1961), and it continues into the present with Mario Martone's *Noi credevamo* (*We Believed,* 2010). These films foreground the complexity of interpreting and reinterpreting revolutionary movements such as the anti-Fascist resistance and the Risorgimento (Ferrero-Regis xxvii) and initiate a tradition of constructing the past as a means of interpreting the present.

The interpretation and construction of the past through historical representation on screen, however, raises a number of theoretical and practical questions. What exactly do we mean by history?

How does cinema contribute to the historicization of the past in the present? If, as Hayden White argues, historians and writers of fiction employ similar "techniques or strategies" (*Tropics* 121) when writing about the past, what is the role of the filmmaker in the creation of the past as history? And how does cinema deal with women's contested relationship to history?

The relationship between history and cinema is complicated by problematic questions relating to accuracy, narrative, and the screen as a site of cultural production. The question of accuracy relates not only to the degree of the film's historical faithfulness in terms of the details of *mise-en-scène*, but also to the ways in which narrative conventions necessarily construct and, for some, distort history (Dagle 27). White invites us to cease to take for granted that something called the past exists and can be studied and represented. Instead he invites us to view History as a "process of social change that includes not only the past but the present as well" ("Questions" 76). Hence, following White's suggestions, rather than trying for historical accuracy, we need to be concerned with how we construct "the idea of historical inquiry" as an investigation into "the process of transformation by and in which a given epoch, era, or phenomenon became something other than what it once was" ("Questions" 76). According to White, cinema is particularly well suited to "the representation of transformations in a way that verbal discourse, except for the sublimest poetic utterance, is not" ("Questions" 76):

> Cinematic representations can successfully morph images so as to depict change without having to allegorize […] And indeed in film editing one has a better analogy to what historians purport to do with historical evidence […] It all depends upon what one takes to be the referent of a specifically historiological mode of representation. If the referent is things, individuals, human beings, practices, and the like, then cinematographic reconstructions will offend those historians who think that the aim of historical inquiry is to establish "the facts of the matter." If the referent is the process of change by and in which a given social formation, group, or individual became something other than what it originally was or appeared to be, movies can be not only very "historical" but indeed even "philosophical." And this whether they are cast in the mode of factuality or fictionality. ("Questions" 76)

White's view is further developed by Robert Rosenstone, who argues that directors such as Roberto Rossellini and the Taviani brothers are historians; their obsession about the past becomes a burden that forces them to make historical films, not for escape or entertainment, but as a means to understanding how the problems and questions posed by the past are still relevant in the present (*History* 117).[1]

The close attention to period detail typical of the films directed by the Taviani brothers betrays a desire to refashion the present through an imaginary past. Commenting on their films, Francesca Parmeggiani argues that, "Oggi come allora (e viceversa) la sinistra progressista e più impegnata socialmente s'interroga sui modi della rivoluzione, sulle idee di individuo, autorità e individualismo al suo interno" ["Today, like back then (and vice versa), the progressive and more socially committed Left wonders about the methods of revolution, about the ideas of the individual, authority and individualism within it" (406)]. This approach to constructing the past according to contemporary values had already been an issue in the 1970s and informed films such as Bertolucci's *Il conformista* (*The Conformist,* 1970) and *Novecento* (*1900,* 1976) and Liliana Cavani's *Il portiere di notte* (*The Night Porter,* 1974).

The need to reconfigure the national past is still felt in the twenty-first century. With films such as Tullio Giordana's *I cento passi* (*One Hundred Steps,* 2000) and *La meglio gioventù* (*The Best of Youth,* 2003), Daniele Luchetti's *Mio fratello è figlio unico* (*My Brother Is an Only Child,* 2007), and Mario Martone's *Noi credevamo* (2010), Italian filmmakers have continued to reflect on the relationship between social and cultural revolutions, and individuals. The Fascist past and the contested memory of Italy's participation in World War II continue to be of particular interest to many filmmakers. Films such as Tullio Giordana's *Sanguepazzo* (*Wild Blood,* 2008), Michele Soavi's *Il sangue dei vinti* (*Blood of the Losers,* 2008), and Marco Bellocchio's *Vincere* (*Victory,* 2009) address Italy's allegiance to first Nazi Germany and then the Allies, which resulted in defeat, civil war, and foreign occupation. New to the past decade, however, is the interest in remembering and reinventing women's history through fiction films and documentaries. Examples of the former include De Lillo's *Il resto di niente* (2004), Sandrelli's *Christine Cristina* (2009), and Nicchiarelli's *Cosmonauta* (2009). The history of the women's liberation movement is the

focus of panoramic documentaries such as *Bellissime 1* (*Beautiful 1*, 2004) and *Bellissime 2* (*Beautiful 2*, 2006) by Giovanna Gagliardo and *Storia del movimento femminista in Italia* (*History of the Feminist Movement in Italy*, 2006) by Lorella Reale, as well as the more experimental *Vogliamo anche le rose* (2007) by Marazzi and the biographical accounts of four women in *Ragazze la vita trema* (2009) by Sangiovanni. Documentaries remembering and reinventing women from the literary past include Spada's *Poesia che mi guardi* (2009).[2]

The attempt to examine women's relationship with history through cinematic historiography parallels that of feminist written biographies. The connection between feminist scholarship and women's history is not new. In fact, the first texts in the field that have come to be known as women's history were biographies (Varikas 352). Since Christine de Pisan's *Le livre de la cité des dames*, there has been a rich tradition of biographies of famous and influential women. The biographies of exceptional women were mostly intended for the edification of young women, who were meant to learn obedience through such exemplars of female excellence. This was particularly so in the cases of collections comprising biographies of women whose fame was dependent on their relationship with men. These women were almost always wives, lovers, mothers, or daughters of famous men.

One of Sylvia Plath's biographers argues that the writing of a woman's life is "a dangerous cultural and literary project" (Wagner-Martin ix) because "genre divisions collapse under the weight of pervasive themes in women's writing" (x). These themes include the problem of being seen as someone's daughter, wife, or mother on the one hand and, on the other, society's reaction to a woman's ambition and achievements, to her struggle to negotiate the demands of others—mainly her family and loved ones—and to attempt to balance her aspirations with the expectations of her community as well as her family (Wagner-Martin x). One strategy for dealing with these issues is, therefore, to find a woman from the past who transcends the confines of her society's cultural codes and rebels against the norms of conventional behavior for women. This woman would set an example of extraordinary female achievement and would become a model of "independence and creative work" (Gutiérrez 49). Carolyn Steedman, among others, criticizes feminist biographies of exceptional women, arguing that their heroines

remain by necessity unusual figures whose life stories have little or no relevance to others. This, Steedman observes, has "partly to do with the absence of analyses of women's structural relationship to the societies in which they become actors, but the exceptional female figure is also partly produced out of the biographer's use of a personal, or individual, frame of time" (*Childhood* 249).

Many feminist historians and biographers have pointed out that biographies of illustrious women often celebrate them as individuals rather than as part of a group. Billie Melman, for example, observes: "Exceptional individuals became the subjects of historical inquiry not because they had been 'typical' or because their lives had in any way represented the fortunes of women as a social or cultural construct, but precisely because as 'great women' they had been different from the rest of their gender" (17). In the North American context, Sidonie Smith describes the celebration of great women as a "romance with bourgeois subjectivity," which effectively dehistoricizes the exceptional woman, engendering a romantic reification of individualism (394–95). This narrative strategy "maintains the very ideology of normative bourgeois subjectivity that marginalized women, among others, in the first place" (Smith 395).

The emphasis on the exceptional individual is also shared by the form of historical film that has come to be known as biopic. Rosenstone points out that many critics and scholars snub the biographical film and dismiss it "with a kind of sneer as the 'biopic'" (Rosenstone, *History* 89): "to do biography is to make the case that individuals are either at the center of the historical process—or are worth studying as exemplars of lives, actions, and individual value systems we either admire or dislike" (*History* 90). Viewed as a popular subgenre of the history film, the biopic is arguably the most common form of cinematic historiography (Burgoyne 39). It is, however, "seen as a conservative, mainstream form" and, by and large, as "an aesthetic embarrassment" (Burgoyne 16). Emblematic of this disdain is George Custen's characterization of the Hollywood biographical film as "an enormous, engaging distortion, which after a time convinces us of its own kind of authenticity" (7).

Despite the widespread assumption that the biographical film is usually conformist, it follows cinematic conventions that range from mainstream (which is presumably what Custen defines as

"Hollywood biographical film") to more experimental. Rosenstone identifies "three baggy and arbitrary categories" that are useful in attempting to understand such a diverse cinematic form:

> The biopic of Hollywood's studio era; the "serious" biofilm which has for a long time been made in Europe and other parts of the world, and has more recently come to Hollywood; and the innovative or experimental bio, which presents a life in the form of a fragmented or achronological drama rather than a traditional linear story. (History 93)

In what follows, we discuss films that loosely belong to each of these categories, ranging from Sandrelli's conventional *Christine Cristina* to De Lillo's more complex *Il resto di niente* and Nicchiarelli's coming-of-age historical drama *Cosmonauta*. We also include examples of historical documentaries that deal with the lives of individuals or groups of individuals, such as Spada's *Poesia che mi guardi*, Sangiovanni's *Ragazze la vita trema*, and Marazzi's experimental *Vogliamo anche le rose*. We are concerned with the ways in which these filmmakers, casting their inquiry in the mode of fictionality (in the case of the fiction films) and factuality (in the case of the documentaries), reinvent a gendered history of Italian literature and politics. In different ways and to different degrees, they denounce the legitimacy of the traditional voice of authority by emphasizing the fictionality of history from a gendered perspective.

Literary Mothers: *Christine Cristina* and *Poesia che mi guardi*

Sandrelli's directorial debut, *Christine Cristina* (2009), recounts the story of the Italian-born medieval writer Cristina da Pizzano, also known as Christine de Pisan, who was the first European woman to make a living through writing. She grew up at the court of Charles V in France, where her father was court astrologer and physician. Following the death of her husband in 1390, Christine used her writing to support herself and her family. In addition to writing love ballads for wealthy patrons at court, she wrote the much-celebrated *Le livre de la cité des dames* (1405), translated into English by Earl Jeffrey Richards as *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1982), in which she defends women against misogyny by discuss-

ing the lives of women from the past and their contributions to society. She also argues for equal access to education in *Le livre des trois vertus*, translated into English as *The Treasure of the City of Ladies: or The Book of the Three Virtues* by Sarah Lawson (1985). Here she instructs women of all ages and social standing, from royal courtiers to prostitutes, on matters ranging from how to run a household, to how to dress appropriately, to how to behave correctly in all situations. Christine's last work was a poem about Joan of Arc, *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* (1429).[3]

Sandrelli's *Christine Cristina*, which she describes as "un piccolo film" ("a small film") (Pasetti 13), premiered at the 2009 Rome Film Festival and was released in May 2010 with only twenty copies across the peninsula.[4] It had taken Sandrelli five years to find the necessary funding. The film was made on a low budget of 2.5 million euros and was shot mostly at Cinecittà using recycled sets from a film about Francis of Assisi. Reviewers of the film focused mainly on Sandrelli's status as a film diva, expressing surprise that "l'ex sogno erotico di mezza Italia" ("the former erotic dream of half of Italy") (Pasetti 13) and "icona sexy di quasi tutto il cinema d'autore italiano" ("sex symbol of almost all Italian art house cinema") (Mammì 78) would make a film about a protofeminist (Gallozzi, "La papessa" 42; Cappelli 46) from the Middle Ages (Aspesi 62). Natalia Aspesi asks:

> Come mai una bella signora che ha attraversato con grande successo quasi cinquant'anni di cinema e trenta di televisione, con la sua bellezza carnale, l'ironia gentile, l'apparente sventatezza, il talento leggero, accanto a grandi attori, con grandi registi, commedie, tragedie, film storici e film erotici, abbia deciso di affrontare la sua prima regia per raccontare di un personaggio medioevale, oggi sconosciuto ai più e per di più intellettuale? (62)

> How is it that a beautiful woman—who so successfully negotiated almost fifty years in cinema and thirty in television, with her sexual beauty, gentle sarcasm, seeming absent-mindedness, and light talent, next to top actors, with top directors, comedies, tragedies, historical films and erotic films—decided to tackle her first film as director by telling the story of a medieval figure, unknown to most people these days, and an intellectual on top of that?

Sandrelli says that she came across Christine's story by chance while shopping for Christmas presents at her local bookshop: "All'improvviso vedo la copertina di un libro, dove lei era ritratta in una antica miniatura. Ho un tuffo al cuore. Eccolo qui, il libro galeotto" ("Suddenly I see the cover of a book, where she was depicted in an old miniature. My hearts skips a beat. Here it is, the book that sparks it all") (Mammì 78). Sandrelli claims that her motivation for making a film about Christine de Pisan was fueled by her identification with, and admiration for, the writer (Bertuccioli 33), coupled with a desire to try her hand at directing. The film was also intended as a political statement about the present at a time in which, as Sandrelli claims, "noi donne siamo ridotte a merce di scambio" ("we women are reduced to traded goods") (Cappelli 46). Elsewhere, she says: "è come se in questo momento storico, soprattutto in Italia, fossimo tornate indietro" ("it's as if in this historic moment, particularly in Italy, we've gone backwards") (Bertuccioli 33) and "il nostro è uno dei periodi più bui per le donne, mi aspetto una legge che ci obblighi ai tacchi a spillo" ("ours is one of the darkest periods for women, I'm expecting a law that mandates stilettos") (Cappelli 46). Sandrelli's comments refer to the widespread representation of women in the Italian media that commonly relegates them to the role of scantily clothed and sexually alluring ornaments to middle aged men, which we discussed in the previous chapter and to which we will return in the conclusion.

Sandrelli's effort to celebrate a woman from the past who transcended the confines of her society, and to use her life story as an exemplar of female achievement aligns her with the tradition of feminist biography, which the protagonist of her film initiated. This tradition of feminist biography flourished in nineteenth-century Europe and North America in which biographies of illustrious women aimed to offer examples of female behavior directly opposed to the normative notions of female passivity and intellectual inferiority. Melman contends that the genre of the historical biography of illustrious women that flourished during the nineteenth century provided "the challenge to the model of the 'world-historical man' and to traditional role models." These historical biographies, however, did not include "lives," or "fragments of lives," as Melman calls them, that attacked the androcentric model, but dehistoricized their subjects and failed to propose

new narrative patterns (12). For Melman, the new historical biographies "combine an attempt to historicize individual women and integrate them in the public memory, with a new notion of the relation between the public and the domestic" (13). These works also establish a female tradition, recounting the life histories of a succession of powerful women and "a feminized version of the concept of descent." According to Melman, in the English language tradition, this is particularly visible in the serial female biography and in collections of the lives of women worthies such as queens (13). Such works were largely authored by feminists who wished to write about women's achievements irrespective of their relationships to men.

Sandrelli shares with feminist biographers the aim to highlight and celebrate women who achieved public recognition on account of their professional or artistic merits, independent of their husbands, lovers, or sons. Such examples were to prove that, given the chance, women were as capable as men of becoming active participants in the histories of their countries (Varikas 354). The connection between Sandrelli's film and the feminist biographical tradition has led many journalists to wonder, in disbelief, whether Sandrelli had become a feminist. When asked if she called herself a feminist, Sandrelli replied,

> Per forza, se in tempi di tanto disprezzo per la cultura sono riuscita a fare un film su Cristina: donna, intellettuale, caparbia, tenace e persino provocatoria. E poi ho in curriculum anche un manifesto del femminismo: "Io sono mia" di Sofia Scandurra. Tutte donne sul set, mai riso tanto. (Mammì 78)

> Absolutely, if in times of such disdain for culture I've managed to make a film about Cristina: female, intellectual, stubborn, tenacious and even provocative. And I also have a feminist manifesto in my CV: "I am my own," by Sofia Scandurra. We were all women on the set, never laughed so much.

That many journalists and reviewers should express surprise that Sandrelli, of all people, would make a film about a woman from the past and that the making of such a film should be viewed as a small miracle is evidence of the complex position that women still occupy in Italian history and in the history of Italian cinema. It is precisely because of Sandrelli's iconic, and acceptable, status

as diva that the film attracted the attention of journalists and reviewers, who seemed to view this film as a paradox.[5] Arguing that she wanted to be a director because she wanted to see, rather than be seen (Mammì 78), Sandrelli is challenging her position within the film industry and reclaiming the camera in order to honor a woman, who, in turn, had claimed the right to be an author at a time in which women did not have access to writing. Sandrelli explains how she felt after reading Christine's *The Book of the City of Ladies*: "quel legame che unisce le donne alla loro storia, mi ha incantato sapere del suo coraggio e delle sua forza, mi hanno commosso i suoi versi" ("that link that unites women to their history, it delighted me to learn of her courage and of her strength, her verses moved me") (Aspesi 62).

Christine Cristina employs mainstream filmmaking practices. Generally, conventional historical films simplify complex historical records, focus on the experiences of a few characters, present issues of the past in terms of a "an uplifting morality tale," present characters in stark contrast as heroes or villains, pull on "the emotional heartstrings of its audiences," and offer a story that is relevant to the present (Toplin 37). Rosenstone describes mainstream practices also in terms of constructing the past as a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end; presenting history as a story of individuals who are usually already famous or who are identified as significant by the film's choice of them as protagonists; presenting history as the story of "unitary, closed, and completed past"; and personalizing, dramatizing, and emotionalizing the past. This "gives us history as triumph, anguish, joy, despair, adventure, suffering, and heroism," giving the "look" of the past, of buildings, clothes, landscapes, and artifacts and showing history as a process of changing relationships "where political and social questions are interwoven" (*History* 47–48).

To some extent, Sandrelli's film conforms to a similar pattern. Beginning in 1380 with the death of Charles V in Paris, the widowed Christine finds herself on the wrong side of politics in the conflict between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians. Deprived of father and husband, she loses her house and has to find a way to make a living to support her two children. Exiled and desperate, Christine and her children find refuge with their former maid and the maid's husband, Charleton. Forced to earn money to make

a living, Christine discovers she can use her talent to compose poetry and starts writing lyrics for Charleton's performances at a local tavern. While writing for Charleton, she also starts writing in defense of women and against misogynistic poets.

As the daughter of an Italian, Christine is an outsider. This is clearly conveyed by the spokesman for the new king, who declares, "Lei e il vostro defunto padre non siete cittadini di Francia" ("You and your deceased father are not citizens of France"). Her status as an outsider is further reinforced when she attempts to establish herself as a woman writer who writes about women. In her uniqueness, however, Christine is also presented as a kind of everywoman: a mother struggling to care for her children, and a woman intent on surviving. The film emphasizes Christine's humanity rather than her exceptionality, focusing on her relationship with her children, her friendships, and her love for a cleric.[6] Sandrelli's Christine becomes a writer almost by default. Her writing and literary success are secondary to her relationships with her children and with the fellow poet Charleton and the scholar Jean Gerson. The film merely alludes to Christine de Pisan's exceptional education at the court of Charles V, her commitment to the education of women, and her supposed desire to become a writer. The emphasis on Christine as mother and survivor with a talent for making rhymes rather than as a committed intellectual and writer is disappointing for those who would prefer to interpret Christine de Pisan as an exceptional fighter for women's rights. As one reviewer argues,

> C'è infine un ultimo elemento della personalità della vera Christine che il film lascia in ombra e che, trattato con cura, avrebbe reso più interessante il personaggio per il grande pubblico: l'ardire di Christine nell'entrare in un campo, la scrittura, tradizionalmente riservata agli uomini […] Non a caso, parlando di lei, Jean Gerson diceva: "*Insignis femina*, *virilis femina*." (Terranova 15)
>
> There's one last element of the real Christine's personality that the film obscures and that, treated carefully, would have made the character more interesting for the wider public: Christine's boldness in entering a field, that of writing, traditionally reserved for men […] It's no coincidence that when talking about her Jean Gerson stated *Insignis femina*, *virilis femina*.

Instead, as a way to introduce her character, Sandrelli's camera follows Christine on the road, flanked by her children as they leave their sheltered lives behind. In these sequences, Christine is framed as a mother anxious for her children, giving them the last of their bread and making up rhymes to cheer them up. To her daughter, who asks, "come fai a trovare rime anche quando siamo nei guai?" ("how can you find rhymes even when we're in trouble?") she replies, "forse le due cose vanno insieme" ("maybe the two things go together"). This depiction of Christine does not present her as a woman intent on being exceptional. Her exceptionality, nonetheless, is conveyed through conventional sequence shots in which she discusses her writing with Charleton or argues with a rival poet. In these shots, Christine is often framed by a low-angle camera, as if demonstrating her moral and creative superiority as an innovator and as a woman ahead of her time.

Sandrelli's Christine is deeply committed to women. The film traces Christine's critical writing about the war to an episode in which a woman on the street asks her to read a letter from the army which announces the death of the woman's son. A similar letter had already told her of her husband's death, and the woman's grief becomes the source of Christine's writing about the futility of war and its effects on women. Although conforming to traditional cinematic practices, Sandrelli's film also attempts to construct Christine as a woman capable of feeling and expressing solidarity for fellow women rather than aspiring merely to transcend the confines of her gender.

Sandrelli's Christine—played by her daughter, Amanda Sandrelli—does not conform to the voyeuristic representational strategies typical of contemporary Italian visual culture. She is neither visually configured as exceptionally beautiful nor constructed entirely in terms of erotic male desire. Her mind, rather than her body, attracts Gerson's romantic interest, and her relationship with Charleton is entirely built on their mutual love for words. For the duration of the film, Christine remains fully dressed in her full-length tunics. It is tempting to interpret this de-eroticization of the female protagonist as an attempt to challenge the traditional voyeurism of much of Italian cinema, which configures women as objects of desire to be looked at. In fact, when Sandrelli was asked to comment on her experience of working with male and female directors, she replied, "la differenza è che un regista ti guarda,

mentre una regista ti vive" ("the difference is that a male director looks at you, while a female director lives you") (Mammì 78).[7]

In the same year in which Sandrelli's film premiered at the Rome Film Festival, Spada's docufiction about the little-known Milanese poet and photographer Antonia Pozzi premiered at the 66th Venice Film Festival.[8] Pozzi was born to a wealthy family in 1912 and committed suicide on December 3, 1938, at the age of 26. Spada's film resurrects Pozzi's forgotten life through the character of a filmmaker, Maria, and her encounter with a group of street poets who call themselves H5N1, after the bird flu virus. Attempting to reconstruct and bring into the present the little-known poet, Maria embarks on a journey of discovery, reading Pozzi's poems and traveling—driving and walking—to places dear to the poet. Spada's film is an account of Pozzi's life and poetry and of Maria's and, through her, Spada's search for ways to understand Pozzi's poetry, life, and literary and social milieu. As Maria looks out of her window, the voiceover twice repeats the verb *cercare* ("to look for"): "Cerco dove può essersi posato il suo sguardo, la cerco nei suoi versi dove la sua anima di grande poeta era libera, libera e sola" ("I look for where her gaze may have rested, I look for her in her verses where her great poet's soul was free, free and alone").

The encounter with the street poets Stefano, Manuela, and Nicola allows Maria to link Pozzi's poetry to the present and to turn the film into a reflection about the role of poetry in the past and in the present. This is announced in the opening sequence of the film, as a series of still images of today's Milan accompanies the voiceover of Maria, who reads from Pozzi's diary, "Leggo le parole dei poeti per capire il mio cuore e quello degli altri" ("I read the words of poets to understand my heart and that of others"). This sequence is followed by a shot/reverse shot sequence of Stefano, one of the street poets and a medical student, attending a lecture at university, and a close-up shot of Stefano's notebook in which he writes, "H5N1, contagioso, quello che leggi è solo un verso" ("H5N1, contagious, what you're reading is only a verse").

Whereas the images of Milan introduce the city as a character in the film, the voiceover introduces Antonia Pozzi, the elusive subject of the film, as a woman who had lived "dentro e fuori del suo tempo" ("inside and outside of her time"). The connection with the filmmaker is also made explicit by the simple declaration: "era nata e vissuta a Milano come me" ("she was born and lived in

Milan like me"). The "me" refers to Maria, the fictional narrator, who can also be interpreted as an alter ego for the filmmaker Marina Spada, who was also born and lives in Milan. Thus, the search for Antonia Pozzi and the desire to revive her memory in the present are linked to an attempt to establish a relationship between the poet and the filmmaker: it is an act of restitution for the forgotten poet and also a means to create a female genealogy (akin to the one discussed in Chapter 3 when discussing biological mothers) for women artists in Italy. Like Christine de Pisan, Antonia Pozzi becomes a literary mother for Italian women in the present.

This female genealogy is further conveyed visually in a sequence in which Maria's voiceover reads one of Pozzi's poems, as a medium shot of Maria is followed by a medium shot of Manuela. The voiceover links the medium shots of the filmmaker Maria and the street poet Manuela. The position of this sequence within the narrative of the film is significant. It follows a short exchange between Manuela, Stefano, and Nicola in which they discuss Pozzi's poems. When Maria had come across the H5N1 poems posted on city walls, she had attached her phone number to one of them and to the Pozzi poem, which, notably, contains the line "poesia che mi guardi" ("poetry which looks at me") from which the film takes its title. Maria's signposting invites the three street poets to read Pozzi's poems, about whom they knew very little. Of the three, only Manuela had heard about Pozzi, and Stefano quickly tries to dismiss her by stating that Pozzi's poetry was "un po' da femmina, quel gusto ottocentesco di fondersi con la natura" ("a bit feminine, that nineteenth-century taste for nature").

As Stefano equates what he considers bad poetry with poetry "da femmina," the camera, in a close-up shot, shows Manuela's silent frustration with such obvious contempt for women poets. Contradicting Stefano's interpretation of Pozzi's poetry as old-fashioned, Maria defines the poem that, in the following sequence, links her to Manuela as "un testo punk" ("a punk text"). The modernity of Pozzi's poetry, however, is lost on Stefano, since it finds its inspiration in the social unease that Pozzi experienced as a woman in a male-dominated society. In an interview, commenting on Maria's statement that the poem *Canto selvaggio* (1929) felt like a "testo punk," Spada observes:

> È la prima cosa che ho pensato quando ho letto quei versi. Questa ragazza scrive una poesia del genere nel 1929, a soli 17 anni.

> Non so se mi spiego: è un salto mentale sconvolgente, come se fosse arrivata sulla Luna, oltretutto in un'epoca in cui le donne erano solo delle povere bestioline da rieducare e tenere sotto controllo tramite la maternità. Il punk è il *no future*, e la poetica di Antonia ne è invasa. (qtd. in Sciamanna 11)

> It's the first thing I thought when I read those verses. This girl writes a poem like that in 1929, at only 17 years old. I don't know how to explain it: it's a shattering mental leap, as if she'd landed on the moon, and moreover it happened in an era in which women were only poor little creatures to rehabilitate and keep under control through motherhood. Punk is *no future,* and Antonia's poetics is overcome with it.

The narrative elements of the film, which include the characters of Maria and the actors playing the street poets, are interlaced with photographs taken by Pozzi together with excerpts from 8-mm home movies shot by the poet and her father. These images portray her family, friends, beloved countryside, and the periphery of Milan and are used to gain access to Pozzi. Comparing the Pozzi depicted by the home movies, with the persona that emerges from her poems, Maria comments, "Quando l'ho vista nei filmini di famiglia non potevo credere che questa ragazza timida impacciata fosse proprio lei. La stessa che scrive quasi urlando 'per troppa vita che ho nel sangue!'" ("When I saw her in the home movies I couldn't believe that this shy, embarrassed girl was really her. The same girl who writes, almost screaming 'for too much life that I have in my blood'"). This discrepancy, reminiscent of Marazzi's use of home movies in *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, conveys Spada's interpretation of Pozzi as a young woman who was ill at ease in society: "Viveva in una situazione sociale che non le corrispondeva: non si sentiva vera e non si sentiva libera di essere vera all'interno dei riti dell'alta borghesia milanese che, volente o nolente, era constretta a svolgere" ("She lived in a social situation that didn't suit her: she didn't feel real and she didn't feel free to be true to her real self within the rites of the Milan upper middle class that, whether she liked it or not, she was forced to perform") (qtd. in Sciamanna 11).

Pozzi's poems convey and render explicit the uneasiness she experienced in life. For this reason, and as a way to control her psychological health, friends and family advised her to refrain from writing. In her diary she expresses doubts about the artistic value

of her poems, which she kept a secret from most: "Ma che diritto ho io di credermi qualcuno?" ("But what right do I have to think of myself as somebody?"). This question is central to her legacy for women artists who struggle to carve out a place for themselves in an environment that devalues their gendered experience. In the twenty-first century, Spada reclaims Pozzi's life and work by reviving her legacy for women through the characters of Maria and Manuela. While sitting at her desk and taking on the role of writer, Manuela says, "Il suo bisogno di dirsi, in questo io le assomiglio. Scrittura al femminile, dicono. Che altro dovrebbe essere?" ("Her need to tell herself, in this I resemble her. Women's writing, they say. What else should it be?"). In an act of restitution, the film ends with images of a tram traveling across Milan featuring an image of Pozzi and excerpts from her poems.

Gendering Politics: *Il resto di niente* and *Cosmonauta*

De Lillo's *Il resto di niente* could also be interpreted as an act of restitution. The film focuses on the little-known revolutionary Eleonora Pimentel de Fonseca, who was born in 1752 in Rome into an aristocratic but impoverished Portuguese family. When she was a child, her family had to move to Naples, where she stayed for the rest of her life and where she was executed on August 17, 1799, for her involvement in the revolution that in January 1799 deposed the Bourbon monarchy and installed the short-lived Neapolitan Republic.

Il resto di niente is based on a novel by Enzo Striano of the same title, published in 1986. Unlike the novel, however, which is about a larger cast of characters involved in the revolution, the film concentrates primarily on the figure of Eleonora.[9] When De Lillo acquired the film rights to the book in 1997, it was a cult novel in Naples but was not yet well known in the rest of Italy. In De Lillo's film, the story of the Neapolitan Republic is interwoven with the account of Eleonora's life. The film recounts how she left her violent husband, joined the Jacobins, was imprisoned in 1798, escaped prison, and became a leader of the Republic of 1799. In her role as editor and writer of the newspaper she founded, she was both a leader and a chronicler of the Republican experiment and an early advocate for the freedom of the press. The film also

focuses on Eleonora's poetry and her role as an intellectual and important figure in Naples's literary circles.

De Lillo's *mise-en scène* shows Eleonora interacting both on collective and individual levels. The film's visual and verbal languages, such as point-of-view shots, cutaways, and conversations, allude to larger issues of exploitation, violence, and injustice, but the camera always returns to events seen, experienced, and remembered by Eleonora—her move to Naples, her understanding of the philosopher Gaetano Filangeri's writings on social justice, the challenges that come from her friendships with the uneducated, the experience of female friendship, the experience of prison, marriage, motherhood, and the death sentence.

When historical films have a woman at the center of the narrative, they usually focus on romance and are typically dismissed as historical costume dramas. Early examples of such films include *Joan the Woman* (1916), *Marie Antoinette* (1938), *Queen Christina* (1933), *Mary of Scotland* (1936), and *Joan of Arc* (1948). In these films, revolutions serve as a background for romantic melodrama, as in the case of Joan of Arc films, in which Joan "links romance to war" and her brief foray into the male sphere of war "is suitably punished at the end" (Maddox 1). More recently, films such as Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth* (1998) and its sequel *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007) also dwell on romantic intrigues and disappointments.

As early as the 1920s, leftist film critics in the United States attempted to distinguish categorically between "legitimate" historical films and historical costume dramas. Such distinctions have been based on the relationship between genre and gender. As Chris Robè argues, this "predominantly male-produced body of film criticism" consistently favored the historical film, which was considered a male-centered and, therefore, "masculine" genre, over the costume drama, which was held to be a "feminine" genre (71). In January 1929, writing about Carl Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (*The Passion of Joan of Arc,* 1928), Harry Alan Potamkin declared that the film was a historical film and definitely not a costume drama because it betrayed "no specious prettiness, but hardness," since, as Robè also explains, Joan "embodies the thematic conception of the film, operating as a metaphor for its central idea rather than merely representing the literal plight of an individuated woman battling the Church" (71). Potamkin's dichotomy of

costume drama and historical film, in which spectacle distinguishes the former and theme characterizes the latter, has structured "all of later U.S. Left film criticism" (Robè 72).

Recent critical writing about the distinction between "historical" and costume drama perpetuates this view. Rosenstone argues that the costume drama, such as *Gone with the Wind*, "uses the exotic locale of the past as no more than a setting for romance and adventure" (*History* 45). A history film, by contrast, poses and attempts to answer questions about, comment on, and critique the past with which it engages (46). Robert Burgoyne claims that, "Unlike the costume drama or the romance set in the past, history provides the referential content of the historical film" (4). In such films, according to Burgoyne, the events of the past "constitute the mainspring of the historical film, rather than the past simply serving as a scenic backdrop or a nostalgic setting" (4). As a film that alludes to related contemporary issues and other past revolutions but from a woman's perspective, *Il resto di niente* carefully avoids any references to romance. Instead, filtering the events through Eleonora's memory, *Il resto di niente* underlines the personal experience of history and addresses complex historical and contemporary issues from a predominantly female point of view.

The Republic lasted only a few months and failed to create a new world based on the ideals of the Enlightenment. However, precisely because of its focus on the meanings and consequences of political failure, *Il resto di niente* is also about the present and constitutes an attempt to reflect on the many failed revolutions marking the history of the Italian peninsula. Connecting (through history) Naples and, by extension, the South with a tradition of progressive politics, the South is made to participate in a utopian vision traditionally associated with presumably more forward-looking Northern Italy and Europe. In this respect, the film uses the representation of a marginal and inauspicious episode of the past told from the point of view of a marginal and marginalized character to reclaim both Fonseca and the South as historical and cinematic subjects.

When it was released, *Il resto di niente* was well received by critics, who described it as "film notturno, vibrante e intenso" ("nocturnal, vibrant and intense film") (Caprara), "splendido" ("splendid") (Armocida) "armonioso e luminoso" ("harmonious and luminous") (Porro), and "elegante e ricercato" ("elegant and re-

fined") (D'Agostini) and compared it to Rossellini's work (Crespi; Fittante; Porro). Others commented on the film's achievements despite its small budget, emphasizing De Lillo's skills: "film povero, efficace, intelligente […] la regista è diventata sempre più brava" ("small budget, effective, intelligent film […] the director has become increasingly good") (Tornabuoni). Deborah Young called it a "serious, intensely scripted historical biopic," commenting that the "treatment looks too subtle for Italian fans of made-for-TV romantic historical fiction" and welcoming the casting of de Medeiros as a "contrast to the romantic heroines of most historical fiction and a convincing choice for an outspoken thinker who defies the monarchy in the name of her convictions" ("The Remains" 37).

The subtlety to which Young refers is mainly achieved by the ways in which De Lillo combines representational codes of realism and classical narrative cinema, such as flashback and a degree of linear narrative, with less conventional means, such as the limited use of shot/reverse shot sequences and the recourse to paper sets and animated puppet theater to create period reconstructions. Although they were probably the result of financial constraints, these sets imaginatively mark the passing of time and stage significant historical events such as the arrival of the French. They invite spectators to imagine the past as a set of recognizable conventions and formulas rather than as something that can exist outside of such conventions. De Lillo thereby calls into question what some critics have termed "the paradox of period design" (Tashiro 41):

> The process is based on difference, but in most cases must be framed in a way that denies difference once it has been established. Production values have to be sufficiently high for audiences to suspend disbelief, but not so assertive that they call attention to themselves as a construction. (41)

By calling attention to *Il resto di niente*'s paper sets and puppets as constructions, the film invites the audience to suspend disbelief but remaining aware that this is precisely what historical reconstructions ask them to do. Hence, they function as self-reflexive means to show the extent to which the image of the past comes largely from previous representations, and the audience's expectations about the "look" of the past are shaped accordingly. The paper sets at once introduce and comment on the stylized image of the eighteenth century presented in the film, and the puppets

remind spectators of the role of spectacle in creating images of the past in the present.

Il resto di niente has a circular structure, beginning and ending with an account of Eleonora's final hours prior to her execution. Her last wish for a cup of coffee is fulfilled by a fearful young girl in a sequence that makes no use of conventional establishing shots, and does not try to make the audience identify with Eleonora through the traditional sequence shot. The sequence begins with a long, deep focus shot of the girl as she enters the room and moves toward the camera. The deep focus shot allows the audience to see the open doors behind the girl as she enters the room, delivers the coffee, and then runs away from Eleonora in fright. Through the open doors, we see the sky and the natural light that are denied to Eleonora but suggest continuity from Eleonora's past into the future, which becomes the present for the audience watching the film.

As the girl moves forward into the empty room and approaches Eleonora, the camera travels down to a close-up shot of her bare feet and then cuts to a medium shot, taking in her trembling hands as she carries the cup of coffee rattling on the saucer. Rather than cut to a reverse shot of Eleonora looking at the girl, the camera moves behind Eleonora to include a medium shot of Eleonora and the girl as they face each other. Eleonora sits on a bench, and only after Eleonora invites the girl to sit down next to her does the camera cut to a reaction shot of the frightened girl, who then turns around and runs away. As the girl runs toward an open door, the camera cross-cuts to a flashback of the young Eleonora as she runs toward the carriage that will take her to Naples. From this unconventional opening, De Lillo's visual language announces that this is a film about ideas as much as character. The carefully arranged *mise-en-scène* also introduces the film's narrative focus on Eleonora's gendered experience of the Revolution.

The flashback to the young Eleonora's move to Naples establishes her as a foreigner. As an adult, her slight accent when speaking Italian continues to mark her foreignness. As a foreigner whose nobility is no longer recognized, she is denied execution by beheading, which is the privilege of the aristocracy, and is sentenced to be hanged. When Eleonora receives the news, she is most concerned because her underwear has been taken from her. She worries that, given the height of the scaffolding, her nudity

will be exposed. To the priest who expects a confession she pleads, "Mi hanno tolto le mutande, padre. La forca è molto alta, datemi delle mutande" ("They took my underpants, Father. The gallows are very high, give me my underpants."). That in her final hours Eleonora should be pleading for underwear shows De Lillo's interest in imagining the personal and intimate side of history from a gendered perspective.

By challenging the separation between private and public in the configuration of history, De Lillo also critiques the representation of Eleonora as heroic revolutionary, thus questioning conventional understandings of heroism. The account of Eleonora's involvement in the Revolution is inextricably linked with her personal life, and this is clearly conveyed by the film's aesthetic, which is always intimate in scale. In this respect, the use of paper sets and puppets rather than large-scale battle scenes augments the feeling of intimacy and introspection that pervades the film. The conflation of political and private lives is a common preoccupation among women filmmakers. As the self-declared feminist filmmaker Margarethe von Trotta—who also engaged with the relationship between women and history in *Marianne and Juliane* (1981) and more recently in her 2009 film about Hildegard von Bingen—claims, German women filmmakers "make no separation between private and political, between public and personal life [...] and it is precisely this quality that can be encountered in our films and that may perhaps lead to a new aesthetic" (qtd. in Dagle 30).

The intersection between private and public also allows De Lillo to question the assumption that ideals of freedom and equality can be represented as non–gender specific. This is particularly evident during Eleonora's appearance in front of the panel of judges following the return of the monarchy. In a close-up shot, one of the judges reminds Eleonora of her crimes: "Vi siete lasciata con vostro marito, vi siete messa a parlare nelle strade in mezzo alla gente. Queste sono usanze di femmine svergognate, lo sapete?" ("You left your husband, you started talking in the streets. These are shameful actions, you know that?"). For these actions, Eleonora is defined as "svergognata" ("you should be ashamed of yourself") and "pazza" ("crazy") and is sentenced to death. In effect, she is punished for transgressing the behavioral norms associated with being a woman. In an act that could be interpreted as heroic, Eleonora replies by calling the judge a slave.

Through Eleonora's and her fellow revolutionaries' deaths, we may presume that, in line with conventional cinematic representations of history, the film may wish to impart a moral message, such as a validation of the commitment to change the world and the willingness to sacrifice oneself for a noble cause. But, as previously discussed, other aspects of the film subvert the ideology of selfless heroism and the belief in the individual as agent of revolutionary change. Eleonora goes to her death wondering, "Forse saremo di esempio a qualcuno?" ("Maybe we'll be an example for someone?") and asking, "La vita! E chi te la darà un'altra volta?" ("Life! And who'll give it back to you?").

De Lillo's pessimistic take on a youthful and naive belief in revolutions questions the meaningfulness of Eleonora's desire to change the world. Through an exploration of Eleonora's friendship with her maid, Graziella, however, the filmmaker subtly introduces another story, about a "revolution" of a different kind. As Karen Hollinger argues, female friendship "challenges articulations of conventional femininity in two ways: by portraying female friendship as an alternative to women's complete dependence on men and by qualifying traditional concepts of feminine passivity"(8). In De Lillo's film, it is precisely the relationship between Eleonora and her maid that most evidently challenges conventions. Their friendship transgresses social, educational, and class barriers and links them in ways that allow both women to learn and gain strength from each other, irrespective of their relationships with men. This is particularly evident in three instances: when Eleonora pleads with Graziella to remain with her even though she had just seen her own husband having sex with her; when Eleonora offers to teach Graziella to read in exchange for lessons in Neapolitan and for her help in enlisting support for the revolution among the lower classes; and when, in recognition of their bond, in the final hours of the Republic, Eleonora gives Graziella the golden earrings she had inherited from her mother. To an incredulous Graziella, Eleonora replies, "Appartengono alle donne dei Fonseca da più di duecento anni" ("They have belonged to the Fonseca women for more than two hundred years"). Thus the private friendship between Eleonora and Graziella changes the world in ways that the public revolution that had attempted to change a political system never could.

The relationship between public and private and the gendered politics of revolutionary change are also central to Nicchiarelli's

first fiction film, *Cosmonauta* (2009). Set between the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the film establishes a relationship between the Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, who in 1963 became the first woman to travel in space, and the fictional 15-year-old Luciana. Luciana and her brother, Arturo, who suffers from epilepsy, are enthusiastic members of the Federation of Young Communists and have been obsessed with the Russian space missions from an early age. As a young girl, Luciana is close to her brother, who teaches her all about the Russian space mission. As she grows up, however, she becomes ashamed of Arturo, resents her stepfather, and struggles to find her voice in the male-dominated culture of her comrades in Rome. Luciana is ahead of her time: she is unconventional, aggressive, and determined to live according to her own rules. Her submissive mother is incapable of providing any support; the only adult Luciana trusts is her friend and mentor, Marisa. As the space race between the Soviet Union and the United States reaches its peak, Luciana falls in love, has her first sexual relationships, and struggles with the consequences of her desire for freedom and self-realization beyond the confines of the behavior traditionally expected from women at the time.

The narrative cross-cuts between the fictional account of Luciana's coming-of-age story and newsreels about the Soviet cosmonauts, starting with the breakthrough trip by the dog Laika and culminating with Tereshkova's space mission, which included seventy-one hours in space and forty-eight orbits around Earth. Valentina stands for Luciana's ambitions "to reach for the stars," so to speak, at a time when choices for women were limited. Initially, Luciana places her hope for freedom in Communism, only to discover, as she grows older, that even Communists believe women must conform to social conventions and can occupy only supporting roles. As Nicchiarelli points out, "Quello raccontato da *Cosmonauta* era un mondo in cui un'adolescente pagava con la discriminazione e l'indifferenza il suo essere donna, perché, i comunisti di allora erano maschilisti e molto moralisti" ("The world depicted in *Cosmonauta* was a world in which an adolescent paid, with discrimination and indifference, for being a woman, because the communists of the time were chauvinistic and very moralistic") (qtd. in Greco, "Susanna Nicchiarelli").

Reminiscent of Cristina Comencini's *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*, the film starts with a long shot of a suburban church and cuts to a close-up shot of a young girl, who, dressed in her white first

communion dress and wearing a white veil, declares, "questo è il giorno più bello della mia vita" ("this is the most beautiful day of my life"). This sentiment is not shared by the 9-year-old Luciana, who runs out of church, discarding her white veil and gloves. Once at home, after locking herself in the bathroom to take off her bridelike dress, she stubbornly declares that she will not take her first communion because she is a Communist.

Already in the opening sequence Luciana refuses to conform. She steps out of the line of children dutifully marching toward the front of the church to take their first communion in front of their parents and relatives. The camera follows her act of defiance with a series of long (high-angle) shots, intercut with middle (point-of-view) shots of Luciana looking back at the astonished onlookers and featuring a slight overexposure to produce a dream-like effect. As she leaves the church, a series of middle shots and long shots follow Luciana as she runs home, while the words of the song "Nessuno mi può giudicare" ("No One Can Judge Me") provide a further subtext to the sequence, as Luciana will have to face the disapproval of others for the rest of the film.

Luciana's main problem is that she is not a man. She inherits her late father's commitment and passion for the Communist Party, but as she grows up she will need to learn that, as a woman, she is not allowed to take on her father's role. At party meetings she is overlooked and patronized by her male colleagues, and when she develops a crush and seduces one of them, he condemns her for her sexual availability, telling her that "nessuno si fidanza con quelle come te" ("no one gets engaged to girls like you"). Nonetheless, unable to grow up to be like her father, Luciana is unwilling to identify with her mother, who ends up marrying a man whom Luciana thinks she does not love, for the sake of gaining financial stability and support in raising her children. The painful and complex process of "disidentification" of the daughter with the mother, which we discussed in the previous chapter, is clearly evoked early in the film, in a crucial scene at the hospital where Arturo is taken following his first episode of epilepsy. A point-of-view shot of the 9-year-old Luciana cuts to a medium shot of her mother as she gratefully allows her late husband's former colleague, whom she will later marry, to hold her hand. The camera then cuts to a deep focus shot of Luciana, shot from behind, diagonally facing her mother who looks at her defensively, knowing that her young

daughter understands what is happening and disapproves of her. Mother and daughter do not speak, but their body language betrays their feelings. Luciana stands aggressively, almost like a boxer, with her hands made into fists, whereas her mother shifts nervously on her feet, playing with a paper tissue, looking at her daughter with a guilty expression.

As an alternative to her mother, the Communist Marisa becomes Luciana's role model. She works tirelessly for the party and, in Luciana's view, is a respected party member. The young woman expresses her admiration, declaring, "Voglio essere libera. Io voglio diventare come te. Non voglio avere bambini e voglio dedicare la mia vita al partito" ("I want to be free. I want to be like you. I don't want to have children and I want to dedicate my life to the Party"), only to discover that, as a woman, Marisa is not as free as she seems. After Luciana is expelled from school for hitting another girl and for sexual promiscuity with party members, the party punishes her (for both transgressions) by excluding her from a delegation to Moscow that she had previously been asked to join. When Marisa delivers the news that Luciana won't be going to Moscow, she cautions Luciana that matters are different for women: "Dobbiamo stare attente a come ci comportiamo. La reputazione è importante. Queste cose non si fanno e soprattutto non si fanno con i compagni" ("We have to be careful about how we behave. Reputation is important. You don't do these things, and most importantly you don't do them with your comrades"). The conversation between the two women ends with Marisa's admission: "Io non sono nella posizione di difendere nessuno" ("I'm not in a position to defend anyone").

A partial victory for the women of the party seems to come with the news of Valentina Tereshkova's travel into space. An ecstatic Marisa reads from the newspaper to Luciana and their friends: "Valentina sorride, e le donne della terra sorridono con lei in una speranza che non è più un'utopia. Vorrebbero andare tutte sulla luna? Vorrebbero solamente scegliere il proprio destino, come lei" ("Valentina smiles, and women on Earth smile with her in the hope that it's no longer a utopia. Would they all like to go the moon? They only want to choose their own destiny, like her"). Tereshkova's victory, Marisa announces, is also their victory. Although Marisa and her Communist comrades believed that many others would soon follow Tereshkova's example, it took almost

twenty years for another woman, Svetlana Savitskaya, to travel in space. And the final images of the film remind us that it was an astronaut rather than a Russian cosmonaut who first landed on the Moon.

Reframing Feminism: *Vogliamo anche le rose* and *Ragazze la vita trema*

Marisa and Luciana find themselves caught between the politics of class and that of gender. The mass movement that would allow many more women to give voice to their uneasiness was still to come. Marazzi's and Sangiovanni's documentaries recount what happens in the aftermath of Marisa's declaration that Tereshkova's victory was also theirs. In essence, for all those women who, like Luciana in the 1950s, desired to transgress traditional norms of behavior, that victory was as much out of reach as traveling in space. It is only later, during the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, which is the focus of Marazzi's *Vogliamo anche le rose* and Sangiovanni's *Ragazze la vita trema*, that Italian women, as living counterparts to the fictional Luciana, found a place in which to articulate the contradictions and constraints of their gendered experience.

It is no coincidence that Marazzi and Sangiovanni use the documentary form rather than fiction to engage with a period in Italian history when the documentary played a significant role in raising awareness about the position of women. The invention of lightweight cameras and recording equipment in the 1960s allowed the documentary to become more observational and interactive (Rosenstone, *History* 73). As the women's movement gained momentum in Italy, many women turned to observational and interactive documentaries to raise awareness of women's social and political disadvantages and to advocate feminist politics. As Patricia Erens argues in her discussion of documentary film in 1970s North America, feminist filmmakers "saw film as a tool for raising consciousness and implementing social change; they had a message and a wish to treat subjects of importance to women that male filmmakers had so far ignored" (555). They sought to use film as a means to reach larger audiences while at the same time offering a feminist alternative to the representational practices prevalent in mainstream cinema. Hence, they viewed the docu-

mentary film as a form most appropriate to represent women's lives (Borda 161).

Jennifer Borda points out that independent documentary making offered a number of creative advantages to emerging filmmakers. First, it allowed them to retain control of their films from conception to production. Second, they could "choose to work individually, occupying multiple positions such as cinematographer, editor, and director, or they could challenge the artistic 'imperative' of individual creative control by bringing other women on board as partners in cooperative productions." They also viewed the documentary as a means to "give voice to those on society's margins and bringing public attention to their cause" (162).

In Italy, the most significant examples are the observational documentaries *Processo per stupro* (*Trial for Rape*, 1979) and *AAA Offresi* (*A.A.A. Offering Myself*, 1981). Made by a collective of Italian feminist filmmakers in conjunction with the RAI state television network, *Processo per stupro* details, for the first time in an Italian documentary, a rape trial and criticizes the manner in which such trials were conducted.[10] The account of the 1978 trial of Rocco Vallone and his accomplices was broadcast on RAI2 in April 1979, attracting record ratings of 9.5 million viewers, and was shown again in October 1979, when it was watched by 4.8 million viewers (Grosso 2). In the same year, the documentary won the prestigious Premio Italia for best Italian documentary, and was shortlisted for an Emmy award. It was broadcast in many Western European countries, as well as in Australia, Japan, and India. The documentary, which is held in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was instrumental in shaping the public discussion about the reform of sexual violence laws. Rarely in any country have feminist films, let alone feminist documentaries, enjoyed such widespread mainstream success.

AAA Offresi was a direct follow-on from *Processo per stupro*. As Loredana Rotondo states, "Nel corso del processo, infatti, un avvocato faceva una vera e propria apologia della prostituzione e noi ci siamo chieste quale fosse la relazione tra stupro e prostituzione" ("In the course of the trial, in fact, a lawyer made a genuine apology for prostitution and we were asked what the relationship was between rape and prostitution") (87). In *AAA Offresi*, the award-winning collective used a hidden camera to show the bargaining and small talk that took place between a prostitute and her male

clients. The documentary was censored by direct government intervention just hours before it was due to be broadcast and became the subject of a national scandal and a protracted court case. Although the filmmakers were eventually absolved of any wrongdoing, the documentary was not, as it still cannot be, broadcast. But *AAA Offresi* was apparently screened in underground film showings in Italy (Heffernan 41).

More than thirty years later, documentaries such as Marazzi's *Vogliamo anche le rose* and Sangiovanni's *Ragazze la vita trema* offer two very different approaches to the cinematic remembering of the women's liberation movement.[11] Unlike the feminist documentaries of the 1970s, which tended to privilege strategies of realism and often used on-location shooting, long takes, and unobtrusive editing (Borda 166), Marazzi and Sangiovanni use the documentary to focus on the construction of memory and historical narratives, making editing and cinematic artifice part of the narrative. Although different in style, Marazzi's and Sangiovanni's documentaries engage with the personal and experiential aspect of this complex time in Italian history. Sangiovanni constructs the documentary around the stories of four women (Alessandra, Liliana, Maria Paola, and Marina) who come from different geographical, social, and cultural milieus. The women's first-person narratives are accompanied by images from public and private archives.

Similarly, Marazzi uses excerpts from the diaries of three women (Anita, Teresa, and Valentina), who also come from different geographical, cultural, and social milieus.[12] The reading of the diaries forms the voiceover of her experimental documentary and traces the continuity of the women's movement, beginning with Anita's pre-1968 struggles with sexuality and a repressive Catholic upbringing, to Teresa's painful and moving story of her clandestine abortion in 1975, to Valentina's post-1977 personal reflection about her militancy in the women's liberation movement.

The film begins by showing a woman dressed in the style of the 1950s entering a shop that is selling an eclectic array of objects. As she looks around, a voiceover says: "Curiosità, curiosità sei donna. Vedere, sapere, che sarà? Come sarà? Il passar del tempo, il tuo futuro, guarda" ("Curiosity, curiosity, you're a woman. To see, to learn, what will it be? How will it be? The passing of time, your future, look"). However, the woman is horrified to discover,

as she looks into the future through a crystal ball, that there will be a time in which women will dance naked. The original footage was intended as a commercial for an anti-aging cream, and as the woman looks into the crystal ball, her despair is triggered by seeing her own aging face (Fraioli 46). This sequence functions as a prologue to the events of the documentary, which take place between 1964 and 1979. The account of these events, however, is not intended as a comprehensive history of the women's movement. Within the structure provided by the diaries, the film focuses selectively on issues concerning female sexuality, abortion, and the gendered politics of relationships between men and women and between women and women.

The film ends with a powerful sequence of older women attending evening classes and listening to their teacher as she reads aloud the articles of the Italian constitution that state that women and men enjoy equal rights. This is clearly contradicted by the women's body language and by a catalogue of relevant legislation that slowly appears on screen. Laws on abortion, divorce, and the right not to be killed by jealous husbands have all come well after the constitution declared that men and women have equal rights.

Adding parody to self-reflexivity, Marazzi makes unconventional use of documentary and fictional footage. The voiceover readings from the diaries intersect with clips from experimental fiction films, documentaries, home movies sourced from private collections, interviews, and talk shows from the RAI archives in which women and men discuss issues similar to those being raised by the diaries; cartoons from the 1940s and 1950s, animation, and newly shot footage are also mixed with edited excerpts from picture books.

The images and the diaries comment on each other, often ironically, by way of allusion, inference, synecdoche, and metaphor. In this way, both images and words are re-signified within the narrative of the film, changing the relationship between the public and the private dimensions of history, experience, and memory. Marazzi explains:

> Il film immagina gli eventi narrati nei diari ricorrendo a materiali di repertorio dell'epoca, accostandoli, forzandoli ed esaltandoli in una libera interpretazione che vuole andare al di là della ricostruzione storica, per cogliere il più possibile tutta

> la verità emotiva ed esistenziale di cui la storia è fatta. (qtd. in Persico 21)
>
> The film imagines events narrated in the diaries by drawing on bibliographical materials of the era, matching them, coercing them and enhancing them in a free interpretation that aims to move away from historical reconstruction, to gather as much as possible of the emotive and existential truth that history is made of.

By being self-reflexive, Marazzi's film asks the viewer to question key representational strategies that are crucial to the creation of history through documentary. For some scholars, this representational style creates a genre of documentary that is generally defined as radical. Paula Rabinowitz argues that such radical documentaries challenge "the status, meaning, interpretation, and perhaps even the control of history and its narratives" (7). In *Vogliamo anche le rose* the narrative is constructed as a spiral of contradiction, carefully avoiding the conventions of drama, which the documentary also shares, with a story that begins with "problems, questions, and/or characters at the outset, develops their complications over time, and resolves them by the end of the film" (Rosenstone, *History* 71). This creates the distinctive anti-epic tone and style of the film. According to the editor, Ilaria Fraioli, this was a clear intention:

> Preferiamo la tecnica del ricamo che, a partire da un centro focale, si espande in senso circolare ed orizzontale raccogliendo e collegando mano a mano tutti i differenti fili che compongono il corpo del racconto per evitare la progressione verticale e sommatoria tipica del crescendo epico. (51)
>
> We prefer the technique of embroidery which, beginning from a central focal point, expands in a circular and horizontal sense, gathering one by one all the different threads that comprise the body of the story, to avoid the vertical and incremental progression typical of the epic crescendo.

In this approach to storytelling, the transition in the diegesis from fictional to documentary footage is always unmarked, as the cross-cutting between the diaries and fictional and documentary footage is deliberately jarring and disjunctive rather than a seamless merging of archival and fictional material or archival material

and voiceover (as is the case with more traditional documentaries such as *Bellissime 1*, *Bellissime 2*, and *Storia del movimento femminista in Italia*). The editing of this material, however, at times conforms to conventional narrative strategies typical of fiction films and docufiction. This is exemplified in the sequence about the editorial meeting at the popular magazine *Annabella*. The journalists sit around a table and discuss the predicament of a reader who had complained about her marriage and her low self-esteem. The discussion is edited using a succession of reaction, close-up, and medium shots intercut with humorous animation that serves to make light of the journalists' self-righteousness. Fraioli explains the function of this sequence:

> Una donna infelice e insoddisfatta del suo matrimonio.
> Le giornaliste di "Annabella" analizzano puntuali, severe intellettuali milanesi, gli errori della sfortunata che nel frattempo esibiamo nella forma dell'animazione caricaturale (di Pino Zac). È un banale montaggio alternato, loro dibattono—lei dimostra, e non servirebbe a niente in quanto tale se non introducesse un elemento qualitativo in più. L'ironia [...] Ci è servito a mostrare la strada ai nostri spettatori e compagni di viaggio e ci è servito a capire cosa e come vogliamo raccontare. Rinominando le cose, sorvolando come austronaute un pezzo di storia, riqualificando materiali dimenticati negli archivi polverosi [...] riutilizzando le inquadrature. (48)
>
> A woman who is unhappy and unsatisfied in her marriage.
> The *Annabella* journalists analyze punctual, stern Milanese intellectuals, the unfortunate woman's mistakes, who we simultaneously depict as an animated caricature (by Pino Zac). It's a banal, alternating montage: they debate—she demonstrates, and so it would be useless if a further qualitative element were not introduced. Irony [...] It helped us to show our viewers and travel companions the way, and it helped us to understand what and how we want to narrate. Renaming things, hovering over a piece of a story like astronauts, recataloguing forgotten material in dusty archives [...] reusing frames.

In this process of re-signification, diaries, fiction, and documentary make claims to truth and authenticity in the business of making history. History and cinema remain in tension, each foregrounding the fictionality of the other, thus questioning radically the fantasy of mainstream documentary as an objective and

exhaustive account of the past as it really happened. The past lacks coherence, and it is necessary to view fragmentation, inconsistencies, and contradictions as crucial elements of any attempt to engage with the women's movement in Italy. This is particularly significant for the ways in which one makes sense of the movement's feminist legacy within the complex and contradictory postfeminist discourses through which such a legacy is constructed today.

Sangiovanni's approach in *Ragazze la vita trema* stems also from an interest in telling stories about historical events (such as the women's liberation movement) from a personal and subjective reflection on female experience told in the first person. In a recent conversation with us, Sangiovanni explains, "La cosa che mi interessa molto è arrivare al racconto della storia attraverso racconti di soggettività e in modo particolare la soggettività femminile. Quindi non raccontare la storia delle donne ma la storia attraverso l'esperienza femminile" ("The thing that really interests me is arriving at the telling of history through stories of subjectivity, and particularly, female subjectivity. Therefore, not telling the history of women, but history through the female experience") (Interview with Luciano and Scarparo).

In her first documentary, *Staffette* (*Changeovers*, 2006), Sangiovanni had already worked with this approach. This documentary recounts the experiences, told in the first person, of four women who joined the anti-Fascist resistance when they were about 18 years old. Their stories are structured as conversations and as dialogues between the past and present, bringing to life a process of remembering that is not concerned with facts, but with an intimate reflection on the very fabric of history through narratives of emotions. Thus in *Staffette* the resistance is remembered and narrated as an experience of everyday emotions and events rather than as heroic history. Similarly, in *Ragazze la vita trema*, the focus is on ways in which Alessandra, Liliana, Maria Paola, and Marina reflect on, remember, and narrate their involvement as young women in the student protests of 1968 and the women's liberation movement. As in *Staffette*, the women reconstruct their experiences retrospectively, configuring for the viewer new memories of historical processes from a subjective and personal point of view. They interweave intimate accounts such as the experience of rape, in Alessandra's case, or the complex and painful relationship with one's mother, in Liliana's story, with stories about their

involvement in the student movement of 1968. They discuss their developing uneasiness with the subaltern role women were expected to play in the leftist political groups that they had helped create, recount the development of *autocoscienza* ("self-awareness") groups, and talk about the campaigns for legalizing abortion and divorce. They also reminisce about the occupation of the building in Rome's Via del Governo Vecchio that would become the Casa delle donne, culminating in the struggle to change the law that considered rape a crime against public morality rather than against the individual.

In her "Note di regia" ("Director's Notes") Sangiovanni describes her documentary as "un film sulla memoria e la sua trasmissione, e sulla sua possibilità di farsi narrazione storica" ("a film about memory and its transmission, and about its potential to become historical narration"). She explains her methodology as follows:

> Per realizzarlo ho incontrato tante donne e ascoltato molti racconti prima di scegliere le quattro protagoniste, racconti di un tempo in cui io ero bambina o poco più. Ho ascoltato suoni di repertorio e visto immagini. Ho cercato di costruire con tutto questo un rapporto empatico, che è diventato metodo, una sorta di circolarità dell'emozione, ciò che la Storia generalmente stenta a comunicare. Si tratta credo di un'emozione impegnativa, che vorrebbe portare chi guarda e ascolta ad una partecipazione attiva, una memoria vivificata e presente.
>
> In making it, I met a lot of women and listened to a lot of stories before selecting the four protagonists, stories about an era in which I was a small child or not much older. I listened to sounds of the period and saw images. With all this, I tried to construct an empathetic relationship, which became my method, a sort of circularity of emotion, which History generally has difficulty communicating. I believe it involves an engaged emotion, which aims to actively engage the person watching and listening, providing an enlivened and present memory.

The term *ragazze* ("girls") in the film's title reminds the audience that at the time of their involvement in the making of history, the women were in their twenties. The past they remember now, in their sixties, with and for the viewers in the present, was also a time in history when "the young" became a social, political, and

economic entity. The other part of the title, "la vita trema," ("life trembles") refers to graffiti found on a wall of the (now abandoned) building that housed the first Casa delle donne in Rome and forms the backdrop of Valentina's diary in *Vogliamo anche le rose*.

The building was occupied by the women's liberation movement, and the account of the occupation is significant for the women's stories. For Sangiovanni the writing on the wall exemplifies all that the women's stories attempted to convey:

> Quando si parla di donne si toccano con mano delle cose che stanno alle radici della nostra cultura e della vita. È uno sguardo spostato […] come è nel caso di queste donne che raccontano il loro processo di presa di coscienza di se e di presa in mano della propria vita. Questo sguardo spostato, penso che sia ancora capace di illuminare la nostra storia e cultura. Non la storia delle donne, ma uno sguardo spostato sulla storia. (Sangiovanni, Interview with Luciano and Scarparo)
>
> When people talk about women they touch upon things that are at the roots of our culture and of life. It's a shifted gaze… like it is in the case of these women who tell the story of their consciousness raising process, and of taking their lives into their own hands. This shifted gaze, I think, is still capable of illuminating our history and culture. It's not about the history of women, but about a shifted gaze on history.

Sangiovanni's *sguardo spostato* ("shifted gaze") comes from an understanding of the world that originates in the Italian feminist practice of *partire da sé* ("beginning from oneself"). As discussed by Scarparo, this practice "implies taking oneself as a starting point" so that "the free understanding of oneself and the world around oneself must necessarily be reconfigured and rethought beginning from one's own gendered experience" (203). Sangiovanni also refers to the practice of beginning from oneself in an interview in which she comments that the protagonists are not famous but, rather "significanti in quanto donne che hanno preso in mano la loro vita, sono 'partire da sé', dai loro desideri e drammi personali, per arrivare a una politica rivoluzionaria" ("significant in that they are women who took their lives into their own hands, 'beginning from themselves,' from their desires and personal dramas, to arrive at a revolutionary politics") (qtd. in Greco, "La rivoluzione").

In *Ragazze la vita trema* this practice becomes a way to narrate history and a means through which historical memory can be created. Their memories of sit-ins and demonstrations to campaign for legislation concerning divorce, abortion, and violence against women are accompanied by personal accounts of the protagonists' growing awareness of themselves as gendered subjects. The women's accounts are illustrated by images that, in part, had never been shown on screen before, sourced from library audiovisual stock and from public and private archives. As in Marazzi's more experimental film, the focus of Sangiovanni's documentary remains on the dialogic relationship between the private and public dimensions of history and memory.

Conclusion

In their attempt to imagine on screen the experience of forgotten women from the past, Sandrelli, Spada, De Lillo, Nicchiarelli, Marazzi, and Sangiovanni join the efforts of feminist biographers and historians. Since the 1970s a strong concern with the specificity of the experiences of women as marginalized subjects of historical discourse has motivated feminists to focus also on the lives of individual and, more often than not, previously unknown women. Feminist historians like the filmmakers discussed in this chapter have either become increasingly concerned with rescuing women's lives from obscurity or have insisted on the need to place the lives of exceptional women within "a framework of 'ordinary' female experience" (Caine, "Feminist Biography" 253). In doing so, they have reflected on the ways in which these women were "constrained, or assisted, by the conventions of femininity in their society" (Caine, "Feminist Biography" 253).

Like many feminist historians who have come to favor women's biographies as privileged sites in which the formation of women as "soggetti in divenire" ("subjects in process") is most evident (Di Cori, Introduction to *Altre Storie* 53), Sandrelli and Spada use the biographical film to inscribe literary mothers, Christine de Pisan and Antonia Pozzi, as *soggetti in divenire* in Italian cinema.

De Lillo's biographical film and Nicchiarelli's coming-of-age comedy re-interpret Italian political history from a gendered perspective. De Lillo uses Eleonora Fonseca's story to revisit the Neapolitan Revolution. Nicchiarelli reconfigures and reframes

the history of Italian Communism from the point of view of a fictional young woman. Whereas Sandrelli, Spada, De Lillo, and Nicchiarelli inscribe women into Italian literary and political history by reframing the perspective of individual women who fought against societal constrains, Marazzi and Sangiovanni reconfigure the tumultuous and complex history of the 1960s and 1970s by placing the women's liberation movement at the center of their narratives. Their films create a dialogue between public and private, between story and history. The diaries and the first-person accounts interpret and narrate official history from a personal perspective.

Chapter Five

Migration and Transnational Mobility

Since the 1990s, filmmakers have turned their attention to Italy's dramatic transformation from a nation producing emigrants to an immigrant nation. Recent studies of these films have contributed to the unpacking of the representation of the phenomenon and of its relationship to issues of national identity and Italy's history while also drawing attention to the complexity and cultural specificity of migration experiences from different locations of origin and at different times.[1]

The representation of immigration in Italian cinema remains problematic. Derek Duncan suggests that films about issues of migration are made by filmmakers who "have uniformly aligned themselves with the attempt to welcome migrants as a positive presence" ("'Loving Geographies'" 168), but often such films work with the same stereotypes they purport to dismantle.

This chapter analyses the encounter between cinema, transnational mobility, and migration through a discussion of documentaries and fiction films that foreground the complexities and specificities of the migration experience, and construct a nation of transformed landscapes that is struggling to hold on to traditional cultural and gender myths.

Here, we are particularly concerned with three documentaries that pay attention to individual migrants and their particular stories. *Sidelki/Badanti* (2005) by Katia Bernardi, *La stoffa di Veronica* (2005) by Emma Rossi Landi and Flavia Pasquini, and *Il mondo addosso* (2006) by Costanza Quatriglio explore transnational mobility from the point of view of migrant women and girls in search of a new notion of home that requires spatial and mental mobility away from familiar spaces into new territories. These documentaries employ techniques that reveal the narrative and ideological choices involved in the representation of subjective, moral, and

aesthetic perspectives on the issues of migration and transnational mobility. As Bill Nichols suggests, "documentary calls for specific techniques to give cinematic embodiment to lived encounters and historical events, experience and reflection, research and argumentation. It calls for an ethics of responsibility, an aesthetics of film form, and a politics of representation" (Foreword 13).

The uniqueness of each individual and the specificity of each story are determined by the relationship between the filmmaker and her protagonist. According to Quatriglio, the quality of documentaries depends on the filmmaker's relationship with her subjects (Interview with Scarparo). A relational style and ethics highlight the experiential aspect of the so-called cinema of reality, which tries to counterbalance the claim of neutral observation with the inevitable subjective point of view of a director who also has the spectator in mind. This relational style characterizes the three documentaries by Bernardi, Landi and Pasquini, and Quatriglio and their engagement with the experience of migration for women and children.

The fiction films we explore in this chapter highlight the evolving status occupied by the migrant in Italian cinema. *L'appartamento* was made a year after Denny Mendez, who was originally from the Dominican Republic, won the 1996 Miss Italy contest. Her victory triggered a public debate about race and national identity. That debate was focused on the female body and had a "distinctly racist edge," but it also led to a radical rethinking of the Italian concept of a multiethnic society, according to which migrants could only be cleaners, prostitutes, or laborers (O'Healy, "[Non] è una somala" 185). Michela Ardizzoni argues that "Italy had never, until the 1996 pageant, undergone such a radical reconsideration of its own identity politics at the national level" (qtd. in O'Healy, "[Non] è una somala" 185). Made in the aftermath of that debate, *L'appartamento* tells an ambiguous story in which migrants attempt to "talk back," to use Graziella Parati's expression, and claim a place in a multiethnic nation, albeit one that is only temporary.

A decade later, in Spada's *Come l'ombra* and the comedies *Bianco e nero* and *Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar*, the migrant is no longer a novel inscription on the Italian landscape. These films are seemingly taking the presence of migrants in the new multiethnic Italy for granted, but, like *L'appartamento*, they prompt audiences to reflect on the marginalization in some instances, or incorpora-

tion in others, of threatening and threatened "others." These films, while imagining an ostensibly changed Italy, construct narratives of encounters between Italians and migrants in which the migrants disappear or remain stereotypes.

Relocations and Dislocations: *La stoffa di Veronica, Sidelki,* and *Il mondo addosso*

In the past thirty years, transnational movements, the movement of women without their families, and unaccompanied minors seeking asylum have become significant features of international migration. Italy has been no exception.

There are marked differences in the pattern of women's migration. Most women coming from Morocco or Tunisia, for example, migrate to Italy to accompany male family members. By contrast, many women from Eastern and Central European countries, Latin America, the Philippines, and Cape Verde migrate by themselves for work. They are often the breadwinners and make a strategic choice that allows them to fund their children's education or contribute to the purchase of a house back home.[2] Most but not all settle in large urban centers, such as Rome or Milan. They tend to occupy poorly paid jobs and find themselves in enclosed, isolated domestic spaces, often as domestic workers or in the sex trade (Anthias and Lazaridis). Isolation is one prominent feature of this type of migration.

By 2005, 5,573 children had moved to Italy on their own (UNICEF). Unlike other migrants, who can be served with deportation orders for entering Italy illegally, unaccompanied minors are taken care of by the state until their 18th birthday.[3] These provisions, however, often fail to take into account the special needs or experiences of individual young migrants. Research has shown that independent child migrants are often deeply affected by the absence of family support. They often work in irregular labor markets—for example, as prostitutes or domestics—and regularly end up living on the streets (UNICEF; O'Connell Davidson and Farrow 31-32; Bichi; Campani and Salimbeni; Campani, Lapov, and Carchedi).

The experiences of these women and children suggest that we need new paradigms for understanding migration. No longer can it be considered a one-way process, involving either a journey from

or a return to a particular locale. Rather, as Floya Anthias asserts, "transnational global processes provide the context within which new forms of gendered migration to Italy need to be located" (Anthias and Lazaridis 21). Transnational processes involve the possibility of regular movement across borders, which results in the development of new and complex relations between migrants and the different spaces they inhabit. Cheaper airfares, as well as new forms of communication (such as free voice over Internet applications), allow migrants to maintain closer ties with their countries of origin and their networks of family and friends.[4]

Migrant women in particular have strong transnational family links and major responsibilities for providing for their families back home (Anthias and Lazaridis 22). These women belong to both their country of origin and their country of destination, as they are economic and ethnic subjects within both locations. Anthias's notion of transnational social spaces suggests that the two binaries of assimilation and ethnic pluralism that pervaded multiculturalist discourse are no longer adequate descriptors of migrant identity construction.

In *La stoffa di Veronica* it is imprisonment, rather than travel, that allows Veronica to live and work in Italy while supporting her four children in Romania. Arrested while traveling from Romania, Veronica is sent to Italy to serve her jail sentence at Venice's la Giudecca. She earns money by working as a seamstress for a cooperative that employs women prisoners as part of a rehabilitation program. Modeling her creations on styles featured in reproductions of old paintings that are sourced by members of the cooperative, Veronica is in charge of designing and sewing old Venetian costumes for a fashion show. The documentary chronicles the preparations for that show and its eventual staging, while also piecing together Veronica's story. Making limited use of talking head interviews, the camera follows Veronica as she works, interacts with her fellow prisoners, and prepares for the two-day leave she has been granted to attend the show and be introduced as one of its key contributors.

While on leave from prison, she is joined by her 17-year-old daughter, who has come from Romania for the show, her brother and his wife, and by an Italian boyfriend with whom she corresponds from jail. The fashion show becomes a catalyst for a family reunion. The camera dwells on the intimate moments shared

by mother and daughter and the nervous encounter between Veronica and her boyfriend, and records the family lunch with the brother and sister-in-law. On the day of the show, dressed in an elegant white suit, Veronica roams the Venice of international tourism, riding on a gondola and taking pictures of San Marco.

The documentary begins with a long shot of a courtyard where women walk in a line dressed in what look like Renaissance costumes. The audience soon discovers that the yard belongs to a women's prison. Much of the documentary is shot inside the prison, yet the camera carefully avoids typical features such as barred windows or barbed wire fences. The sense of imprisonment is minimized: the bars on the windows facing the courtyard are depicted only from afar. Veronica is never framed in enclosed spaces, and the feeling of freedom that runs counter to imprisonment is suggested from the beginning of the film, in which Veronica is seen repeatedly opening windows. Fluid camera movements follow Veronica as she walks from the room in which she works through corridors and into the courtyard. She is even able to look out of her window and see a little tree that is miraculously growing on top of the prison roof. Embodying Veronica's resourcefulness and stubborn desire to grow and develop against all odds, the tree has been there since Veronica arrived at la Giudecca.

The images suggest that Veronica is free. She also makes that point herself, when she says on camera that she lives a fairly normal life, working long hours and spending her evenings with her friends. She earns enough to support her children, who are in the same situation as many other Romanian youths whose mothers work abroad. As Veronica's daughter says, "In Romania ci sono molti ragazzi che vivono da soli perché i genitori sono andati all'estero per lavorare" ("In Romania many young kids live by themselves because their parents have gone overseas to work"). For Veronica, the grief that comes from her forced separation from her young children is far greater than the loss of personal freedom that comes with her confinement in jail: "Non mi manca niente, non mi manca la libertà, solo i miei figli" ("I don't miss anything, I don't miss freedom, only my children").

Whereas Veronica refuses to see herself as a prisoner, a social worker in charge of the cooperative for which she works and a nun from Caritas who befriends her struggle to see Veronica as anything but a Romanian prisoner in need of help. The nun worries:

"Questo di essere una detenuta Veronica non l'ha interiorizzato. Da una parte è un bene perché può essere libera dentro come chiunque altro, ma da una parte è un male per lei perché questa sua libertà viene poco considerata" ("Veronica has not internalized being a prisoner. On the one hand it's a good thing because she can be free inside like anyone else, but on the other hand it's a bad thing for her because this freedom of hers is barely considered by others"). When Veronica organizes a dress rehearsal in the prison so that her fellow prisoners can also enjoy the show and admire her creations, the nun patronizes the women involved: "Sembrano le bambine dell'asilo che fanno i travestimenti" ("They look like little kindergarten girls playing dress-up").

Similarly, the social worker regrets having offered Veronica the opportunity to make the costumes for the show, claiming that "tutto questo successo dentro le mura" ("all this success inside the walls") could give her wrong expectations of what life will be like—"perché quando uscirà sarà una sartina qualunque" ("because when she gets out she will just be a little seamstress"). The diminutive *sartina* ("little seamstress"), along with the nun's reference to Veronica and her friends as *bambine* ("children"), jars with the image of Veronica that the documentary so carefully constructs. Except for the condescending social worker and the nun from Caritas, everybody admires Veronica: her daughter wishes she could become like her, her fellow prisoner and assistant claims that she could never even dream of being as talented as Veronica, and her Italian boyfriend is smitten by her strength and liveliness.

Contradicting the opinions of the Italian authorities, which are embodied by the social worker and the nun, Veronica refuses to be seen merely as someone in need of help. Her construction in the film defies facile definitions such as "Romanian criminal" or "migrant." *La stoffa di Veronica* invites the spectator to reflect on the uniqueness of *one* Romanian woman, and to pay attention to the specific details of her story. Her story is told so that it may be heard, not necessarily because she is special, but because each story should count, each woman should be much more than merely a "migrant."

The closing words of *Sidelki* summarize Bernardi's documentary: "Sono piccole storie di una storia più grande, sono le donne di un' immigrazione silenziosa. Le sconosciute che tessono uno degli infiniti fili di una storia, un filo che le ha condotte fino a

qui- a incontrare e condividere storie di altre donne" ("They are small stories in a much larger story, they are women of a silent migration. The strangers who weave one of the infinite threads of a story, a thread which has brought them here—to find and share the stories of other women"). The sharing of the story is suggested by images of a Matryoshka doll, an iconic symbol of maternity, which accompany the opening titles. The dolls are a visual metaphor for the fact that in the documentary's narrative, one story leads to another.

By means of voices, images, and testimonials *Sidelki* interprets Eastern European women's journeys, suspended between hope, nostalgia, and dreams that rarely come true. Through traditional talking head interviews that alternate with images of daily life in Italy and in the Ukraine, we meet the women and their families. Psychologists and social workers discuss the complex set of emotions that mental health professionals in the Ukraine call "la sindrome d'Italia" ("Italy syndrome"): the trauma, social isolation, maternal anguish, and depression that mark the experience of migration for the women interviewed.

Women from countries that formerly belonged to the Soviet Union have migrated to Italy since 1991. Because of a shortage of female domestic workers,[5] they found work primarily as *badanti* ("caregivers"), irrespective of their qualifications. They work long hours for years and return "home" only after they have earned enough to pay for their children's education or to buy a house. In the 1990s, women's migration to Italy was mainly driven by their dire economic circumstances at home; in more recent years, the lure of Western consumer culture has increasingly been a key factor in women's decisions to migrate. The desire for Western clothing or the newest cell phone or a holiday house also conditions the women's choice to work in Italy (Bernardi).

The *mise-en-scène* of *Sidelki* is as transnational as the women's experiences. The film begins with the image of a long, white, snow-covered road slowly superimposed onto the bodies of women on the move. The camera moves between the former Soviet Union and Italy, retracing the women's journeys and their alternating commitments to two cultures. The film highlights the women's courage and sacrifice, and depicts an ambivalent relationship to the destination country. In some cases they want to settle in Italy permanently, whereas in others their goal is ultimately to

return home. The choices themselves are not fixed, however, as these women find themselves increasingly displaced when they travel back to a "home" that they no longer recognize and where the family dynamics might have changed.

The documentary is structured as a journey in reverse that begins with an "epilogue." The women featured in the documentary are often filmed on their way to Italy, or recounting their journeys to Italy. *Sidelki* can therefore also be considered a road movie, in the tradition of European travel films (as discussed by Eva Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli) in which ordinary citizens travel for work or move to countries and take trains or buses or even hitchhike and walk, and where the "road covered" is transnational.[6]

The female migrant experiences mobility as dislocation.[7] In the words of Italian feminist critic Paola Melchiori, "dislocation has always marked the terrain of the female traveler. Nostalgia is substituted by dislocation" (qtd. in Bruno 86). Dislocation, in fact, is one of the causes of "la sindrome d'Italia."

The female migrant, if seen as a traveler, threatens the established dichotomy that traditionally identifies voyage with the male subject and home with the female. Giuliana Bruno writes:

> Conceived as a circular structure, the metaphor of travel locks gender into a frozen, binary opposition and offers the same static view of identity. Travel as metaphor involves a voyage of the self, a search for identity through a series of cultural identifications. If such travel is simply conceived as a return to sameness, or nostalgia for loss of that sameness—the home of identity or the identity of home—domus, domesticity, and domestication continue to be confused and gendered feminine. (86)

In this understanding of home, the *domus* "is conceived as the opposite of voyage"; it is a "point of departure and destination, and gendered female" and becomes the "very site of the production of sexual difference" (Bruno 86). The circularity implied in this construction of home identifies the *domus* with one's origins. As Bruno argues, the *domus* comes to represent "the womb from which one originates and to which one wishes to return" (86). As the archetypal story of Ulysses and Penelope shows, the voyage is constructed by and for the male subject.

The female migrant finds herself caught between the conflicting desire for mobility and the impossibility of representing the *domus*

as a fixed and stable origin. It is only fitting that, in an understanding of *domus*, domesticity, and domestication as feminine, the female traveler-turned-migrant would be seen as best suited for domestic work. Paid domestic work in Italy has expanded enormously in recent years, with paid work performed by women migrants filling the gaps created by the movement of increasing numbers of Italian women into white-collar jobs, and the lack of adequate public child care and elder care services (Chell-Robinson 108). In the few studies on female migration to Italy, some scholars argue that women's migration provides "an escape route from patriarchal structures as well as being motivated by the search for economic improvement for their families" (Anthias and Lazaridis 7). Others highlight how many of these women, in addition to suffering poor working conditions and extreme exploitation and abuse, suffer from social isolation (Chell-Robinson 103–23).

Sidelki addresses the tension between female mobility and domestic work by providing the women with an identity that goes beyond that of migrant or *badante*. In films and stories about migration, the migrant is often male and is also primarily seen dealing with his new life in the host country, perhaps telling stories about his pre-migration life, even showing pictures of family members left behind. Migration in these stories usually entails a before and an after, by which the home country and the people left behind are invested with nostalgia. By contrast, in Bernardi's documentary, the women interviewed are seen back at home with their families, but they are also on the move back to Italy. The women talk about their experience of life in Italy in Italian, but they do not inhabit the screen by themselves. Their husbands and children are often strategically positioned in the frame in the background, listening to their mothers and wives. While the women and their family members attempt to control their expressions so as to conceal the emotion of the traditional reaction shot, their looks and at times tears betray their distress.

The stories these women recount are complex because they are neither about the "good migrant" who faces adversity at the hands of an uncomprehending and racist host country nor about women as hapless and uncomprehending victims. The women face difficulties and are often exploited by employers and fellow migrants, but they are aware of the choices they make. They are also aware of their contradictory positions as mothers, invested with the task of

taking emotional as well as material care of their children, and of their inability to fulfill the role of caregivers from afar. Although they regularly conceive of themselves as desperate, isolated, or alienated, they never see themselves as victims.

The women refuse to be objectified; as one of them comments when remembering her harrowing journey to Italy by clinging to the undercarriage of a train: "Mi sono ricordata della pubblicità che diceva che le donne non sono oggetti" ("I was reminded of the advertisement saying that women are not objects"). Her words are accompanied by a strategically positioned still image of a poster featuring a woman being held, almost squashed, by what looks like a big male hand. This image foregrounds the complexity of the women's position. Despite their determination to claim social and personal mobility for themselves and their families, the strong male hand that keeps the woman firmly in its grip shows the difficulties that women continue to face in so-called postfeminist times.

In an interview about her most recent film, *Vogliamo anche le rose*, Marazzi reflects on the status of migrant women in Italy, highlighting the ironic tragedy of postfeminism:

> Ogni giorno noi donne emancipate e privilegiate del Primo mondo possiamo permetterci di essere come siamo e fare ciò che facciamo proprio perché dietro a ognuna di noi c'è un'altra donna, dalle nostre stesse capacità ma più svantaggiata perché viene da un paese lontano, spesso da una cultura che la soggioga, che si si prende cura al posto nostro di tutte quelle funzioni di accudimento [...]. Il confronto è quotidiano, ma mi sembra che sia purtroppo un confronto silenzioso. Queste donne siamo noi di due generazioni fa, eppure spesso non lo riconosciamo e le trattiamo come non avremmo mai voluto che fossero state trattate le nostre nonne. Insomma, la nostra emancipazione e libertà sono possibili solo grazie al sacrificio di un'altra donna. È triste che debba sempre essere la donna a pagare. (Marazzi and Ballestra, in Persico 34)

> Every day we emancipated and privileged women of the First world can let ourselves be as we are and do what we do, just because behind each of us there's another woman, with the same abilities as us, but more disadvantaged because she comes from a distant country, often from a culture that subjugates her, who takes care of all our caregiving functions on our behalf [...] It's a daily comparison, but it seems to me that it's unfortunately

> a silent comparison. These women are us, but two generations back, and yet often we don't recognize it and we treat them like we would never have wanted our grandmothers to be treated. So, our emancipation and freedom are possible, only thanks to another woman's sacrifice. They say that it's always a woman who has to pay.

The persistence in Italian culture of a historical female condition of subjugation is even more shameful because it finds generations of privileged Italian women reaping the so-called benefits of postfeminism by appropriating patriarchal codes of behavior and exploiting less-privileged women. Paradoxically, transnational mobility, which in theory should have further emancipated women, seems to have created a condition that continues to confine women—albeit not middle-class Italian.

Il mondo addosso juxtaposes the narratives of several unaccompanied minors. It begins with the harrowing story of a young Afghani man who is never seen on screen but whose voice is heard regularly throughout the film. He acts as a voiceover and as a mouthpiece for the director:

> Quando avevo sei anni, un giorno sono andato a scuola e dalla scuola sono tornato. Ho visto che avevano lanciato una bomba sulla mia casa. La mia mamma e i miei fratelli erano sotto le macerie. Appena sono arrivato davanti alla porta non ho trovato i miei fratelli. Ho trovato solo la mia mamma. Ho preso in braccio la mia mamma. Le ho sollevato la testa e le sue ultime parole sono state "Se tu sei mio figlio se tu hai bevuto il mio latte allora ti dico che devi andare. Vai a raccontare in tutto il mondo che ci sono persone che vivono come noi. E i problemi che abbiamo."

> When I was six years old, one day I went to school and I came back from school. I saw that they had dropped a bomb on my house. My mother and my brothers were under the ruins. When I got to the door I didn't find my brothers. I only found my mother. I took my mother in my arms. I raised her head, and her last words were "If you are my son if you drank my milk, then I tell you, you have to go. Go and tell the whole world that there are people who live like us. And the problems that we have."

A mother's words become this protagonist's driving force. To bear witness, he leaves Afghanistan on a long, traumatic journey

that will eventually bring him to Italy. On another level, the mother's wish is also appropriated by the filmmaker; Quatriglio's documentary is testament to the many children who are driven at a young age from their homeland and face the enormous challenge of starting a new life in a new country and earning enough money to send remittances home.

Following the opening voiceover, the camera depicts the arrival of a young immigrant at a hostel for unaccompanied minors. The camera follows the solicitous actions of a woman who welcomes him, attentive to his needs of food and a bed. He remains hidden from view, captured only from behind or in shots that don't show his head as we see the ritual of his induction. The camera then cuts to outside shots of the hostel and to a voiceover by another person, which introduces us to the second protagonist of the documentary: the Romanian Cosmin, sitting on his bed on the day of his 18th birthday. The discreet distancing in the portrayal of the previous minor gives way to close-ups that provide an emotional insight into Cosmin's character. The trembling hand-hand camera that remains fixed on Cosmin's face increases our intimacy with the young man. The camera records every expression and gesture, capturing the sadness of a child-adult, who confesses his loneliness on a day when he should be celebrating with family and friends.

The camera then follows Cosmin into the courtyard. Even as we see him through mid-shots, his body language alerts us to his distress. The narrative then moves to position the political alongside the personal. At 18, Cosmin ceases to be a minor and loses the legal protection granted to immigrant children. Being in a special category for young adults, Cosmin will only be able to convert his temporary permit into a permanent one if he is able to produce a work contract. The young Romanian is still struggling to express himself in Italian, and he has to rely on volunteers who help him set up a job interview and on doctors who treat him when the results of his physical exam reveal a serious hearing impediment. Cosmin's story ends on a hopeful note, as he lands a job and thus becomes eligible for permanent residence.

Cosmin's story is intercut with the stories of three other young people: Inga from Moldavia, Mohammad Jan from Afghanistan, and Josif from Romania. The individual narratives are not told as separate chapters but are interwoven in a complex quilted text that engages the spectator in their reconstruction. Images are framed

and edited so as to lead the viewer incrementally to an understanding of the issues and events.

Inga is taking a course to qualify as a pastry chef. Eager to work, she accepts an offer of irregular employment; if it wasn't for the intervention of volunteers, she would have been exploited. Mohammad Jan is committed to helping youths like him who arrive in Italy alone and afraid. He tries to make them understand the options and rights available to them in Italy. Josif is homeless and makes a living as a prostitute near Rome's Piazza della Repubblica. He is sending money home to assist his family. He regularly reassures his mother by phone that he is fine, has a job and a house, and is healthy. Unlike Cosmin, Mohammad Jan, and Inga, whom we come to know through a camera that captures them in close-ups, Josif remains faceless, the director respecting his wishes to conceal his story from his family in Romania. The sad reality of his loneliness and stolen youth is brought home to the viewer through the close-up of his only constant companion: a small, yellow stuffed animal, which always smiles at him.

The young protagonists of *Il mondo addosso* left their homelands for different reasons. Cosmin, Josif, and Inga came to Italy primarily for economic reasons. Mohammed Jan and his nameless compatriot escaped persecution and war. Although each of these stories has a political or economic dimension shared by many immigrants, the emotional trauma depicted in this film is specific to migrants of this age group. As teenagers or young adults, the protagonists of *Il mondo addosso* occupy a vulnerable and lonely position: they are forced to face the world on their own and to always be on the lookout in a society they cannot entirely trust. There is a striking contrast between the tragic stories of epic journeys under trucks and across oceans in inhumane and abusive conditions and the banal encounters with a bureaucracy that also puts up seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Quatriglio points out another contrast: between the normality of everyday life and the experience of young people who are used to talking about human trafficking and about traveling companions who perished on the way to Italy (Colamartino).

In the unspooling of the narratives, *Il mondo addosso* employs stylistic elements signifying travel (filming, and on board of, modes of transportation—buses, trams, trains, motorbikes), thus reflecting the protagonists' metaphorical journeys of change or

growth, which are central to the narrative. The mobility of the camera and the repetitive use of means of transport serve two purposes: they drive the narrative of the film, and they include the spectator in the documentary's journeys. In recounting the separate stories of its central protagonists, the film travels across Rome from the margins to the center, from the spaces that the young people temporarily inhabit to the official spaces where they negotiate their futures. The young protagonists are constantly on the move: in search of something, running from the authorities or following a trajectory dictated by them.

Quatriglio juxtaposes close-ups of Inga, Mohammad Jan, and Cosmin with the voiceover of the young Afghani man and the voices of those we encounter through Mohammad Jan's attempts to assist them. While their identities are protected by the darkness of the night, they talk about the abuses they suffered during their long journeys to Italy, which mirror those undertaken by the young Afghan who provides the film's voiceover and by Mohammad Jan. The film's sadly ironic ending shows successive shots of each of the protagonists. Young Josif is in his "home": an abandoned railway car, a symbol of mobility now immobilized like Josif himself, who with the passage of years and the coming of legal age will be trapped by the bureaucratic structure that once protected him.

In *Il mondo addosso*, Quatriglio focuses on the emotional predicament of migrants who are unaccompanied minors by asking: Who are they?, What do they feel?, What are their aspirations? Adriana Cavarero defines the theoretical concepts of "whoness" as the unrepeatable individuality of a self, which is ideally located in narratives, and of "whatness" as the designations societies attach to an individual in terms of generalized definitions such as migrant, illegal migrant, or asylum seeker (*Tu che mi guardi*). Graziella Parati applies Cavarero's ideas to her discussion of migration stories in film. It is the individual, or what Parati and Caverero would term the "whoness" of the child migrant, that Quatriglio is most interested in exploring. The "whoness" lies behind the "whatness" of the immigrant and of anyone else who is "other." By attributing uniqueness and individuality to what could easily become the stereotyped other, Quatriglio's documentary is an attempt to give a voice to the individuals and their stories.

Mobile Encounters: *L'appartamento* and *Come l'ombra*

Spada's and Pirani's feature films are intimate in scale and in plot. They are about chance encounters and their impact on the lives of marginalized and solitary characters. Pirani's *L'appartamento* focuses on the unforeseen meeting between two immigrants from different cultural backgrounds who are marginalized by a suspicious dominant culture and struggle to redefine themselves in a new and alienating landscape. The apartment where they meet becomes a temporary haven and a provisional homeland for the recognition and affirmation of their humanity. In this space they can openly admit to each other the solitude and obstacles facing them as they attempt to reconstruct their transnational identities.

Spada's *Come l'ombra* tells the story of the encounter and short-lived relationship between a Milanese woman and a newly arrived Ukrainian immigrant. This film celebrates female friendship and offers a new path for self-realization for its Italian protagonist, but also foregrounds the problems for contemporary women in general and migrant women in particular and their relationship to mobility in a postfeminist society. *L'appartamento* predates Spada's film by almost a decade, but it employs similar cinematic use of space to highlight the solitude felt by immigrants, their victimization and disempowerment, and their experience of alienation between cultures. The film's narrative takes place over little more than twenty-four hours and uses many long sequences and close-ups to capture the movements and states of mind of the two central characters: Mahmud, a glassblower from Egypt, and Lejila, a traumatized refugee and former schoolteacher from Mostar.

Mahmud works in a pizzeria and shares a room with a fellow immigrant. He is represented as a warm and nurturing figure: he is identified with the making of food, with the feeding of his friend, and with kind gestures extended to other immigrants. We learn early in the film that he is about to embark on a potentially life-altering plan of action, the details of which are revealed only later. The build-up leads to Mahmud's walking into an orphanage and leaving with a baby, his daughter, who had been given up for adoption by her Italian mother.

This storyline alternates with Lejila's narrative and sequences, which focus on the menial and isolated nature of her work as a

cleaner. The two narratives intersect about thirty minutes into the film when Mahmud breaks into an upper-class apartment at the same time that Lejila arrives there to clean it. As Lejila goes about her domestic chores mechanically and with a sense of urgency, Mahmud offers advice about cleaning. As the evening progresses, the exchange between the two provides further insight into Mahmud. His warm personality manages to elicit information from the reticent Lejila, who is in Rome by herself and who doesn't know whether her family has survived the war in the former Yugoslavia.

L'appartamento focuses on the development of a sense of intimacy and tacit understanding between two people that is based on a recognition of their "similarity in difference." Although they are both immigrants, they, like Spada's characters, are "other" to each other: they come from different cultures and had different life experiences, and initially the film seems to suggest dichotomies: white/dark, female/male, and introvert/extrovert. But the film's narrative subverts these initial suggestions of difference. Lejila, in an unexpected gesture, overcomes her initial fear of the black male intruder and allows Mahmud to stay once she sees his child. Gender differences also seem to disappear as Mahmud is increasingly feminized in the film; his clean-shaven, innocent, boyish face is matched by his nurturing and feminine nature, as he cares for his baby daughter.

L'appartamento, like the documentaries discussed earlier in this chapter, emphasizes the whoness, the unique and individual story that lies behind the whatness or stereotyping of the immigrant:

> At the beginning of the film both protagonists are seen as whats: Mahmud like many other Egyptians in Italy works in a pizza parlor […] The first thirty minutes of the film […] follows the actions that define both people as immigrants working menial jobs […] It is within the space of the apartment that their story can be told to each other and to the audience as their temporary appropriation of a space in which to exist validates them as unique individuals. (Parati 118–19)

From the beginning of the film there is an overwhelming sense that immigrants are regarded as anonymous, deviant, second-class citizens who must be monitored and controlled and must act subserviently and not question the privileges that are being extended

to them by the dominant culture. Mahmud's misfortune is a result of his not respecting boundaries, of making himself visible within a culture that seeks to keep the immigrant invisible. His problem begins when he is seen. While undertaking a perfectly benign and indeed charitable activity (Mahmud goes up to the terrace in broad daylight to retrieve the heavy load of washing Lejila had hung out the night before), he is spotted by a suspicious neighbor. At this moment Mahmud becomes dangerous in the eyes of the neighbor, as she classifies him as a "what" that must be apprehended. This is because, unlike Lejila, who was able to see beyond his "whatness" and who, in identifying with him, believed that he would not hurt her, the neighbor is blind to his "whoness," his uniqueness. She looks for confirmation that the immigrant represents the dangerous undocumented intruders that need to be expelled from Italian soil. Mahmud's whoness positions him as a loving father, but his dreams for a better life in Italy for himself and his daughter are ruined as he is escorted out of the building and out of his daughter's life to be prosecuted as an undocumented immigrant. The final words we hear as he is taken away by the police, "ma che cosa ci venite a fare?" ("but what did you come here for?") relegate him to "whatness," that category of outsiders who should have stayed where they came from.

Although Mahmud disappears from the scene because he has ignored Lejila's strategy for survival—invisibility—his daughter is saved, at least temporarily, because she remains with Lejila in the land of the invisible. As Mahmud is led away, Lejila stands behind a door that is slightly ajar, and witnesses his expulsion before retreating into the house. In these final minutes, Lejila unwittingly inherits Mahmud's stories and parental role. The film ends with a four-minute out-of-focus sequence, in which Lejila is rocking the baby girl in her arms, replicating the iconographic Madonna and child. As Lejila replaces Egyptian lullabies with lullabies in her native tongue, the identities of surrogate mother and child, like the images themselves, become blurred. The film ends in a home that is a non-home, both a safe zone and a prison, an enclosed and isolated space where woman and child without agency or power seek protection through invisibility from a hostile dominant culture.

Come l'ombra has little dialogue and resorts to cinematic strategies that make events and characters difficult to understand and which highlight the alienation and solitude symptomatic of

our times.[8] Its opening scene is reminiscent of the aesthetic of Antonioni. In fact, the film is about cautious "distance" rather than immersion in location. The film opens with an aerial view of Milan from atop the city's Torre Branca, a recently reopened skyscraper. Like the Pirelli Tower, which features prominently at the beginning of *La Notte*, this is a "new" place from which to scope out a "new" city. Claudia, one of the film's two main protagonists, appears in the frame in an over-the-shoulder shot (much like Lidia, who is looking out over the Roman cityscape in the introductory sequence of *La Notte*), but then almost immediately disappears from the screen as the camera pans to show us a 360-degree view of a sprawling cityscape. The camera eventually locates Claudia again, in one of what will become a series of rapid entrances and exits from the film frame as she eludes the camera and the cinematic space, as she will do throughout the film.

Claudia's world is the focus of the first part of the film. The sequences focusing on Claudia don't tell a story; in them, images of interior spaces alternate with those of an inanimate urban landscape that reflects Claudia's empty, suspended life. She is a postfeminist woman, financially independent and mobile, and waiting for something to happen rather than actively seeking to change her life. She works as a travel agent by day and retreats to her apartment by night, looking out at but not participating in the world, only occasionally meeting up with friends and making the obligatory visit to see her family on the weekend. Her major extracurricular activity consists of taking evening Russian classes, which also seems to provide the only opportunity for romance, one based on an attraction for the other and for a culture to which Claudia seems drawn. One day she invites her teacher, Boris, to her house, in the hope of initiating a romantic relationship. He, however, is less interested in her than in securing a place for his Ukrainian "cousin" to stay for a week while he is away.

As in *L'appartamento*, the encounter between the film's two main protagonists occurs about thirty minutes into the film. It begins with the arrival of Olga, who is possibly only visiting Italy or may be planning to move there. The initial encounter between her and Claudia frames the two women on opposite sides of the central male interest, Boris, but the film soon diverges from what might have easily developed into a recognizable heterosexual romance narrative. The film subverts the expectations of the audi-

ence by giving prominence instead to the relationship between the two women and removing the male protagonist from the film. Thus the domestic space, emotions, and experience take precedence over action and events.

Olga is a mobile subject "who has relinquished all idea of nostalgia and desire for fixity" (Braidotti 22). Despite her mobility, or perhaps because of it, Olga is vulnerable. She is in love with the idea of Italy, the country of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Armani; she loves cappuccino and knows Italian songs. Unlike Claudia, who, conscious of her vulnerable female position, observes the city from a cautious distance, Olga invades the landscape, map in hand, and seems determined to negotiate it. Claudia warns Olga that not everything is as it seems—"non si fa il cappuccino con il latte a lunga conservazione" ("you don't make cappuccinos with long-life milk")—but cannot protect her from putting her faith in what is to her a land of milk and honey. Olga embraces the facade: she cannot afford Armani products, but is grateful for the Chinese imitations that she ships home to her family, where they can be sold for many times the purchase price. At the same time the glittering billboards and the Armani window she poses in front of confirm in her mind that Milan is a dynamic, glittering fashion capital, which hides the dark side of the urban dream in which immigrants play a significant role. As John Foot suggests, the millions of dollars that the fashion industry makes "are underpinned by immigrants working in the dirty jobs which feed this economy" (181).

Suddenly Olga disappears without explanation, her disappearance being another of the many gaps that we have become used to in the film. Her presence, however, remains implicitly inscribed on fashion billboards. Olga is like the women on the billboards, a woman fashioned for men and for heterosexual voyeurism, a surface image of false empowerment caught in a life-threatening patriarchal world. Like the billboard images, the many images of Olga traversing the urban landscape speak to women's sociohistorical treatment and a cinematic practice that similarly exploits female images.

Olga's disappearance sets in motion Claudia's journey in search of her. She cancels her holidays, puts her life on hold, and follows a path through unfamiliar parts of the city in an attempt to find Olga, a path that retraces her trajectory. Straying into unfamiliar

neighborhoods, Claudia discovers a Milan she did not know and had kept at bay. The film continues as a concatenation of gaps and unanswered questions until the night when Claudia identifies Olga's body at the morgue.

Olga has prompted Claudia also to search for herself. The end of her search for the missing friend propels Claudia on another journey. She returns to a Russian transport service that shuttles people and goods between the two countries and which she had discovered while looking for Olga, and embarks on a reversal of the journey undertaken by Olga. This journey has not been prompted by the travel guides that clutter her office, but by the brief bond of female friendship linked to a common genealogy that emerged out of difference. The film ends with Claudia embracing her own mobility: she leaves behind the protection offered by enclosed spaces and domestic rituals, and sets off across a new, barren landscape.

The Fantasy of Racial Mixing: *Bianco e nero* and *Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar*

In his seminal article "Laughter in the Dark," Mick Eaton links comedy to ideological and political positions. According to Eaton, the evocation of laughter can have either a consensual or a transgressive effect; that is, it can either reinforce stereotypes and prejudices, or unmask them (22–25). The consensual effect relates to the conservative side of comedy, which traditionally seeks serenity and favors the restoration of the status quo (Gieri 161). Transgressive comedies, on the other hand, question social norms and advocate social change. Many Italian comedies of the *commedia all'italiana* of the late 1950s and early 1960s had a transgressive effect. The *commedia all'italiana* critically observed the social problems of a transforming country through humor, irony, and satire. It drew attention to urban sprawl and the phenomenon of internal migration that brought southerners to Milan and northerners to Rome. It exposed the malaise of a society in a state of rapid growth and the accompanying loss of an ideological, political, and geographic center. The *commedia all'italiana* subverted the traditional structure of comedy by providing dramatic endings and featuring an antihero. Representatives of the best tradition of Italian comedy, such as Mario Monicelli and Dino Risi, "understood that

taboo subjects or politically incorrect materials, which could not be faithfully represented on the screen through drama, were in fact partly achievable through comedy" (Lanzoni 23).

Taboo subjects such as racism and miscegenation are well suited to comedy. Roberta Torre's *Sud side stori* (*South Side Story,* 2000) was the first comedy about immigration to Italy to tackle these issues. It concealed them behind the narrative of an impossible romance between an African woman and an Italian man. As precursor to *Bianco e nero* and *Billo*—which, by contrast, combine comedic with dramatic elements—*Sud side stori* is a carnivalesque musical comedy that does not allow for pathos (O'Healy, "Border Traffic" 47). In addition to dealing with an impossible interracial and intercultural romance, *Sud side stori* presents two other issues that are central to the configuration of migration to Italy: the migrant woman, black in this case, as prostitute, and the complex relationship between Africa and the South, in this case Sicily, which is Italy's own Africa. As O'Healy demonstrates, Torre's film is mainly concerned with the mutual incomprehension between two communities of the "South", namely Palermo's local inhabitants and a group of Nigerian prostitutes.

Sud side stori also denounces the exploitation of African prostitutes, who "effectively work as indentured slaves" (O'Healy, "Border Traffic" 48–49). More recent comedies such as *Bianco e nero* and *Billo* attempt to move beyond such denunciations. They endeavor to expose social and racial stereotypes as outmoded, using such stereotypes as a trigger for a comic critique of Italian society. Through a comic critique of racist stereotypes, migrants function as agents for change as the moral conscience of a corrupt and hypocritical society. They represent a desire for renewal of outmoded familial relationships and for social cohesion in an increasingly fragmented national discourse.

In Cristina Comencini's *Bianco e nero*, Elena works for an NGO as a cultural mediator between Africans and government institutions. She is committed to racial integration, both at work and at home: she gives her daughter Giovanna a black Barbie doll and insists that her husband Carlo accompany her to countless evening charity events. Her efforts at enlightening her family are often unsuccessful, however: Unbeknownst to Elena, Giovanna treats her black doll as a servant; Carlo accompanies Elena only to humor her.

As Elena complains to her Senegalese colleague, Bertrand, that "Quando penso alla stanza di mia figlia così piena di gioccatoli, mi viene una rabbia!" ("When I think of my daughter's room, so full of toys, I get so angry!"), the camera cuts to an over-the-shoulder shot of Giovanna playing with her Barbie dolls. Giovanna choreographs a scene between her black and white dolls in which the white Barbie instructs her naked black servant to help her dress: "Mettimi il vestito, mettimi le scarpe, perché sono io la principessa" ("Put on my dress, put on my shoes, because I am the princess"). The white doll then proceeds to hit and scold the black doll: "Sei brutta, cattiva, cattiva" ("You're ugly, bad, bad"). When Elena returns home, the camera pulls back into a medium shot to frame Giovanna in her room, which is decorated in pink and is filled with pink toys and dolls. Whereas Elena believes that she has raised a politically correct daughter who has learned to call black people *neri* ("black") rather than the politically incorrect *negri* ("negroes"), for Giovanna a black doll remains a servant.

Like his daughter, Carlo is not interested in racial integration. At the charity events he attends with Elena, he feels out of place and is bored. At one such event, he meets Nadine, Bertrand's beautiful and sophisticated wife. Neither Carlo nor Nadine is interested in the politically correct language of cross-cultural interaction; they are nevertheless immediately drawn to each other because of their cultural and ethnic difference and embark on a passionate relationship. The love affair between Carlo and Nadine exposes the repressed and not-so-repressed racial and social stereotypes on both sides: Nadine is ostracized by the African community for sleeping with a white man, and Carlo's infidelity exposes Elena's latent paternalistic attitudes toward Africans.

At Giovanna's birthday party, which is celebrated at the house of her wealthy maternal grandparents, the attitudes that had been masked by Elena's ineffective and superficial attempts at persuading Giovanna that black women are not necessarily servants, surface. On arrival, we encounter the grandparents' black maid, who is wearing the quintessential white apron. Nadine and her children are the only black guests. As other guests distractedly expect Nadine to collect their empty glasses and Elena's father treats her like an exotic fantasy, Nadine's daughter, Felicite, is shown to have acquired the attitudes of the dominant culture. Having been taught that princesses are white and blond, she steals Giovanna's new Barbie *sposa* ("bride"). No amount of parental training in

subverting social assumptions about women (black or white) can override the little girls' awareness of cultural assumptions that value most of all white, blond, and slim women.

As Giovanna and Felicite compete over the Barbie *sposa*, the competition between Elena and Nadine over Carlo's affections begins; this competition is introduced in a sequence shot in which Elena's mother, Adua, expresses her surprise at Nadine's elegance. A sequence of medium, reverse-angle shots places Adua and her embarrassed daughters in the same frame followed by a shot of Nadine and Carlo standing next to each other on the other side of the room. This configuration also confirms that Carlo, who has a working-class background, does not belong with Elena's middle-class family.

If interpreted as a classic triangle about Carlo's romantic infidelity, as the poster of the film suggests, *Bianco e nero* could be described as a story about Carlo, in which the characters of Elena and Nadine play the usual supporting roles of wife and mistress. The film is indeed about Carlo's journey from an Italian everyman who is blind to the plight of migrants and to racial prejudice to someone who is forced to "see," as he literally begins to see black people on the streets of Rome. Nadine becomes the agent of Carlo's journey of self-discovery. Her role in the film is twofold: she is the catalyst for Carlo's moral and social education, but she also exposes the role played by the black female figure in Italian society.

As O'Healy ("[Non] è una Somala" 177) and others argue, the African woman is primarily a symbol of the territory to be conquered by the colonist. Gabriella Campassi and Maria Teresa Sega comment that "Il rapporto uomo bianco–donna nera è simbolico del rapporto nazione imperialista-colonia" ("The white man/black woman relationship is symbolic of the nation's imperialist/colonist relationship"), with the black woman (standing for Africa) functioning as a "complemento dell'espandersi dell'io maschile" ("complement of the masculine expansion of the self") of the white Italian colonizer (55). With the increased flow of postcolonial transnational migration, this configuration of the African woman is inscribed onto the black female prostitute. The other side of this is the de-exoticized and de-eroticized servant wearing the white apron, reminiscent of the black mama of the Hollywood cinematic imaginary.

The role assigned to black women in Italian society is recognized by Nadine, who lives in an elegant and spacious house, works at the Senegalese embassy, and speaks many languages. She

exposes the prejudices of the Italian middle class, who are unable to relinquish their old-fashioned values and are ill equipped to deal with new transnational and postcolonial subjectivities. The issue of gender is crucial here: from the opening scene in which Elena's daughter plays with the Barbie dolls, to Felicite's stealing of the Barbie *sposa*, to the voyeuristic desire for Nadine's body that the film invites the viewer to both experience and question.

Nadine is configured as an object of exotic and erotic desire for all the Italian male protagonists, from Carlo to his co-worker and his father-in-law. The latter is represented as a caricature of the bigoted white male, reminiscent of the anthropologist at Steiner's party in *La dolce vita*. Like Fellini's anthropologist, who espouses the sexual virtues of "oriental" women, Elena's father spouts stereotype upon stereotype concerning the wildness of African culture and the exoticism of black women. The culmination of the representation of Nadine as an object of a blatant voyeuristic gaze comes in the scene in which Nadine returns to Carlo's shop to pay for the repair of her computer. In these sequence shots, we see Carlo's co-worker watching a website advertising the services of a black prostitute. The shot reverses to a medium shot of him watching and listening to the prostitute on screen, who is targeting white men with her words, "Entra, che ti faccio nero. È tutta un'altra cosa sai, è nera!" ("Come in, so I can make you black. It's another thing entirely you know, it's black!") and the writing (in English), "Once you go black you never come back," when Nadine slowly enters the frame. In the following shot, Nadine emerges from the dark and stands tall next to the seated man, looking down at him as he is clearly aroused by what he sees on the computer screen. Nadine's standing position suggests her cultural and moral superiority while at the same time inviting the viewer to keep a distance from the white man's voyeuristic desire for the black woman.

Whereas in this sequence the Italian man's desire for the black woman is criticized as voyeuristic exploitation, Carlo's desire for Nadine is treated as benign. When he visits Nadine at home under the pretense of returning her computer, she hastily changes into another dress. This allows the camera to dwell on her beautiful body. Through a medium shot with the camera positioned on the left of Nadine, we watch her as she watches herself in the mirror. Her reflection in the mirror is framed within the frame of the mir-

ror which becomes the screen. The self-reflexive *mise-en-scène* of this shot reminds us of the role played by cinema in providing a stage on which women perform for voyeuristic eyes. Despite the potential self-referential criticism implied in this sequence, the camera's voyeuristic approach adheres to representational strategies that are typical of contemporary Italian visual culture. Nadine remains an object of erotic and romantic interest for Carlo and by extension for the spectator, who—in light of Carlo's "goodness"—is allowed to identify with his desire. Thus the film fails to challenge cinematic and social constructions of women in general, and black women in particular, as objects of (white) male voyeurism.

The construction of Nadine and the role played by the Barbie dolls suggest that *Bianco e nero* is less about migration than about the configuration of gender in the contested space of postcolonial and middle-class Italy, in which the traditional positioning of male desire is also a contested space. This is in spite of the film's obvious didactic concerns in relation to issues such as racism, which Cristina Comencini confirms in a recent interview:

> Il problema del razzismo va affrontato e il discorso deve essere chiaro a tutti. Per intenderci, so che se faccio un film come *La bestia nel cuore*, non posso rivolgermi a tutti, anche se parlo a un pubblico estesissimo. E lo stesso vale per *L'illusione del bene*. Ma se giro un film sul razzismo voglio che lo veda tanta gente. E quindi l'idea che contenga molte semplificazioni, spero sempre di gusto (l'idea è che l'opera mantenga sempre una certa eleganza!) è voluta e studiata, proprio per poter parlare a tanti, e credo che questo sia avvenuto. (qtd. in Augusto 22)

> The problem of racism must be confronted and the point must be clear to everyone. To be clear, I know that if I make a film like *La bestia nel cuore,* I can't reach everyone, even if I'm speaking to an extremely broad audience. And the same can be said for *L'illusione del bene.* But if I make a film on racism I want a lot of people to see it. And therefore, the fact that it contains many oversimplifications, I hope always in good taste (the idea is that the work always maintains a certain elegance!) is desired and planned, precisely in order to reach many people, and I believe that this has occurred.

Perhaps because of its attempt to simplify complex issues, Comencini's film is not only a film directed at Italian audiences,

but also, more significantly, a film *about* Italians. In *Society under Siege*, Zygmunt Bauman argues that strangers are either "ingested into the national body and cease to exist as strangers" or expelled "from the realm of the state's power or from the world of the living" (111). *Bianco e nero* ingests the stranger and domesticates those perceived as threatening others. This is obvious, for instance, in the scene about a family outing in which a pensive Nadine is framed in a medium shot against the backdrop of the Coliseum. Her ingestion into the national body culminates in her incorporation into the history of the national cinema, when Carlo pushes her into the Trevi Fountain. In this sequence, which cites one of the most recognizable scenes of Italian cinema, Carlo replaces Marcello Mastroianni as the iconic symbol of Italian masculinity, whereas the black Nadine takes the place of the blond Anita Ekberg as the symbol of an exotic and erotic other. While in Fellini's *La dolce vita* the other came from an imaginary North that evoked dreams of sexual and cultural freedom, in *Bianco e nero* she comes from a South that conjures colonialist phantasies of erotic license.

Muscardin's *Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar* displays salient and innovative features of an independently coproduced film.[9] *Billo* is based on the real-life story of a young man from Senegal, Thierno Thiam (now a film actor and fiction writer), tracing his metamorphosis into, and development as, Billo. The saga of the protagonist's initial encounter with Italy and of his gradual integration is cross-cut with accounts of his growing up in Senegal. The Senegalese scenes are initially retrospective and serve to provide the viewer with the protagonist's background, his training as a tailor, and his developing interest in a young girl, all of which are instrumental to an understanding of his present condition and to the romantic dilemma that become central to the narrative. Using visual devices like Senegalese cloth or narrative hooks to facilitate the passage between time and space, the scenes set in Senegal are in chronological order and end in the protagonist's present.

In its exploration of the migrant's relationship with the host country, *Billo* follows three interconnected strands: Billo's relationship to work, or the productive aspect of existence; his relationship to women, or the reproductive aspect; and his relationship to the nation. Following these three strands, the film traces Thierno's development from a naive, newly arrived immigrant into a transnational figure located between two cultures.

Having arrived in Italy and desperate for work, Thierno accepts an opportunity to sell bootleg CDs. Eventually he is arrested—not because of what he does for a living but because he is mistaken for somebody else. Thierno has the same name as his cousin, who is a suspected terrorist and is sought by the police. On his release from jail, Thierno begins to defy the classic representation of the illegal migrant working in service industries. He becomes the "good immigrant" in search of regular employment and of a job that does not involve "cleaning white man's shit." The film follows Thierno/Billo's work trajectory in an environment that offers opportunities to migrant workers. He is positioned as somebody who can play a crucial role in the economy by propagating and renewing Italy's artisan industry. In his first job he works as an apprentice to an upholsterer whose son does not want to take over his father's business. Later an entrepreneur recognizes that there is a market in Italy for what he calls "contamination" by Senegalese creativity, and Thierno is given the opportunity to sell his own line of sports clothing. Thus Thierno comes to represent a new category of migrant worker. Applying Hannah Arendt's tripartite formulation of work-labor-action (83), we can take Thierno's contribution not just as "labor," which creates nothing of permanence, but as "work": it survives and leaves its mark on the community, connotes human rather than animal activity, and is associated with freedom rather than slavery. As a "worker," Thierno/Billo disrupts the normal configuration of the male migrant in Italian cinema as menial laborer—a window cleaner, waiter, or seller of mass-produced products on the streets. Rather than being an invisible promoter of invisible services or products, he foregrounds creativity and visibility in his production of artistic goods. The figure of Thierno/Billo also highlights the cultural and economic values of otherness.

As the narrative follows Thierno/Billo's struggles and eventual successes as a producer in the economic sphere, a parallel thread examines his position as procreator of the nation. Just as Billo finds ways to integrate into the local workforce, he begins to weave himself into the social fabric. His transformation is signified by changes in the way he dresses, and, halfway through the film, by his new name, Billo. The change of name is brought about by his first (failed) sexual escapade with a married white woman. While maintaining close links with his family in Senegal, Billo becomes

increasingly integrated in Italy: he makes friends with whites, moves into a house inhabited by two Italians and an immigrant, and eventually becomes romantically involved with an Italian woman, Laura. The encounter with Laura is responsible for the central narrative tension of the film. As we learn from the retrospective cuts to Senegal, since childhood Thierno had dreamed of marrying Fatou, the daughter of the local doctor. She is now waiting for him in Senegal. Thierno/Billo seems comfortable juggling his double existence and romances, but his apparent transnational ease is challenged when Laura announces she is pregnant and his mother informs him that his wedding to Fatou has been arranged. A confused Billo travels to Senegal to meet his family's expectations. He marries Fatou, but then returns to Italy, where he also marries Laura. As she and Billo celebrate their wedding day, news arrives that Fatou is also pregnant. The film's ending is open; the audience does not find out how Billo, a transnational procreator in Italy and in Senegal, will juggle his two families and his transcultural existence.

As a migrant, the figure of Billo initially resembles that of the migrants created by Nino Manfredi and Alberto Sordi. Billo, however, crosses a cultural boundary that they do not: whereas Nino (in *Pane e cioccolata*; *Bread and Chocolate,* 1974) and Amedeo (in *Bello onesto emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata*; *A Girl in Australia,* 1971), may be attracted to native Swiss or Australian women, they do not become sexually involved with them. Billo, on the other hand, claims the right to marry Laura and father a child with her. Like the Italian emigrants before them, the immigrants of more recent Italian cinema (be they from Africa or Eastern Europe) are generally not configured as characters who father children.

When discussing films focusing on men's migration from Eastern Europe, Duncan argues that their cinematic representation "constructs a non-normative heterosexual subject whose presence in Italy depends on his productive role in the workforce, and excludes any kind of reproductive function" ("'Loving Geographies'" 167);[10] they "disrupt established configurations of heterosexuality in that their difference disturbs accepted patterns of gendered behaviour" (170). Male migrants are therefore often feminized and denied the opportunity to engage in successful romance, to have children, and to feature as reproducers of the nation.[11]

Billo occupies a new and privileged position. Initially he too is feminized and displays racial and gender stereotypes associated with African men. He becomes the victim of the kind of interracial sexual gaze that is usually directed at the black woman, when an Italian married woman tries to seduce him. Wertmüller's depiction of seduction in *Travolti da un insolito destino nell'azzurro mare d'agosto* (*Swept Away*, 1974) could be a model here, but also, in reverse, representations of the African woman as a symbol of the territory to be conquered by the colonizer (O'Healy, "[Non] è una Somala" 177). Laura seduces the self-declared virgin, Billo, and then boasts to her friend about it. Thus he represents the virgin territory that is conquered and ravished by the colonizer. Having been conquered, Billo gains the right to impregnate Laura and hence the right to reproduce rather than merely produce (through work). Arguably this film authorizes the figure of Billo as both a creator and a procreator of the nation.

The situation is complicated, however, by the fact that Billo has a wife and child in his country of origin. Referring to the unresolved ending, Muscardin comments that "in *Billo*, the ending is up to everybody. Because nobody knows what's going to happen, there is not an ending because there is no ending. You can understand why, because there is no solution for somebody who finds himself with two families" (qtd. in Rhodes).

The narrative of the film suggests that a possible solution would be tied to attempts at intercultural comprehension. Having conquered Billo, Laura helps him to integrate and achieve success in his new culture. In turn, Billo assists Laura in her attempts to "disintegrate" and to question traditional family configurations. At a family lunch, Laura becomes irritated with her mother, who, in a scene reminiscent of Giovanna's birthday party in *Bianco e nero*, asks Billo if he misses the jungle and the wild animals. Laura impatiently reminds her parents that Billo comes from a city of five million and doesn't spend his days climbing trees. The depiction of Laura's mother, however, is less stereotypical than that of Elena's mother in *Bianco e nero.* Although Muscardin continues to play on the stereotype for the purpose of humor, Laura's mother emerges as a more sympathetic character. Having already had to come to terms with nontraditional relationships due to her son's homosexuality, she seems to embrace Billo's otherness, asking again with a certain level of cultural naiveté whether his parents might come

and join them for Christmas. By contrast, Laura's brother, Paolo, who should be most open to alternative families given his experience of being denied the right to marry his partner, is less tolerant. Angry that Billo has gone home to Senegal to marry a local woman, Paolo breaks the news to his sister. He expects her to be outraged at Billo; but instead she directs her anger at her brother, whom she calls "un frocio maschilista" ("a chauvinist faggot"). She considers herself is "una persona libera" ("a free person") who does not care for a so-called normal family.

Ultimately, in an attempt to contain difference, Billo's polygamy is recodified as normal. Laura's mother reveals that her own husband has had relationships with other women for at least thirty years, and Laura's best friend, after consulting the Koran to legitimize Billo's marriage, adds that polygamists like Billo "sono come tutti gli altri" ("are like everybody else"), and that to marry more than one woman "è il sogno di tutti gli uomini" ("is every man's dream"). In *Bianco e nero* and in *Billo* the taboo issues of miscegenation and polygamy are softened and recast as different forms of the adultery that is deeply embedded in Italian culture. The issue is subsumed into the exposure of a cultural reality that is condoned in Italy—that men have extramarital affairs and are irresistibly attracted by women who represent the exotic other. Although positing to deal with the issues of race and miscegenation directly, these films indirectly dislocate and disguise them as part of a reflection on culture, social integration, and shared values.[12]

Notwithstanding Muscardin's attempt to engage with the ambiguities and complexities of being physically and culturally dislocated between two places, two cultures, and two families, *Billo*, like *Bianco e nero*, ingests and domesticates the migrant. The film provides evidence for Yosefa Loshitzky's view that the act of "screening" migrants is closely linked to the need to differentiate "between the 'indigenous' population and desired and undesired migrants" (3). For Loshitzky this practice is still influenced by "popular and racist myths according to which immigrants bring disease and pollution to the body of the nation" and thus "need to be screened and contained" (3). This is achieved by focusing on the "good immigrant" and on his or her assimilation and integration:

> through practices of assimilation, absorption and integration which are in accordance with the models of citizenship adopted by each European nation state—*ius sanguinis* (law of blood), *ius*

> *soli* (law of the soil), and *ius domicile* (law of residence)—it is hoped that the good migrants will be digested by the national and European body. Even racial mixing or miscegenation [...] can also be seen as a practice of screening and controlling, a way of assimilating the inassimilable. (Loshitzky 2–3)

Despite his double life, Thierno/Billo is allowed into the nation because he is identified as a "good" migrant. Set in opposition to his compatriots who steal or engage in terrorist activities, Billo is visually configured as a positive character from the start. After a scene showing him as part of a group of men departing by boat at night, the camera cuts to a close-up of Billo's face that singles him out from the group. Subsequent cuts to a sequence of medium shots of him praying upon arrival to Italy, interspersed with low-angle shots, emphasize his integrity and moral standing. Within the narrative, Billo always maintains the moral high ground, and the camera repeatedly fixes on his expression of confusion and incomprehension when he is accused of any form of wrongdoing.

Billo's "goodness" ultimately allows him to become visible. On his arrival in Italy he represents the stereotypical invisible migrant, framed within the chaos of the Roman traffic and of the indifference of Italians, who seem accustomed to the ubiquity of migrants and ignore them. This is clear from Billo's first ride on a Roman bus, when, upon boarding, he blesses his fellow passengers, only to be met with silent faces who look through him and pretend not to see or hear him. By the end of the film Billo has become highly visible and has been ingested into the "national body." The final scene frames Billo in a quintessential Italian place, on top of the Capitoline Hill in Rome, where he is wed to an Italian bride by a marriage celebrant who wears a tricolored sash. Billo has literally and metaphorically emerged from the margins of Rome to occupy the center. The bride is in a traditional white dress and the black groom is in a tuxedo, leaving the spectator to think that despite the film's gesturing toward alternative families and lifestyles, the status quo has been preserved.

As in *Bianco e nero*, the interracial romance upstages the migration issue, showing how recent comedies have moved beyond the desire to document and denounce the migrant condition. In an interview with Nancy Keefe Rhodes, Muscardin confirms this view and adds that her film also documents a diffused but little-known reality, that of the double family:

> There are immigration problems but the main thing is he finds himself between two families. He has a woman in Italy and a woman in Senegal. As I discovered, this happens to a majority of people who come from Senegal to Italy—to Europe also—because they live for years in Europe without going back. [...] Another thing they told me—that for the person from Senegal—to be in a country and not have a family is like not being in this country. It's like passing by but not being there. So that's the spiritual reason they gave me.

Billo is socially conservative but Billo is seen as inhabiting a very different Italy from that of *L'appartamento*. Mahmud's misfortune is a result of his failure to respect boundaries, and of his visibility in a culture that seeks to keep the immigrant out of sight.

Bianco e nero and *Billo* become sites of negotiation over the idea of Italy and Italianness. They attempt to address the crisis of Italian identity in the process of negotiating anxieties concerning the long tradition of the stranger within and its place vis-à-vis new configurations of what Loshitzky calls "post-Europe, post-Holocaust Europe, New Europe, post-nation Europe, and transnational Europe" (8). The obsession with "saving" the family underpins these anxieties, which remain very much within the confines of a racialized and gendered discourse.

These films fall short of being women-centered comedies that imagine new roles for women and feature plots that are not exclusively tied to marriage, family, and the domestic sphere. Kathleen Rowe maintains that female performance strategies of purity and conformity need to be replaced by the "unruly" strategies of danger and transgression that are inherent in comedy and might question traditional gender categories (5). *Bianco e nero* and *Billo* do not offer alternative identities but feature traditional female characters who seem content to accept their roles as wives and mothers and who appear to feel empowered by these roles. Laura and Fatou, despite their expressed desires to cross cultural boundaries, remain fixed in their national spaces, preserving the families of their transnational husband.

Conclusion: Reconfiguring Home

The documentaries and fiction films discussed in this chapter play on the tension between mobility and stasis, between new

geographical and geopolitical landscapes and enclosed spaces. It is the same tension that defines mobility across the boundaries of a Europe in transition. The forced migration and involuntary exile experienced by some of the men, women, and children featured in the documentaries also plays on the tensions between the emotions caused by displacement and marginality and the determination to redefine home and homeland.

In these films, migration and home, rather than being diametrically opposed, become intricately interlaced. As these women and men on the move negotiate new spaces as home, they redefine and question the male-defined notion of home, which has traditionally been equated with domesticity and conceived as the opposite of voyage. Home, then, is reconfigured as a transit site that can accommodate a constantly evolving sense of identity for those who are dislocated and who relocate. Home becomes an idea, an imaginary and emotional place: "material spaces of home are contested and recast to reflect different more inclusive imaginaries, lived experiences and relationships" (Blunt and Dowling 254). In Bernardi's *Sidelki*, the *badanti* negotiate a home in transit, between the home they left behind and the new homes and networks created in Italy. In *La stoffa di Veronica*, the prison cell becomes a home, a site of creativity where a female domestic task—sewing—becomes both an expression of creativity and a vehicle for economic sustenance. Hence, in psychological, physical, and economic senses Veronica is less imprisoned here than in her homeland. *Il mondo addosso* begins with the sound of a train, a voiceover, and a high-angle shot of a train entering Rome's central train station. Later it returns to that motif and focuses on the abandoned train car, which has become home for Josif and other homeless young migrants. In all three documentaries, the journey and the act of traveling become modes for interrogating the relationship between displacement and self-understanding, home and homelessness.

In *Come l'ombra* the notion of home is constantly questioned; the economically privileged Claudia does not feel at home until Olga's presence turns her home into a site of human exchange and self-interrogation. Finally, in *L'appartamento* Lejila and Mahmud create a home out of a home that is not theirs. In all these cases, home represents "a fluid mobile place" that "enables and promotes varied perspective"—a place that offers new horizons and where one discovers new ways of being (Blunt and Dowling 20). The

price for this new experience of home, however, is also a struggle against the alienation that comes from dislocation.

In the comedies, the notions of home and homeland struggle between new and traditional understandings of those spaces. In *Billo*, the protagonist, who is a transnational character similar to the women in the documentaries discussed here, lives in two homes and is at home in both places as he becomes a reproducer of the next generation in both "homelands." At the same time, "his" women remain immobile, as they are relegated to the domestic spaces in their respective homelands while being aware of the increasing mobility of their male partner.

In all these films the search for and discovery of a new notion of home requires spatial and mental mobility away from familiar spaces and into new territories. The search requires a journey that is the driving force behind migration, and is mirrored in the cinematic process. Giuliana Bruno defines cinema as a mobilized space, a means of transport that supplies multiple visions and hybrid stories: cinema mobilizes identity, encouraging it to change and to transform (7). Each of the films, in its exploration of personal mobility and new concepts of home, also subverts the conventions of the medium: the establishing shots that traditionally secure and map the viewer's space often displace us as we travel into new spaces where the narrative unfolds in voyages of transformation across transformed and transforming landscapes. Cities often captured in the cinema—Milan, Rome, and Venice—are shown to be under architectural and demographic reconstruction: they are reaching out toward the margins in order to embrace their marginalized inhabitants. In other cases, the familiar Italian landscape must share its cinematic space with other national territories, such as Russia or Senegal, less frequently represented on the Italian screen.

At the end of each film, the camera captures migrants' solitude and mobility, juxtaposing freedom and entrapment. Spada's camera traces the movement of the van transporting Claudia across national borders, in her search for her own self, continuing the journey she had begun with Olga until she disappeared from view. *Sidelki* also ends with a mobile camera capturing female subjects in transit, as an unfocused image superimposes the traveling van onto a frozen Russian countryside. The film scrutinizes individual faces as part of the many faces that embark on journeys of migration and transmigration to better the lives of their families.

Il mondo addosso, which uses the journey to weave together the threads of stories told by people on the move, ends where it had begun, at Roma Termini, a place for people in transit. Finally, *Billo* ends with the new transnational protagonist traversing the traditional national space while the protagonist's Senegalese wife sits at home, immobile, watching on television a place she longs for but to which she is denied access.

Whereas the endings of *Come l'ombra*, *Sidelki*, *Il mondo addosso*, and *Billo* highlight mobility, those of *L'appartamento* and *La stoffa di Veronica* remind us of the solitude that is also part of the migration process. Lejila, transformed by her encounter with Mahmud, remains enclosed in an apartment that is not hers with a child that emerged from a union of two cultures that are not hers, in a new land where her physical and mental mobility is restricted. Veronica, temporarily freed to celebrate her creations and to meet with both the family of her past and the man who will potentially become part of her new, transcultural future, returns to prison to serve the rest of her sentence "redressing" for her crimes. In *Bianco e nero* the final moments of the film alternate between affirmations of cross-cultural understanding and the recognition of the impossibility of an interracial relationship in an immobile national culture. At the same time, this film has an open fairytale ending in which, for the moment at least, love conquers all, and the next generation is left alone to work out its differences.

The films remind us of the ambiguous fate of the protagonists of immigration cinema, shadows in a society in which their lack of agency makes their individuality invisible. On their own in a new country that does not live up to its promises, they seek to dislocate and relocate in a society that has no space for them. Caught between this society and their sentimental and financial obligations to families left behind, the transnational lives of these women and children cause mental illness (*la sindrome d'Italia*) for the women in *Sidelki*, anxiety and fear for the teenagers in *Il mondo addosso*, death for Spada's Olga, and forced enclosure and stereotyping for the protagonists of *La stoffa di Veronica* and *L'appartamento*. Only the transnational male protagonist of Muscardin's comedy is given the option of moving between two cultures, two lives, and two women. Whereas mobility is sanctioned for the black transnational male, Laura and Fatou are immobilized in their national space. Women still seem relegated, like Ulysses's Penelope, to maintaining the *domus*.

Chapter Six

Women at Work

Negotiating the Contemporary Workplace

The long list of Italian documentaries about work and labor issues reaches back to the early years of cinema.[1] In Italian feature films, however, work has rarely taken center stage. As Mario Verdone writes in his introductory comments to one of the few books dedicated to the representation of work in Italian cinema, work issues have tended to be a pretext for dramatic situations rather than the central preoccupation of films (6). Such issues have often served to highlight moments of social transition or to critique the aspirations of upwardly mobile classes. This was particularly the case in the 1950s and 1960s, when the effects of the economic miracle inspired a new cinema about work or work-related issues, including films that traced the effects of internal migration or of changing social attitudes and new professions.[2] Probably the best example of those films is Ermanno Olmi's *Il posto* (*The Sound of Trumpets*, 1961), a hybrid between a documentary and a fiction film that Verdone defines as a "film about work" (7). *Il posto* is about a young man's career: from entering the workforce to securing a prized *posto fisso* ("permanent employment"). The film is hardly a celebration of the workplace: it draws attention to the alienating effects and the meaningless routines of the modern office, and highlights the underside of the economic miracle, and thereby becomes an "eloquent portrait of the anguish of daily labor […] rarely […] so successfully drawn on the screen" (Bondanella 229). While Olmi puts an array of employment-related issues at the center of the film, other film comedies of the 1960s and 1970s address issues of work in a more marginalized way. Edoardo Zaccagnini's recent book, *I "mostri" al lavoro*, catalogues various representations of workers in the *commedia all'italiana*. In a study whose underlying premise is to show how cinema represents Italian reality, Zaccagnini argues that Italian comedies featuring

images of office spaces, storefronts, and factories and populated by white- and blue-collar workers, owners and farmers, and new entrepreneurs recount the transformation of an agriculture-based economy into an industrial one. Certain comedies of the period, Zaccagnini adds, log the entry of women into a transformed workplace, although usually in a temporary capacity, with jobs generally abandoned upon marriage.[3]

Since the onset of the new millennium, Italian cinema has emphatically returned to work, this time in a way that focuses on the post-industrialized economy and on widespread job precariousness, which has become a mounting concern in Italian society. Temporary employment conditions are not new to post-industrial societies, but, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue, forces of contemporary class oppression, globalization, and the commodification of services have resulted in a flexible labor force that has now moved from the periphery to the center. Richard Sennett, in two fundamental studies on the new economy, identifies major differences between earlier forms of industrial capitalism and the more global mutable new economy. While reformers of both private and public institutions have preached that flexible global corporations provide a model of freedom or flexibility for individuals, unlike the experiences of rigid, hierarchical bureaucracies, Sennett argues that in banishing old ills the new economic model has created new social and emotional traumas. The corrosion of values fundamental to character such as commitment, integrity, and trust calls for a reimagining of community and individual character to confront a "precarious" economy and world.

In Italy the two principal market "reform" landmarks responsible for the proliferation of short-term contracts are the Treu and Biagi reforms of 1997 and 2003. The "Treu package," named after Labor and Social Protection Minister Tiziano Treu, aimed to increase employment, particularly among the young, with special provisions for the economically depressed South. It eased regulation of new apprenticeships and work-training contracts and created incentives for on-the-job training, temporary work via private agencies, and intraregional labor mobility. It also legalized worker-dispatching services for the first time and reduced disincentives to the use of fixed-term contracts. The Biagi Law of 2003, a controversial labor reform package introduced by the Berlusconi government, extended the conditions of the Treu pack-

age. Directed primarily at younger workers, older workers, and women, it promoted increased work "flexibility" through numerous new types of temporary work agreements for on-call working, job sharing, work experience programs, and staff leasing on an open-ended basis. The Biagi Reform of 2003 was based on the guidelines in the European Employment Strategy, whose objectives were the creation of a transparent and efficient labor market that would strengthen the Italian economy and increase employment opportunities for young people, women, and older people and alleviate long-term unemployment. In Italy the public debate on employment precariousness has been roughly divided along political lines: on the left the proliferation of temporary-work contracts is seen as the end of *posto fisso* and the rights, security, and protection that it offered workers. Neoliberals in favor of the new flexible contracts see it as a fairytale opportunity for a worker to choose independently the times, type, and style of work.

As newspapers and television feature many stories and statistics on the victims of a post-Fordist economic reality, Italian films have increasingly turned their attention to fictionalized representations of exploitative elements of "precarious" work and on the impact this has on families, relationships, and life expectations. Examples include *Giorni e nuvole* (Silvio Soldini, 2007), *Tutta la vita davanti* (Paolo Virzi, 2008), *Fuga dal call center* (Federico Rizzo, 2008), *L'orizzonte degli eventi* (Daniele Vicari, 2005), *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* (Francesca Comencini, 2004), *Volevo solo dormirle addosso* (Eugenio Cappuccio, 2004), and *Generazione 1000 euro* (Massimo Venier, 2008). While many of these films tend to feature a younger generation condemned to a lifetime of precariousness and job and life insecurities, others explore the endemic nature of precariousness as it affects individuals from a range of social classes and ages, as well as of different genders. In almost all of these films, temporary, dehumanized workspaces that breed isolation and desperation require characters to make morally difficult choices for economic survival. The negative consequences of the new economy and its impact on character and identity famously explored in Sennett's study *The Corrosion of Character* are brought to the screen in a number of these films. While at times groping for positive endings, Italian filmmakers today are confronting audiences with a grim picture in which a world marked by short-term flexibility and flux runs counter to values such as loyalty and

commitment and to sustaining social relations that have been seen as the basis of Italian life.[4]

While many films dealing with these issues feature female protagonists, relatively little attention has been paid to the gendered tensions and contradictions of women's position in a "feminized" labor market that is marked by precariousness. The feminization of labor refers not only to the increase in the number of women in the workforce, but also to the "qualitative character of this phenomenon, those qualities and competencies recognized as feminine" (Melandri 5) that are valued in the "new economy" (Vercellone; Fumagalli). In newspapers such as *Sole-24 Ore*, which are close to Confindustria ("Confederation of Italian Industry," the Italian Employers' Federation), these qualities are referred to in the composite as "the female value" or "il valore femminile," that is the relational quality that women can bring to management to assist a productive system that is increasingly "flexible." This added value depends on the transference of those qualities that distinguish "super-moms," transforming women workers into caregivers both at home and in the workplace who are prepared to devote themselves to the care of their "corporate" children twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The paradoxical result, for women, is inflexible flexibility, the breakdown of the boundary between work time and private time, and the disappearance of personal time.

Many third-wave Italian feminists in favor of social and political change have welcomed the idea of "real" flexibility, not only in the workplace, but also as a means of redressing the flaws of rigid institutions, seeing it as an avenue to disrupting traditional gender roles (Fantone 18). For them the issue is not to eliminate precariousness, but to define strategies that might make a "precarious" life more sustainable. As Fantone states,

> If the *generation précaire* [Bourdieu 1999] lives in economic insecurity, works off-hours and needs to be mobile in order to follow rapidly shifting job markets, it is difficult to do so when social policies, social welfare and public services do not function accordingly or where, like in Italy, the predominant societal logic is the antithesis of speed, innovation and flexibility. (6)

Third-wave Italian feminist groups have discussed ways to make precariousness livable by addressing issues such as eco-

nomic independence, time free from affective and social labor, affordable access to child care and education, and freedom from family responsibilities (Fantone 17). Young Italian feminists engaging with the idea of questioning, of becoming, of the future, as subjects who resist static and firm class concepts and any form of assimilation, are open to a certain type of "precariousness" (Morini, "The Feminization" 54). Yet what emerges from both the feature films—Labate's *Signorina Effe* (2007), Francesca Comencini's *Mobbing* (2004), and Negri's *Riprendimi* (2008)—and the documentaries—Pedroni's *Invisibile* and Ferreri's *Uno virgola due*—examined in this chapter is that "flexibility," which produces new mechanisms of control and is not accompanied by supportive social structures, results in the incompatibility of work and "womanhood" in Italy. Ultimately the films draw attention to how, ironically perhaps, the feminization of labor has led to the deterioration of the gains of feminism that were meant to facilitate women's access to the public sphere.

An Economy in Transition: *Signorina Effe*

Signorina Effe[5] begins with archival footage: a promotional documentary featuring a young couple arriving at the famed Lingotto Fiat factory in Turin to see their car produced from beginning to end, culminating in the test drive on the recognizable track atop the building. The Lingotto becomes the symbol of the film, the factory captured in its deafening sounds and through images of stairways, corridors, and gates reflecting its hierarchal structure and positioning Fiat as a world unto itself. The factory is featured in three distinct historical moments in time: at the height of its success, in the opening footage; at the beginning of its decline in 1980, for most of the film; and finally, in the film's epilogue, in its post-industrial reincarnation as the shopping mall into which it was transformed in 2007. In *Signorina Effe*, the Lingotto stands for key moments in Italian labor history while inviting reflection on the processes involved in the move toward a post-industrialist economy.

The Fiat layoffs of the early 1980s mark the beginning of a new era. In Labate's opinion, the massive strike that blocked Fiat's activities for thirty-five days, which is at the center of the film's narrative, was a defining event in the history of work that may well

mark the birth of "flexibility" (*Signorina Effe* DVD, interview) or "precariousness." What many consider the end of the workers' movement in Italy unfolds in the context of a love story that serves as a metaphor for defining chapters in labor history and in the feminist movement. While in the 1960s and 1970s factory workers in Italy developed a strong collective voice through the trade unions that resulted in solidarity and major victories for workers' rights, a decade later the trade union movement as a major social and political protagonist was in crisis (Ginsborg, *Italy* 57). In the years that are not mentioned in the film (between 1980 and 2007), Fiat drastically cut its workforce, and methods of production changed drastically as the Fordist factory gave way to the new economy:

> In place of old labour relations of the Fordist factory, based on hierarchy formality and authority, there emerged a conception of the workplace that was hegemonic and monistic. Production was to be an organic act, harmonious and necessarily unifying. Workers were asked to be knowledgeable, flexible, subjectively involved in what they were doing. (Ginsborg, *Italy* 54–55)

In these years the working class as a strong, class-conscious force capable of significant mobilization became fragmented. By the mid-1990s the old working-class identity virtually ceased to exist as workers were divided into various sectors: the rumps of major companies, smaller factories, and service industries where short-term contracts prevailed.

On a parallel track, while the feminist gains of the 1970s and 1980s seemed to signal a new era for women who were better educated and had access to new work opportunities as a result of equal opportunity legislation, Labate's film is less than optimistic, clearly signaling the obstacles that then as now prevent women from making headway in the public sphere. While women were visible in greater numbers in the workforce, their presence was hardly revolutionary, as women were concentrated in generally less prestigious positions and received lower pay, often because of their settling for less demanding but more flexible jobs, which would allow them to negotiate their work inside and outside the home (Ginsborg, *Italy* 34–45).

Traditional and new roles for women are clearly delineated in the film. The film's protagonist, Emma Martano, is posited as the great hope of the Martano family. A young, educated woman,

daughter of immigrants from the South, she represents the potential for class and gender mobility. Like her father, who pledges allegiance to a company that took care of the family and provided summer camps for the children, Emma displays a similar inherited loyalty to the company that also seems to be taking care of her. About to graduate from university with a degree in mathematics, recently assigned to what today would be the information technology sector of Fiat, she is the emancipated woman about to achieve "equality" by gaining access to a traditionally male sphere as well as upward mobility facilitated by her engagement to a manager in the factory (a widower with a daughter). Positioned to fulfill her and her family's dream, Emma represents the archetype of what emancipation meant for a young woman of that generation—the "doppio sì," or the "double affirmation"; in other words, the best of both worlds—work and family.

An uprising at the factory, however, parallels an upheaval in Emma's ways of perceiving the world. In September 1980, during the historic thirty-five-day strike that came about as a result of the company's announcement that they planned to lay off 15,000 employees, Emma meets Sergio. The initial encounter between them, in which his hands soil her perfect white blouse when she finds herself "lost" in the lower, production levels of the factory, suggests the beginning of what can either be seen as the seduction or corruption of Emma or as her moment of awakening. Beginning to question her blind loyalty to the company, Emma begins to question her father's blind allegiance to a submissive life predicated on fear of one's superiors, a life without dignity and one that compromises his health. She becomes increasingly intolerant of the interference and control of her destiny by men: she does not want to be driven home as the strike action risks becoming violent; she is irritated that her fiancé, an engineer, has tried to "help" her pass her university exams when she is clearly able to succeed on her own merits; and for a short time at least she defies her family's wishes for an economically secure life by running off with Sergio, who poses a threat to her career and class advancement.

Emma's private rebellion, however, like that of the striking workers, is short lived. Labate uses archival footage to bear witness to what has subsequently been seen as the defeat of the working class struggle and of the unions. After 40,000 white-collar workers took to the streets for the first time, adopting the strategies of

blue-collar workers to reclaim their right to go to work, the strike is brought to an end and, as Emma declares to Sergio in their final encounter, "Hanno vinto loro" ("They won"). The victory equates to the loss of the political battles against established and empowered institutions, the end of union strength, and the end of Emma and Sergio's relationship. Emma's comment is followed by the couple's final goodbye, and Emma, dressed in her pristine white coat, emerges from her transgressive hiatus and passes through the gated entrance of the Fiat "prison."

This entrance is just one of many of Emma's exits and entrances that define her conflicted relationship with the domestic and public spaces that define her and that suggest the tensions between her desire for freedom and her retreat into the life scripted for her. Emma's quest for freedom is marked early in the film by an unmotivated sequence that shows her running through vacated factory grounds. It is in the in-between spaces, outside the walls of institutions, that Emma, negotiating a life in process, seems most comfortable. In contrast she seems anxious in an office surrounded by male employees who challenge her or have placed her there, ill at ease in the university examination room, where she struggles to publicly perform material that she has clearly mastered, out of place as the subservient daughter in the crowded interiors of a tight-knit Southern-immigrant family home, and stifled in her fiancé's house.

While she eventually manages to break away from the domestic and institutional spaces that entrap her and that condition her view of the world, this liberating period is short lived. After the workers vote to return to work and the strike comes to an end, Emma, feeling betrayed by her new-found ideology and the love interest that personifies it, returns defeated to the family home. Insatiable and in despair, Emma performs one final act of insurrection: left with only her body at her control, she devours everything in sight. Then, disillusioned and resigned, Emma makes a phone call to her fiancé, sealing her fate and returning to the upper echelons of the organization and to her predetermined path toward upward mobility.

The final scene of *Signorina Effe* takes place almost thirty years later. The Lingotto site of the former Fiat factory of Turin, while retaining vestiges of the original structure, has been transformed into a contemporary shopping mall, the site *par excellence* of con-

temporary consumerism. In post-Fordist Italy, where much of the remaining industry has been moved or is attempting to move off-shore, the spaces once occupied by factories represent the new economy. An older Emma, obviously having securely risen out of her lower-class origins, walks elegantly out of the mall, shopping bags in tow, and flags down a taxi, driven by her ex-lover and the former blue-collar worker, Sergio. The loss for both, on a political and personal level, is highlighted in the final images. Sergio has been absorbed by the service sector of the new economy. For Emma vertical mobility gained not through her own merits, but through marital status and a retreat into domesticity, positions her not as the product of a feminist education, but as a product of Italian patriarchy and of a consumer society.

While the film's earlier narrative relied heavily on close-ups and shot/reverse shot sequences full of tension that made Emma's emotions and political choices accessible, in the final scene the camera literally takes a back seat, hesitating before acknowledging Emma, with Sergio only partially revealed in the car mirror. The camera lingers on Emma's expression and then on a less explicit profile on Sergio. The film closes on renunciation and torpor, on the confirmation of the death of ideology, the impossibility of communicability and connectivity, and the frustrations of feminism.

Ultimately, Emma fulfills the expectations of her family, at least of her father, her mother, and her sister, returning, disappointedly, to a conservative model of femininity. While Emma is clearly the protagonist of the film, Labate's treatment of other feminine subjects is intriguing, because while they are relegated to traditional roles, Labate highlights their sense of agency. Emma's older sister, Magda, recognizes her position in the family and her options in society: she has a typical form of female employment—she is a kindergarten teacher—and she will carry on as a future matriarch, expressing the desire to have many children. Magda invests her hope for the future not in herself, but in Emma, and she recognizes that the key to Emma's success lies in playing age-old societal games. While Emma is educated, it is her matching up with the engineer rather than her own talents that will assure her climb up the social ladder. Perhaps the film's most interesting and subversive female is the silent figure of the grandmother, the matriarch of the Martano family. While she rarely speaks, her gestures and her actions reveal her spirit as deeply invested in the causes of the

working class. Unwavering in her beliefs and uncompromising, she remains critically engaged with the television reports on the strikes, and her sympathies clearly lie with the striking workers. While the rest of the family questions Sergio's revolutionary spirit, her alliance with him is represented by the prized family picture she hands over to him, in a gesture that embraces him into the family. In contrast to the family's outrage at Emma's leaving home to join Sergio and the workers' cause, the grandmother's approval is clear as she slips Emma her money. Her unmistakable alliance is sealed in one of the final scenes. Her eyes glued to the screen as Labate replays the archival footage of the white-collar workers taking to the streets, she utters the word *immondizia* ("trash") and makes a disgusted and dismissive gesture toward the television screen that is presenting the march of the 40,000 as a victory. It is through the eyes of a wise generation, in its unflagging belief in what is right, that Labate invests her greatest hope. The matriarch who left her homeland in the South for a better life and lived through the battles of the trade unions to gain rights for workers is disgusted by a society that, in her experienced view, is taking great strides backward.

Labate's film registers a gap of twenty-seven years, a gap accounted for in Francesca Comencini's documentary on the history of Italian industrialism entitled *In fabbrica* (*In Factory*, 2008): "L'accordo passa si rientra: con la fine dei 35 giorni non si chiude solo una vertenza sindacale, si chiude un'epoca. Da quei 35 giorni sugli operai è sceso il silenzio" ("The agreement passes and we reenter the factories; the end of the 35 days doesn't only mark the end of a union dispute, but the end of an era. Since those 35 days, silence has fallen on the working class").

Comencini's documentary tries to breach that silence. The transition into the new economy is marked by a change from black and white to color, as we move distinctly into the darkness of contemporary times: "Un'economia diversa: non è più al centro il lavoro, la fabbrica, il prodotto, un presente estraneo ci si sente smarriti" ("a different economy: work, the factory, the product is no longer at the center, this alienating present leaves us feeling lost").

Labate and Comencini display the same famous archival footage and share a certain nostalgia for a time of worker solidarity. As they contrast the two eras, they highlight the isolation and

alienation of the contemporary factory worker. Comencini, whose documentary extends into the present, highlights the quiet and sterile atmosphere of the contemporary factory, where workers work constantly changing shifts and go systematically about their jobs. Insecure employment contracts result not in solidarity but in unhealthy competition, and workers without job security are more reluctant to stir the waters and go on strike. The factory Comencini's camera enters is open twenty-four hours a day, running on three eight-hour shifts. More-specialized assembly "islands" where a worker's efficiency is monitored by a digital display that compares his/her productivity to the factory's expectations have replaced the former assembly line.

Comencini's sympathetic camera turns to immigrants trying to affirm their status in a new country and to single women or single mothers trying to support themselves and raise their children. Among many of these workers economic necessity rather than passion governs their attitude toward their work; the changing economic and social realities of many are expressed in the words of a single mother: "riuscire a crescere mia figlia serena anche se non tutto nel caldo cogliente della famiglia" ("to manage to raise a happy child even if not in the embracing warmth of the family"). An immigrant worker instead remarks that in a world that forces immigration, a new reality prevails, which requires "collaborare non gridare" ("collaboration and not crying out"). These workers are far from the height of labor's contractual powers in the 1970s, when in Italy a system of councils and delegates resulted in union intervention on a vast range of work-related issues.

Since precariousness, however, has become a major social concern, immigration has provided new challenges for factories, and accidents in the workplace have become pressing problems. Workers have once again raised their voices and have caught the attention of the cinema, television, and newspapers. Labate's film, whose ending is perhaps a warning of the dangers of complacency, of giving in to powerful forces and institutions, is also uncannily contemporary; her images of striking students and workers resonate in a not so distant future. In autumn 2010, the streets of Rome and other Italian cities ignited with a response to a similar call to arms: in frustration and exasperation, workers climbed up cranes and onto factory roofs, city halls, and railway stations to give visibility to conditions in which citizens are increasingly being

denied rights guaranteed them by their constitution. Although its message for women is bleak, Labate's film is ultimately not about nostalgia for a pre-Fordist age, but a wake-up call for the future.

The Violence of the New Economy: *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*

Francesca Comencini's *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* is the first Italian film devoted specifically to the issue of workplace mobbing, or harassment as an employer tactic. Comencini's social analysis extends beyond the personal narrative as she condemns the style of workplace that facilitates and sustains mobbing and, in her words, "a society that has degenerated to such an extent as to permit these conditions to exist" (*Mobbing* DVD, interview). As we stated in Chapter 2, *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* is a docufilm that emerged from what was originally conceived as a documentary on the phenomenon of mobbing that Comencini had agreed to make on behalf of the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL).

Generally referred to in English-speaking countries as workplace bullying or workplace harassment (Maier 27), mobbing is a form of psychological violence that has gained increasing attention in recent decades as a sociological, political, and medical issue worldwide. In recent years, mobbing has acquired a specific meaning linked to the contemporary, post-Fordist workplace. Scholars have drawn a clear distinction between present-day mobbing and the bullying exerted by authoritarian bosses in the past (Recupero 19). Mobbing is inextricably linked to a workplace environment that advocates rapid upward mobility and competition, where every co-worker or colleague becomes a potential rival and the obsessive struggle for career advancement eclipses solidarity among workers. Its primary targets are disadvantaged and marginalized employees: older workers, women, and immigrants.

Mobbing can be imposed either vertically (usually from above rather than from below) or horizontally (a form of peer pressure). In all cases, mobbing does not suggest a single act of violence, but, as Harald Ege contends, it is a form of psychological terror marked by persistent persecution over a long period of time (qtd. in Recupero 19). At first, potentially unaware of what is happening, the victim may assume the blame for the treatment she or he is receiving, thinking that she or he may have indeed done

something wrong or attribute it to bad luck. Eventually, however, the high frequency and long duration of the hostile behavior result in considerable mental, psychosomatic, and social distress. While early symptoms may include general anxiety, insomnia, and eating disorders, extended abuse may result in more dire consequences such as suicide.

Mobbing has become a heated issue internationally. In Italy it has gained visibility as a serious social problem through a proliferation of studies.[6] At the same time, it remains a complicated juridical issue in Italy mainly because, unlike in other European countries, such as France, Germany, and Great Britain, where the health system provides support for mobbing victims, mobbing and other forms of abuse in the workplace are not addressed in the Italian Penal Code. Both corporations and the judiciary are reluctant to support well-defined mobbing legislation, and the recent attention that mobbing cases have attracted has resulted in a growing concern among judges that favorable rulings might result in an avalanche of lawsuits.

Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing, starring Nicoletta Braschi, the director's daughter, and many nonprofessional actors, members of the CGIL, is a powerful social document that represents the hard realities of contemporary Italy and strives to shape the public consciousness about the violence of mobbing and its devastating consequences. One of Italy's major film reviewers, Tullio Kezich, called *Mobbing* "a real horror film, not the horror of monsters and vampires, but the daily horror that in many cases renders life impossible."

In preparing for what was to be a documentary, the filmmaker interviewed twelve victims of mobbing, equally divided between men and women. What struck Comencini in particular was that, despite the time that had lapsed since the incidents, all of the victims still seemed to be suffering the consequences of the violence to which they had been subjected. Not a single interview was completed without interruption, and the nature of the emotional outbursts seemed to have a definite gender distinction. The men expressed anger and agitation; they could not sit still during the interview and became overly excited; the women, without exception, cried. After studying the interviews, Comencini decided to base her film exclusively on the testimonies by women, focusing in this way on mobbing as violence perpetrated on disempowered

women by a male-dominated society. In her film, Comencini reconstructs mobbing as a violent and traumatic event, akin to other forms of violence against women, with implications on both the public and private lives of its female victims.

Opting for a docufiction rather than documentary, Comencini forges her fictional female protagonist out of the experience and events recounted in her interviews. By collapsing the many stories of her interviewees into a single character, Comencini constructs a representative character who embodies the cumulative effects of repeated and at times almost imperceptible acts of mobbing. At the same time, she provides a panorama of the system: the new workplace environment where mobbing thrives; instances of both vertical and horizontal mobbing; a range of female-specific issues; and a double-edged ending that both encourages victims to rebel against this form of violence and at the same time suggests the bittersweet irony of a legal "victory." The decision to move from a collective documentary to a feature film also allows the filmmaker to represent the inextricable connection between the public violence and the private consequences in a complementary narrative that runs parallel to the workplace one and highlights the effects of mobbing on a mother–daughter relationship and, finally, on the daughter herself, who by extension becomes a victim of the mobbing inflicted on her mother (see Chapter 2).

Shortly after the firm in which Anna works announces its reorganization, the employer surreptitiously arranges for the disappearance of her ledger. This single, inexplicable act is followed by a series of vertical mobbing activities by which she is relieved of her normal duties and assigned a number of impossible and degrading tasks. On a parallel track, her co-workers seem joined in a conspiracy of silence aimed at isolating and marginalizing her. Comencini displays the progression of this alienating behavior through a series of shot/reverse shots, primarily close-ups, by which Anna's perplexed and increasingly agonized expression is met with blank or conspiratorial individual stares, culminating in group pans of co-workers who seem united against her.

The increasing tension and suffocation are captured by repeated shots of Anna walking the office corridors tightly clasping the collar of her coat around her neck, and recurring images of the closed doors she encounters emphasize her increasing exclusion. The silent actions are reinforced by the professional and personal

humiliation caused by a series of disrespectful and offensive remarks from both management and co-workers, primarily male. Anna's behavior and in particular her lack of rebellion is shaped by a patriarchal female script that calls for politeness and deferential behavior (Hesford 200). Her final assignment is a hostile and physically menacing task as the sole woman in charge of assessing the performance of a group of men whose jobs are also at risk. Her fear of physical attack by this "mob" of men, who close in around her and threaten her, results in a physical collapse, the culmination of the psychological violence perpetrated against her from all levels.

The close analysis of select scenes illustrates how Comencini sets up and develops the context and the process of mobbing as well as its cumulative effects. Establishing a new and subversive perspective through her use of the double camera, Comencini both reminds us how women have been fashioned by the camera and consciously structures a female-centered relationship between director, character, and spectator. The establishing shot, filmed with a shaky hand-held camera, includes the protagonist, Anna, and positions the spectator as observer at an office party where the corporate executives outline the firm's philosophy. This contrived festive occasion, held to inform the employees of the company's exaggerated demands and inhumane conditions, foretells the duplicitous atmosphere that pervades the film. As the hand-held camera jumps from face to face, the tensions of the film are evidenced in the close-ups, which reveal the employees' blank, tired, and skeptical expressions. In employing a metaphor that equates the birth of the new company to that of a child, management is reflecting the new workplace language of a "feminized workspace" in which employees, like good mothers, must sacrifice everything for the good of the company at the risk of severing all human relations.

The language used by the firm's corporate executive is the very language used by researchers of mobbing to describe the sort of competitive workplace atmosphere where mobbing is endemic. It is militaristic: work is about "conquering" other markets, about "defending" one's workplace. On the individual level the firm's philosophy pits workers against each other, each one needing to "defend" his or her job by taking on an unreasonable amount of work. Anna is the last of the workers to introduce herself, stating

that she is in the "reparto contabilità"— by definition, "contabilità" refers to the job of bookkeeping, but it is also etymologically linked to the notion of accountability. Anna is a serious employee who feels "accountable" when things go wrong at work, as well as accountable to her daughter and ill father. Her accountability, in an environment where no one else is accountable for his or her actions, makes her an easy victim of mobbing. As the establishing scene closes with Comencini's camera panning the party, the spectator is made aware of another camera that is also capturing the events, as the filmmaker's camera turns to capture a surveillance camera that is recording the office activities. The presence of two cameras suggests two points of views, two opposing agendas, and highlights the difference between the sympathetic agenda of the director's camera and the Big Brother, hostile agenda of the corporate executive. The director's camera zooms in on Anna sympathetically; the surveillance camera pulls back, distancing Anna from spectator identification and sympathy. The spectator is left in an unsettled position, on guard and uncertain as to whose camera is filtering what she or he is witnessing.

There are two surveillance-camera scenes in the film, which in essence frame the series of mobbing-driven events. The first, just described, occurs while management is outlining its agenda; the second occurs once management has fulfilled its mission. While the first scene captures Anna in a moment of uncharacteristic carefree dancing, the second scene frames her on the verge of physical and psychological collapse. No longer able to tolerate the unjustified abuse directed at her by the loading-dock workers who management has ordered her to report on, she confesses to her boss that she feels too physically threatened to continue working among them. As he, victorious, orders her back to work, she leaves his office and sinks to the ground behind the photocopy machine. Comencini's camera zooms in on her in the most intimate of shots, an extreme close-up that exudes vulnerability and defeat, and then moves to the passing feet of other indifferent workers as she is literally trampled by the firm. As the camera zooms out, it reveals another image, the impersonal long shot of a crumpled Anna on the screen of the surveillance camera. This scene previews Anna's second and final collapse. The next day, when she returns to her dreaded job, she is even more violently assaulted and accused by the loading-dock employees, who blame her for the letter they

have received from management that threatens their jobs. Not recognizing that they are victims, not of Anna's spying, but of the same management strategy directed at her, which aims to eliminate what is perceived as an outmoded labor force, the men lash out against her. The camera, caught in the middle of this hostile confusion, jumps erratically from Anna's fearful face to the angry faces of the threatening workers until Anna, a lone and vulnerable woman unable to withstand the verbal and potentially physical attack, flees to what remains her only safe haven, the women's bathroom, and collapses on the floor.

There is little space for female solidarity in a workplace that breeds job insecurity and survival of the strongest and where the divide-and-conquer strategy is successfully employed and practiced by men and women alike. From the film's initial scene, money, job security, and simple survival resonate in the conversations Anna has with her female co-workers, who do not hide their resentment of the fact that her job is legally protected because she is a single mother with a sick, elderly father. Yet the pressures of the workplace, as we saw in Chapter 2, render the mother–daughter and all other personal relationships unsustainable. The only female solidarity that emerges is between Anna and another young mother who shares the same position as victim of a company strategy directed against working women with families. For both women, the firm's women's bathroom, the only space from which threatening men and all men are excluded, becomes their only safe haven, the place where they both repeatedly flee and where they eventually meet.

Comencini's camera allows the spectator, gendered female, into this exclusively female space where the targeted women are captured at their most vulnerable, as their bodies submit to the demands of a dehumanized workplace that forces a nursing mother to feel the need to conceal her motherhood. In a first scene, a painfully agonizing close-up engages us in the young mother's frantic need to express her excess milk and pour it down the drain. Later, when the two women meet in the bathroom, Anna encounters her young friend distressed about a milk-stained sweater, which brands her as a mother. In an act of female and maternal solidarity, Anna, equally distressed by patronizing attacks concerning her appearance, literally gives the new mother the shirt off her back, before breaking down into tears in the arms of her young friend,

both victims of a dehumanizing work environment. The power of this scene lies in its humanity, in its privileging a mode of behavior that renders the disempowered women superior to their empowered employers and is perhaps vaguely nostalgic for a different historical moment when solidarity between workers was the norm rather than the exception.

While Comencini visually foregrounds the violence of mobbing through an exemplary narrative that unfolds around a series of strategically planned events that slowly destroy all quality of life, she also advocates action, through a female character who serves as a mouthpiece for the film's political message. In two scenes that feature a strong female union representative, Comencini warns not only the women of the firm in general, and Anna in particular, but all women against the dangers of succumbing to a management machine that makes unreasonable demands on women, forcing them to choose between family and work, and gains strength through isolating its victims, making them more fragile and more susceptible to violence. In the final scene when Anna herself finally asks the union representative for advice, the advice provided is not directed to Anna alone, but to all women spectators, and all victims of mobbing:

> —Non pensare che sia una cosa che è successa solo a te. Non hai idea di quanta gente ci viene a cercare, a raccontare storie simili alla tua. Storie di mobbing.
> —Si può fare qualcosa?
> —Dobbiamo ottenere giustizia tu hai diritto a ottenere giustizia.
>
> "Don't think that it's something that only happens to you. You have no idea how many people come to find us, to tell stories like yours. Mobbing stories."
> "Can something be done?"
> "We have to obtain justice. You have the right to justice."

In these scenes, Comencini summarizes the indignities of mobbing and calls upon all victims to fight back for the basic human right of dignity and the basic civil right of justice.

In Comencini's film, legal "justice" is served. The film ends abruptly, cutting to a scene that takes place one year later. "Hai vinto" ("You won"), says the clerk as she hands a check over to Anna. "Se si può chiamare vincere" ("If you call this winning"),

Anna replies as for the final time; to the sound of almost mournful music she walks through an office space where she will never work again and where management has also won, achieving its agenda of eliminating her from the firm.

The film has what Hesford would label recuperative potential as a pedagogical text (209). Its believability lies in its capacity to sustain a claim to authenticity achieved by its testimonial quality: the film puts a human face and identity to a particular social phenomenon, that of mobbing. The narrator reproduces and then contests the cultural script ascribed to women and draws attention to the systematic use of mobbing and, more gender specifically, to the system against which women must struggle. There are no flamboyant heroes in Comencini's film as there are in Hollywood movies about sexual harassment in the workplace, such as *Norma Rae*, *Silkwood*, or even Niki Caro's recent *North Country*, films in which women emerge as heroines leading the fight against abuses in the industrial workplace. *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing* constructs female subjectivity within a context of violence, evoking deep sympathy with the plight of the female victim while subverting a conventional format that encourages viewers to identify with a strong and purposeful hero. Comencini's film is not about mythologized heroes, but about victims regaining subjectivity. By coupling narrative tension with a political discourse that exhorts social change, Comencini's social analysis extends beyond the personal narrative as she condemns the sociological, political, and material forces that facilitate and sustain mobbing, condemning, as already noted, "a society that has degenerated to such an extent as to permit these conditions to exist" (*Mobbing* DVD, commentary).

Framing a Precarious World: *Riprendimi*

In the films discussed so far, the notion of work is couched in its historical context as an inviolable right, positioned alongside the other rights of citizens. For that reason the dialogues and debates in the films often revolve around a context of the right to job security and to the health and dignity of the worker, to distinctions between work and life, and to achieving the proper balance between the two. The new "flexible" working environment is seen as running antithetical to that historical interpretation of work.

In Negri's *Riprendimi* the former context is no longer a consideration. The contrast does not exist: we are immersed in precariousness, a concept that has taken over our private as well as our public lives. As Negri describes the film,

> There is a vaster sense of precariousness that pervades the film: I speak of an entire generation that prolongs adolescence in a world that forces you to be precarious and mobile since it cannot guarantee you a job or a career. And when you never feel protected, how can you manage to protect others? [...] I made a film that is as light as a comedy but that is about serious things [...]. Over thirty, people don't seem to be able to build. It is as if a whole generation can't grow up. (2)

Riprendimi develops by using the recognizable trope of the film within the film. A young cameraman and soundman, precarious workers in their own right and working on a shoestring budget, decide to risk everything, and sublet their apartment in order to make a documentary that explores the effects of job instability on a young couple in the film industry: Giovanni is an actor, usually forced to take on bit parts in television shows when he would really like to work in theater, and Lucia is a film editor who thrives on reconstructing narratives from bits and pieces.

Lucia's relationship with the camera "frames" the film itself. The film begins with the camera focused on the character of Lucia holding her baby, a home movie, a "self-portrait" that becomes Anna Negri's autobiographical portrait of the story of Lucia. This opening highlights how cinema itself can impose a false sense of coherence. Lucia creates an edited, and subjective, "enthusiastic" account of a year in the couple's lives that suggests a harmonious private order amid the chaos and uncertainty of their professional lives. The documentary, a declaration of love that she has made for her husband (for the viewer) to highlight the success of their year together, is based on a premise that is immediately put into question by Giovanni's decision, upon viewing the film, to leave both partner and baby.

Thus the opening "documentary" and its effect on Lucia's partner highlight the arbitrary nature and the unreliability of film as a medium, as Lucia's reconstruction clearly represents only her version of "reality." As a result, the documentary in the making is hijacked. Despite the documentary makers' best efforts, the film

derails into a film about the break-up of a relationship. Yet *Riprendimi* remains decidedly a film about the precarious generation: all of the characters, male and female, are personally or professionally precarious. The obsessive claustrophobic focus on the lives of Lucia, who cannot accept the end of her "great love story," and Giovanni, who while on the one hand proclaiming his need for freedom quickly takes up with another woman, is punctuated by a variety of other visual production modes, from the reality show, to the interview, to cell phone videos, that allow the director to present her views on precariousness and on the isolating and devastating effects it can have. Talking head interviews with both the two leading characters and the peripheral characters (her friends, her boss, the director, their psychologist, her first boyfriend, his new girlfriend), who also live "precariously," add insight into a life of instability and contemplate the difficulties and challenges of maneuvering in a "precarious" world.

It is the effect of the insecurity that marks contemporary life that lies at the center of Negri's exploration of female precariousness through the female circle of friends. Lucia's precarious situation is replicated and her future forecast through the kaleidoscope of female friends. What she is or might become is reflected in the various female models caught between tradition and postfeminism: from a friend who is unable to leave an unhappy relationship for fear of being left alone, to one who is about to give birth and can only contemplate maternity, to another who will never have a child, and, ultimately, to the manic-depressive neighbor bound to an on-again, off-again destructive relationship that eventually drives her to suicide. Negri seems to warn against the images and the discourses that frame contemporary women who still desire their *principe azzurro* ("knight in shining armor") in a world without commitment populated by uncommitted men and who are still susceptible to the media myths of Mulino Bianco breakfast and snack advertisements that extol the virtues of traditional families.

Riprendimi delves into the interstices: it explores the gaps in life, the unsaid, the unedited as it proceeds along the lines of a mockumentary in which the two documentary makers track their protagonists day and night with a camera that is omnipresent, never leaving them alone, and yet disjointedly changing register and point of view to reflect the confrontational nature of a

separation. The documentary makers themselves feel that they are losing the plot, and as viewers we feel we are being led further and further away from the original story as an increasing feeling of isolation takes over the film. At the end of the film, however, Lucia takes the camera away from the cameraman who has been filming her story, the cameraman who in documenting her daily life has fallen in love with her. In taking possession and control of the camera, Lucia takes possession of her life. She is no longer the filmed victim, but the woman who will remake herself, who will "edit" her own life story.

Negri's film focuses on a highly creative industry and on a group of people who make an active choice to work precariously in order to work in a chosen field, not unlike the 50,000 journalists and 45,000 researchers in Italy on precarious contracts (Morini, "The Feminization" 50). This autobiographical film is about the effect of precariousness on women of that generation, women who, like the film's protagonist Lucia, do not see themselves as precarious: "Io col precariato cosa c'entro?" ("What does precariousness have to do with me?"). Lucia is one of the educated women of a postfeminist generation who are not in search of the *posto fisso*, of a job with security for security's sake, but of work linked to the construction of one's identity. For someone who arrives at the idea of employment through the feminist concept of *partire da sé* ("taking oneself as the starting point"), work becomes something that does not reproduce the traditional dynamics of power but enables resistance and pushes women to re-imagine contemporary politics, lives, and subjectivities in new ways (Italian Core Group 4). Growing up in a precarious context has made third-wave feminists aware of the fact that they will never live an adulthood characterized by stability and lifetime jobs as their mothers did. As Fantone states, "A precarious existence is not a solely negative phenomenon for the generation of women in their twenties and thirties who chose to do creative work, to teach or to emigrate. In these cases a different sense of precariousness is starting to emerge and with it, new strategies and networking across genders, generations and ethnicities take shape" (18).

Recently, four networks of third-wave feminists, Sconvegno, Prec@s, A/matrix, and Sexyshock, have critiqued the failures of state institutions and societal values to provide young women with practical ways to create meaningful and decent lives for them-

selves, in other words to make precariousness sustainable (Fantone 8). Precariousness can become sustainable only if social services and options for child care improve for women in Italy, but the statistics are worrisome and indicate a long road ahead: Italy has one of the highest rates of educated women but the lowest percentage of female employment in Europe (except for Malta). *Se non ora quando*'s comments on the recent labor reforms introduced by the Mario Monti government express guarded optimism, subject to the introduction of significant investment in childcare and social services (see "Riforma del Lavoro," http://www.senonoraquando.eu/?p=9246). But the rising cuts resulting from the continuing European economic crisis are generating increased unemployment for women. Current conditions seem to render improbable the "Italia 2020" program, which called for greater inclusion of women in the workplace, presented by the minister of labor and the minister of equal opportunity in 2011. Recent events show that Fantone's optimistic prognosis, like Lucia's ability to pick up a camera and rethink her life at the end of *Riprendimi*, remain confined to fiction for the time being.

Documentaries by and about Women and Work: *Invisibili* and *Uno virgola due*

While the feature films analyzed here invent characters and situations to explore the impact of the contemporary workforce on women's lives, Pedroni's *Invisibili* and Ferreri's *Uno virgola due* are two documentaries that canvas "real" women, taking as their point of departure statistics and slogans relevant to the situations women face in the contemporary workforce. *Invisibili* more broadly addresses issues of the impact of the transformation of the workplace on the everyday lives and relationships of women, while *Uno virgola due* is more narrowly focused on the obstacles women face when trying to reconcile work with motherhood. Pedroni explains the motivation behind her documentary:

> Avevo voglia di parlare di lavoro e di come il lavoro che si va trasformando incideva nelle vite degli individui e delle persone. Circolano parole altisonanti e si parla della necessità di essere flessibili, mobili e disposti al rischio. E poi però non si va a vedere cosa significa tutto questo. (Interview with Tufano)

> I wanted to talk about work and how a changing work environment has impacted the lives of individuals. High falutin words circulate and there is talk about the need to be flexible, mobile, and willing to take risks. But then we don't go and examine the significance of all this.

Pedroni unpacks the meaning behind the loaded terminology related to the contemporary workplace in a carefully constructed forty-seven-minute documentary. The filmmaker's interviews and reconstructions highlight complex reactions to the notions of flexibility, mobility, and job insecurity or precariousness. These key terms in the new capitalism imply a workplace environment that demands that all workers, but women in particular, change and adapt, a flexibility that Pedroni ultimately suggests is also aligned to "invisibility." The invisible of the title refers to the fact that the women who are the protagonists of this documentary are often invisible given that they are leading what seem to be "normal" lives. The anguish and the solitude are invisible, beneath the surface, as these women do not belong to a larger, organized collective able to make their voices heard.

> La cosa che mi colpiva di più e mi sembrava descriverle maggiormente era quello che si "nascondeva" dietro la loro apparente—ma anche reale—normalità. Una normalità nella quale non si riconosce una storia. Così la loro quotidiana fatica, il loro disagio, talvolta il loro dolore, ma anche la loro forza sono invisibili, e restano in gran parte *Invisibili* tutte loro, perché disperse, spesso sole, mai parte di qualcosa di più grande che le possa rendere riconoscibili e farne ascoltare la voce. (qtd. in Pacini 198)

> What struck me the most and seemed to best describe them was what was hiding behind their apparent—but also real—normality. A normality whose story you can't recognize. So that their daily struggles, their unease, sometimes even their pain, but also their strength are invisible and they remain for the most part invisible, because they are often lost, alone, never part of something that can render them recognizable and make their voices heard.

The documentary is divided into four blocks or groups of interviews, edited in such a way as to bring us closer to the characters, to their relationship to work, and to the impact their working situ-

ation has on their lives. The episodes are for the most part filmed inside warm domestic spaces where the filmmaker constructs or records intimate dialogue between her subjects and provides glimpses of their daily routines. The individual narrative blocks are connected by traveling shots across an impersonal and anonymous urban periphery marked by modern skyscrapers. Traversing the city allows for narrative passage but also for spaces of reflection, real and metaphorical, from the puddle of water reflecting the buildings surrounding it that opens the film to the many transitions between episodes that feature low-angle, wide-angle shots of high-rise corporate glass buildings of the new-capitalist workplace.

The first section of the film differs stylistically from the rest of the documentary. This preamble of sorts marks the demise of a previous style of work and of a displaced generation of workers. Shot on location at the site of a closed factory, unemployed workers reminisce about a time of job security with nostalgic references to the collegiality and benefits of the Fordist workplace. As the workers despair about their uncertain futures, a hand-held camera alternates close-ups of men and women in their 50s addressing an off-screen interviewer with images of the factory in the background. A sense of loss pervades this section. One of the women states, "Il lavoro è qualcosa che mi ha dato dignità. Senza lavoro non posso vivere" ("Work was something that gave me dignity. Without work I cannot live").

The focus of the documentary subsequently shifts to a younger generation and more specifically to middle-class women in the new flexible workplace. This section of the documentary juxtaposes the lives of three protagonists, highlighting the individuality of their stories and providing detailed and privileged insight into the physical and emotional spaces they inhabit. The intersecting narratives unfold via a style that alternates an observational strategy with fictional reconstructions, contributing to an understanding of the impact of contemporary working conditions on the individual experience.

> Osservare, cercare, ascoltare, e poi raccontare può voler dire anche ricreare qualcosa per ottenere una sintesi più efficace. Nel caso di *Invisibili* però non si tratta di fiction, ma di osservare una realtà, di mettersi di fronte alle cose e di fare di queste un elemento del racconto, trovando il modo di restituirne la verità più intima e profonda. (Pedroni, qtd. in Pacini 199)

> To observe, to look for, to listen to and then to narrate can also mean to re-create something in order to obtain a more efficient synthesis. In the case of *Invisibili*, I'm not sure that it is about fiction, but about observing reality, to come face to face with things, and to make this an element of the narrative, finding a way to endow it with its most intimate and profound truth.

To provide an understanding of the frustrations experienced by her character, Giusi, for example, Pedroni reconstructs one of the many job interviews that results in short-term but unsatisfactory employment opportunities. Giusi, who has a teaching certificate, moves from job to job as she waits in hope of someday actually getting work related to her qualifications. In a later episode, Giusi's frustration is contrasted to her friend's cynical resignation to a future of unsatisfactory work conditions in a bread factory. The exchange between the two friends is captured in camera work that features close-ups of gestures with facial expressions highlighting the physical and emotional impact of the experience.

Giusi's story is intercut with the introduction of Sonia, a young mother who, unlike Giusi, has more work experience and manages to obtain more-specialized work contracts. She shares, however, Giusi's frustration, loneliness, and alienation that result from the lack of professional growth that these short-term contracts offer. While she appreciates the "flexibility" of her work, at the same time she longs for a minimal sense of financial security to assist her between jobs. Her biggest complaint relates to the isolation she feels as she attempts to juggle her many roles as woman, worker, and mother.

Benta is a mother as well; she has a toddler and is pregnant with a second child. A trained architect, and an Australian married to an Italian, she works in marketing for an Italian firm. Working primarily from home, she appreciates the freedom of her job while realizing that with a second child things will change and that she too, like Giusi, would certainly appreciate more legal protection or job security. Shown turning away from her computer to respond patiently to her toddler's demands for food, Benta seems naturally to negotiate work and motherhood.

The third section of the documentary provides a collective recounting of a range of experiences constructed around a convivial meal among friends. The women seated around the table highlight a range of issues related to the workplace: the women have no

decision-making powers, and their difficulties are augmented by the assignment of unpredictable work hours, which deprives them of any control of their time. The exchange between the women reveals an overall mood of alienation and provides a picture of a dehumanized workplace where they feel treated, in the words of one of them, like the merchandise they sell, objects of a system organized entirely around profit where they are hired and fired based on sales figures. The camera circles the table, offering opportunities to each woman to voice her condition. Close-ups, some of them extreme, permit the viewer to identify with the women's experience, while the domestic space provides a temporary haven, a nurturing sense of home and comfort to women who feel otherwise in a permanent state of uncertainty and unease.

The final part of the documentary returns to focus exclusively on Benta. The harmonious domestic scene also includes her husband, in an intimate family situation in which they are choosing the name for the baby. The conversation turns to the impending changes in Benta's life. Aware of the challenges of having a second child, she divulges that maternity has made her less idealistic and more pragmatic; economic necessity has made her more aware of the right to be justly paid for the work one does. The documentary closes with an intimate mother–daughter scene, as the camera turns its attention to the figure of the little girl, Aurora, listening to the *filastrocca* ("nursery rhyme"), which repeats itself over and over again. The documentary does not present answers to the questions it poses, but highlights the many challenges and difficulties facing women of the filmmaker's generation, these "normal" women who are forced to face such "abnormal" challenges. Pedroni's documentary, while not aspiring to cover all aspects of the complexity of "precariousness," tries to render visible a new, disquieting norm. In search of the "other" that is all too familiar to too many Italian women, Pedroni points to its unknown consequences, which will be inherited by a new generation of women, like Benta's daughter, who will have to discover her own way of negotiating the world.

Pedroni's film renders visible the implications of new working conditions on women's lives while also ultimately drawing attention to the specific added dimension of the challenges of motherhood and work. As Pedroni highlights through her working mothers, motherhood enriches but also complicates a woman's life,

the ability to be flexible decreases, and the ability to balance "work" and "life" becomes increasingly more challenging, at a high cost.

The price of motherhood lies at the very center of Ferreri's *Uno virgola due*, which addresses the often unspoken issues behind the reasons why women in Italy have so few children.

> Il progetto nasce da una domanda: mi chiedevo come mai, sempre più spesso, sentivo le donne lamentarsi per soprusi e ingiustizie subite sul lavoro durante o dopo la maternità. Ho deciso di iniziare una ricerca e ho pubblicato annunci sui giornali per chiedere alle madri di scrivermi e di raccontarmi le loro storie. (Interview with Tufano)

> The project grew from a question: I asked myself why women were increasingly complaining about the abuses and injustices suffered in the workplace during or after their pregnancies. I decided to begin researching and I placed some ads in newspapers asking mothers to write me and to tell me their stories.

The large number of responses Ferreri received from ads on the radio and in newspapers and the women's magazine *Grazia* convinced her that this was a widespread problem among women in Italy, one that cut across geographic and class boundaries. Despite the number of testimonies collected, in the end few women were willing to go on screen to tell their stories, fearful of the consequences.

Ferreri's research revealed a type of mobbing inflicted upon working mothers, not unlike that explored in Comencini's feature film: job responsibilities were taken away from women, and women were fired even when the law supposedly "protected" them or they were put in conditions in which they were forced to resign. The irony lies of course in the fact that for years Italy has had one of the lowest birth rates in the world (1.2 per woman when the film was made; 1.3 in 2010). A poll of 50,000 mothers by the Consiglio Nazionale di Economia e del Lavoro in collaboration with the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica showed that the real problem was the vertical drop in the number of families that have a second child. It is not true that women don't have children; the fact is that most women have just one child. The statistics do highlight the economic factor: providing for children is costly above all in a society that lacks political and social support for the family. The other problem is that day care centers provide only 10% of the

places required by working mothers. However, there are equally if not more compelling reasons behind women's choices to not have more children, and these result from the immense pressure and psychological challenges that having children has on women in the workplace. The silent truth is that women who work are not encouraged to have children and risk losing their jobs when they do. Motherhood and work remain incompatible, as Ferreri's film shows.

Ferreri's powerful documentary was completely financed by the city of Rome and was filmed over a ten-month period, mirroring the biological gestation period for humans. The documentary has several "frames"—it begins and ends with footage from an English-language documentary on the hatching habits of a rare species of turtle, further framed by Ferreri's family history tracing the decline in number of children among the generations of women in her family: her great-grandmother had five children; her grandmother, four; her mother, three; her sisters, two and one; and she, at the time, none. Turning the collective experience into a personal one clearly explains why many women like Ferreri might end up with no children.[7]

The film is divided into four chapters: Conciliazione ("Reconciliation"), Discriminazione ("Discrimination"), Licenziamento ("Firing"), and Mobbing. It is a polyphonic documentary of intersecting narratives made up of close-up talking head interviews with the mothers and with public authorities. However, the documentary takes a personal turn by including a number of two-shots that feature the documentary maker asking questions and sympathetically listening and reacting to the answers, not as a disinterested journalist, but as an equal, sharing the frame or walking alongside her subject.

Ferreri's subjects are educated, articulate women, and the well-edited testimonials are interwoven through the chapters to address the issues suggested by the chapter headings. Teresa holds a business degree and previously worked in a bank. She speaks of the difficulty of reconciling work and motherhood as the result of her employer's refusal to honor the promise of renewing her contract after her baby was born. Stefania, highly educated and seeking an academic career as a political philosopher, speaks of the discrimination she encounters at interviews. Repeatedly she is asked if she plans to marry and have children, questions she deems inappropriate and refuses to answer; she gets no further in the interview

process. Maria Grazia, who worked for a cosmetics company, was asked to resign when she was pregnant, and when she did not, the company relocated her to a work site far from home, rendering it difficult for her to get to work. Hers is but one example of the types of mobbing the documentary decries. Others include the loss of opportunities for promotion and mothers who are forced to conceal their maternity by wearing tight sashes so as not to risk losing their jobs. Simona speaks of returning from maternity leave only to find that her office had been taken away from her, leaving her with only a chair in a corridor, and demeaning duties that eventually led her to resign. Her eloquent plea to politicians is to protect women's work and provide opportunities for permanent part-time options; her advice to mothers is to never be ashamed for the choices they made to have children.

The shame that women are meant to feel comes through in the interviews, as the women need to undertake a deeply self-reflexive process to rid themselves of that shame. Being able to talk about their experiences thanks to the documentary was a liberating, therapeutic, and transformative experience for many of them. The documentary-making process had an unforeseen effect on Ferreri, who grimly concludes, "l'Italia non è un paese pronto a sostituire la figura della 'madre' con quella della 'madre lavoratrice'" ("Italy is not a country willing to replace the figure of the mother with that of the working mother").

The "work" documentaries of both Pedroni and Ferreri are documentaries in search of what lies beneath the surface, the disturbing motivations for social realities that are often ignored or swept under by the media whose images have been dominated for the past three decades by Berlusconi, first as media tycoon then as Prime Minister. As a counter-discourse to negative and demeaning images of women, these two filmmakers use the documentary as a way that reflects on themselves as women in Italian society and on women in society in general. As Ferreri explains,

> Più che me stessa vedo lo specchio di una società in cui vivo ed è questo quello che a me interessa molto […] in qualche modo capire il mondo di cui faccio parte, cambiarlo se riesco sarebbe l'ideale ma non ci riuscirò […] ma in qualche modo mostrarlo agli altri cioè mostrare agli altri quello che io vedo coi miei occhi che passa attraverso di me attraverso la mia esperienza ma in qualche modo metterlo davanti agli occhi degli altri. (Interview with Tufano)

> More than of myself, I see the reflection of the society in which I live, and this is what really interests me […] in some way I want to understand the world that I am a part of, change it if I can would be ideal, but I won't manage to do that […] but in some way show others what I see with my own eyes, that passes through me and my experience, but I want to make it visible to others.

Ferreri's documentary enjoys the unusual privilege of having been released as a commercial DVD with an accompanying book. Furthermore, the documentary remains in progress, as Ferreri's views on motherhood and work are continually updated on her blog, which has transformed from the website built around the documentary (http://www.unovirgoladue.it) into a more intimate and autobiographical site where many of her reflections revolve around her new status as mother (http://www.materetlabora.org). Pedroni and Ferreri, along with other documentary makers of their generation, are committed to a style of documentary that is both personal and political, in which their voices sit alongside those of their subjects through a relational process we have witnessed among other female documentary makers studied in this book. As Pedroni states:

> Un documentario si muove su altri territori, credo sia e debba essere un linguaggio più libero, ed è comunque sempre il punto d'incontro tra una realtà e chi si pone al cospetto di quella realtà e ne fa l'oggetto del suo racconto. Un racconto che, in questo senso, diventa anche una creazione. (qtd. in Pacini 199)

> A documentary occupies different waters. I think it is and should be a freer language, and it is in all cases the meeting point between a reality and who is part of that reality and makes him/her the object of the narrative. A narrative which is, in this sense, also a creation.

The documentaries of Pedroni and Ferreri examine issues at the core of women's identity and position in Italian society, issues that the filmmakers as women share with their subjects. Transforming what they observe into objects of their narratives, they engage with a moment in contemporary Italian documentary making that is witnessing a transition from the recording of a supposedly fixed reality into one of provocative and open questioning (Bertozzi, *Storia* 303). Along with the feature films discussed in this chapter,

they challenge the status quo and are both a reminder of women's achievements and resilient spirit in the workplace and of the absurdity of women's continuing need to struggle in order to balance public and private roles in the third millennium. The underlying message behind all these films is that conditions for women in the workplace and in Italian society can only change as a result of deeper transformations in infrastructures and in the demeaning patriarchal attitudes still deeply imbedded and propagated by prevailing cinema and media images that these films openly challenge.

Conclusion

Framing the Film Industry

At the Cinema al femminile forum, which was held on October 21, 2010, at Rome's Libreria del Cinema, women directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, and editors discussed the position of women in Italian cinema and their relationship to the industry's creative output. Like many of the filmmakers we interviewed, most of the women contributing to the forum considered themselves to be as capable as their male counterparts and thought that an emphasis on gender neutrality was the best strategy to legitimize their work within their respective professions. The experiences they related about the obstacles they encountered in the industry, however, reveal a gendered narrative.

The conversation at the forum revealed two overarching themes: the marginalization and stereotyping of women in an industry that is still suspicious of women's desire to move beyond the roles that were traditionally acceptable; and second, the problems involved in articulating subjectivity and an aesthetics that speaks directly to a female audience. Both themes featured prominently in our interviews with women filmmakers.

Actress-turned-director Silvia Ferreri explains the problematic position that transgressing the boundary of established gender roles poses for the woman director in Italy:

> Il cinema è davvero un posto dove il maschilismo italiano raggiunge l'apice [...] nel cinema italiano per una donna è pazzesco. [...] Per me è stato diecimila volte più difficile perché sono arrivata al cinema dalla recitazione [...] per cui il concetto italiano è donna—attrice, probabilmente quoziente intellettivo pari allo zero vuoi fare la regista? Mah fai l'attrice, sei bellina, sei anche brava ma perché vuoi scrivere perché vuoi fare regia? [...] È una cosa per cui io trovo delle difficoltà pazzesche, ma

> propria nella relazione con l'istituzione e con le persone con gli uomini. (Interview with Tufano)

> The cinema is really the place where Italian male chauvinism is at its peak. In Italian cinema it's crazy for a woman. For me it was 10,000 times worse because I came to the cinema from acting. The Italian idea is woman, actress, zero intelligence, you want to be a director? Be an actress, you're cute, you're even good at it, why do you want to write, why do you want to direct? I find it incredibly difficult to relate to the institution, to the people, to men.

Other professionals working in the Italian film industry confirm the prevailing deep-seated prejudice against women's capacity to hold executive positions. Speaking as a successful and experienced award-winning cinematographer and camera operator, one of only a handful of women in that profession in Italy, Maura Morales Bergmann recounted the obstacles she met in her career.[1] Although cinematography is an art, her ability to succeed was considered dependent on her physical strength rather than her professional skills as a cinematographer. As a camera operator, Morales Bergmann often lugged heavy equipment but never complained because complaints would have been interpreted as a sign of professional weakness. She attributes her difficulty in finding work as a cinematographer also to the producers' lack of confidence that a woman would be able to successfully deal with directors, coordinate publicists, and manage (male) camera operators. In the end, according to Morales Bergmann, this lack of confidence results in the sidelining of a female gaze and a female-centered aesthetics.

Our book also addresses a question raised in 1988 in the first volume of essays in English about women and film in Italy. There, Paola Melchiori asks: "When a woman becomes the one who looks, what image of her sexual identity does she reflect? How does she go beyond the representations and identities of her unconscious conditioning as mother or sexual object?" (25). Women filmmakers' difficulty in identifying themselves as subjects and projecting a female aesthetic targeting a female audience can be linked both to their complex engagement with feminism and to the influence of the prevailing models of femininity in the Italian media. In the last three decades, feminist film scholars have produced new understandings of the ways in which representational

categories such as "women"—as subjects and/or objects—can be deconstructed. Nonetheless, the question of subjects and objects remains problematic in cinema since aesthetics traditionally belongs to men, whereas women tend to function as figures "to be fetishised" rather than as creators (Ramanathan 10). As Geetha Ramanathan argues, "command over the aesthetic scene has seldom been possible for women, the male artist being exemplary of the creative principle" (10). Moreover, women directors often face the dilemma of positioning themselves as subjects while grappling with the construction and representation of female characters in the very medium that bases its art on producing the perfect female fetish (Ramanathan 10).

Women scriptwriters face a similar dilemma. They are well represented in the industry in Italy, where they account for 40% of all scriptwriters; by comparison, of the top 250 films made in North America in 2009, only 8% were written by women (Woollard). The growing presence of women scriptwriters in Italy ought to provide a conduit for the creation of women-centered plots and, more significantly, for the proliferation of credible female characters, but the woman screenwriter's interest in articulating a female point of view and understanding of the world clashes with the demands of producers and her own conscious or subconscious censoring of that interest. Screenwriter Francesca Manieri attributes her difficulty in creating female characters to the industry's propagation of the "neutral" spectator, who is, in fact, male. Similarly, emerging screenwriter Sara Fratini acknowledges that many scripts do not convey a "female" perspective:

> Come scenggiatrice non credo di raccontare un specifico mondo femminile, anche se una volta mi è capitato di scrivere un racconto "al femminile," ma nello stesso modo in cui ne ho scritti decine al maschile e unisex. In genere raccontiamo il mondo che scegliamo di raccontare, e nella maggior parte dei casi questo mondo non corrisponde al nostro. (qtd. in Mascherini 200)

> As a screenwriter I don't think I really narrate a specifically female world, even if I have at times written a "female" story, but in the same way that I have written many male and unisex stories. In general, we narrate the world we want to narrate, and in most cases it doesn't correspond to our own.

While in some cases the lack of a female aesthetic results from women's reliance on male referents, in others it is related to issues of power. In the words of Gloria Malatesta, "Lo stile femminile viene massacrato perché la catena di commando è maschile ed è inevitabile" ("The female style is inevitably disguised because the chain of command is male"). Malatesta suggests that while screenwriting may be a creative profession, it is also a service, and the screenwriter's creative freedom is mediated by her relationship with the director. A screenwriter's script is always subject to the scrutiny and revisions of the producer and of the director, who determine whether the aesthetic projected in the script is appropriate and conforms to their vision. Since the industry does not have many directors or producers who favor a more nuanced, female-centered aesthetic, there are still only very few stories and female characters that depart from the traditional and, often, stereotypical representation of women on screen.

Television's systematic degradation of women is another problem. Whereas most Italian women work both inside and outside the home and women on average are better educated than men, the roles assigned to women on Italian television bear no relation to this reality. As Lorella Zanardo shows in her documentary *Il corpo delle donne* (*Women's Bodies,* 2009), on Italian television women are meant to dance, strip, allow themselves to be treated like idiots by older male hosts, giggle, and keep smiling at all costs. The classic role afforded to women on television is that of the young showgirl who has little to say and much flesh to show. In a book written one year after the release of her documentary, Zanardo comments:

> Pensavo agli italiani di fronte alla televisione. Mi chiedevo come si sentissero, sottoposti costantemente com'erano a stimoli erotici: coniugi che si accoppiavano davanti allo schermo stimolati da enormi seni perennemente in primo piano, adolescenti eccitati davanti a provocanti soubrette in trasmissioni pomeridiane. (31)

> I thought of Italians sitting in front of the TV. I asked myself how they must feel, constantly exposed to erotic stimuli: couples that mated in front of the screen stimulated by constant close-ups of enormous breasts, adolescents stimulated by provocative showgirls on afternoon television programs.

For women attempting to make films, the consequences are complex because televisual representations create an expectation that women are best suited to roles that focus on their bodies.

The need to dramatically change representations of women on screen has implications that extend beyond the film industry. In a country in which television programs are marked by their lack of respect for women's rights (Zanardo 104), and the longest-serving postwar Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, is accused of engaging in sexual activities with under-age prostitutes and of appointing women to ministerial positions based on their looks, it is a matter of great urgency for documentaries and fiction films to imagine different roles for women, both as filmmakers and as characters.

To start a dialogue with young Italian women who were growing up with degrading role models, Zanardo made *Il corpo delle donne* and the book accompanying that documentary. She writes on the back cover of her book:

> Sentivo sulla mia pelle l'umiliazione di essere accucciata sotto un tavolo. Sentivo nella mia carne il sopruso della telecamera che frugava il nostro corpo. Soltanto attraverso la comprensione profonda, e di conseguenza l'assunzione totale della vergogna e del dolore per come eravamo rappresentate, sarebbe stato possibile scrivere un testo per stimolare domande, per educare e finalmente cambiare.
>
> I felt on my skin the humiliation of crouching under a table. I felt on my flesh the abuse of the camera that would ransack our body. Only through a deep understanding and through the shame, the pain of how we were represented, was it possible to write a book in order to raise questions, to educate, and finally to bring about change.

Zanardo's documentary and book might be initial steps in what has become a proactive movement for and by women to reclaim their dignity and to challenge their representation in the media and their treatment in society. The *Se non ora quando* (SNOQ) movement (which we mentioned in Chapter 3) began on February 13, 2011, with simultaneous rallies all over Italy, in which more than a million women of different ages, classes, political allegiances, and religious beliefs took part. SNOQ has taken up the challenge of keeping women's issues at the forefront

of the discussion, uncovering inequities, and calling for legislative changes. SNOQ's online presence has spread to social network sites, forums, and blogs including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, thereby expanding the spaces for debate and reflection. It is the first women's organization in Italy to have an iPhone and iPad application.

In an early SNOQ YouTube video directed by Francesca Comencini, which was designed to publicize the protest, actress Angela Finocchiaro demands the recognition and proliferation of a female gaze on the world:

> Questa Italia non è un paese per donne. Solo che l'Italia è costituita per metà da donne, ragazze, e bambine il cui sguardo sul mondo e sulla vita diverso da quello di uomini, ragazzi e bambini è il fondamento di un paese civile. Questo sguardo è una necessità a cui ne uomini ne donne possono più rinunciare.[2]
>
> This Italy is not a country for women. But women and girls make up half the population of Italy, whose gaze on the world, different from that of men and boys, is fundamental to a civilized country. This gaze is a necessity that neither men nor women can any longer do without.

The issue of acknowledging and foregrounding a female gaze is crucial to a rethinking of cinema and of society at large. Given the difficulties women in the film industry face, however, how can a director conceive and create a female-centered "gaze on the world"? Francesca Archibugi, who has long resisted the label of "woman filmmaker," believes that in order for women to make headway in the industry, they must re-engage with the feminist practice of consciousness raising:

> Io credo che dagli anni settanta in poi si è interrotto un processo fondamentale che è quello dell'autocoscienza. La donna soprattutto, tutte noi, il cammino che dobbiamo fare prima di tutto è quello di essere noi stesse, e non riferirci o essere ciò che desiderano gli altri che noi siamo [...]. Il problema è che molti, la stragrande maggioranza e le donne più degli uomini, si costruiscono un falso sé. E questo falso sé apparentemente ti aiuta, perché magari ti semplifica la giornata, i contatti, le cose, ma alla fine ti rattrappisce, ti omologa alla massa internamente e poi ti perdi. Quindi per me il cammino è quello di partire

> sempre da un'autocoscienza di se stessi in tutti i campi. (qtd. in Mascherini 180)
>
> I think that from the 1970s onward the fundamental process of consciousness raising has been interrupted. Women, all of us, what we need to do above all is be ourselves, and not refer to or become what others want us to be. […] The problem is that many, the great majority of women more than men construct a false sense of self. And this false self seems to help you, because maybe it simplifies your day, your contacts, things in general, but in the end it makes you numb, it makes you one of the masses, and you lose yourself. So for me the important thing is to have a sense of oneself in all fields.

Reframing Italy has focused on artists whose films have engaged with feminist practice at different levels. Sangiovanni, for example, strongly believes that a female aesthetic is the result of a search for, and is nurtured by, an understanding of oneself as woman in the world (online interview). Others have approached feminism more cautiously and reluctantly. Debating the complex and multifaceted notion of *il cinema al femminile*, they have outlined definitions of what such cinema might involve by reflecting on their own filmmaking practices. Quatriglio acknowledges an evolution toward a renewed understanding of herself as a filmmaker that inextricably links her practice to an acknowledgment of gender-specific elements: "Alla domanda 'chi sono io?' All'inizio lo sapevo: una persona che voleva fare film. Adesso non lo so più, forse una donna che vuole fare film, o forse una persona che vuole fare film come una donna" ("In response to the question 'who am I?' In the beginning I knew the answer: a person that wanted to make films. Now I don't know anymore, maybe a woman who wants to make films, or maybe a person who wants to make films as a woman") (online interview). Similarly, Spada acknowledges that *Come l'ombra* displays a female gaze as the result of "un lungo percorso psicoanalitico" ("a long psychoanalytical journey") that has led to her being "molto fiera che la critica e gli spettatori abbiano detto che questo film testimoni uno sguardo molto femminile" ("very proud that critics and spectators have said that this film reveals a decidedly female gaze") (online interview). With differing degrees of self-reflexivity, the women directors whose work we have discussed in this book have appropriated the camera and reframed

the male-centered aesthetic in an attempt to create a place for women's stories.

History, Walter Benjamin writes, "is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]" (261). In her discussion of Elsa Morante's *La storia*, Maurizia Boscagli takes the *Jetztzeit* to be "exactly the moment that cuts through history, the 'now' that blasts its continuum open, thus disrupting and contradicting history's claimed completeness" (133). The acknowledgment of the presence of women in the history of Italian cinema has the potential to contradict and disrupt the paternal genealogy, to act as moments of *Jetztzeit*, as moments of disruption, questioning the history of Italian cinema, its completeness and closure both in the present and in the past.

The history of women's contribution to Italian cinema is indeed a history, but for many historians it remains in the realm of story, rather than History. A case in point is the work of film historians such as Vittorio Martinelli, who was the first to write an article about the so-called women pioneers of Italian cinema and the first to write about Elvira Notari. According to Martinelli, Notari's films enjoyed great success in North and South America, making her one of the first Italian transnational filmmakers. Nonetheless, for him, she does not deserve to be included in the traditional history of Italian cinema because her works represent "microstorie: non è la Storia del cinema come la intendiamo normalmente, con la maiuscola, quelle che trovate sui libri. Queste sono le piccole storie che nessuno sa e che danno un pò di pimento" ("microhistories: it is not the History of cinema as we usually think of it, with the capital H, the one you read about in books. These are the small stories that no one knows and that add a little spice") ("Due o tre" 136).

Women filmmakers reframe the history of cinema by their commitment to remembering women's history. They remember and invent female subjects through films that, as we have seen, focus on "le piccole storie," which often remain relegated to the margins. *Reframing Italy* too is a study of "small stories" known to few, also because many of the films we discuss are not distributed widely and have therefore only limited success at the box office.

The lack of commercial success is partly due to the fact that Italian cinema is at the margins of a distribution system dominated by

Hollywood. Brunetta has identified a new age of the dominance of large-budget Hollywood productions with the simultaneous release in at least fifty cinemas of George Lucas's *Star Wars: Episode I* in 1999, which "marked a new era in the history of technological evolution and film distribution. And it reinforced the power of the new big studios and their strategy of saturating theaters with just a handful of titles" (247). Mary P. Wood laments, "There are simply not enough Italian cinemas to absorb the level of Italian, let alone American products" (31). The statistics confirm these observations: while 2010 showed an increase over previous years, Italian films still represented only 32% of films shown in Italian cinemas in 2010.

Emblematic is the example of De Lillo's *Il resto di niente* (2004), which received government funding and which the director described as a "piccolo film perché non ha avuto grandi mezzi" ("a small film because it didn't have great financial backing"). Screened at the 2004 Venice Film Festival, it went on to win numerous prestigious nominations and awards, including the nomination for best film, at Ciak d'oro, ironically in the category "Bello e invisibile" ("Beautiful and invisible").[3] Notwithstanding its critical success, only twenty copies were distributed to cinemas and, although it had been shortlisted as Italy's nominee for the Oscar for best foreign-language film, it had to be withdrawn from competition because the producer went bankrupt. In many ways, the history of *Il resto di niente* mirrors De Lillo's and other Italian women filmmakers' under-recognized contribution to Italian cinema. She speaks for many of them when she states, "la mia storia è sempre una storia di riconoscimenti anche importanti ma poco visibili" ("my history is a history of important but not very visible recognition") (interview with Scarparo).

Ticket sales are slowly picking up after years of rapid and steady decline. Films now reach audiences also increasingly in other ways. Since widespread and sustained access to cinemas has become increasingly difficult for Italian filmmakers, today most films find their audiences through festivals, art-house circuits, public and pay television broadcast, satellite television, DVDs, and the Internet.[4] Whereas there are exceptional cases such as that of the Comencini sisters, who manage to make films because of their long-standing family connection to the film industry, most women make films thanks to technological developments that have reduced the cost

of filmmaking and rely on distribution beyond the traditional cinema circuit: via new means of Internet distribution, screenings in clubs, universities, or cultural institutes, or at local and international film festivals. Marazzi's *Vogliamo anche le rose*, for instance, was the first Italian film available as an iPod application.

For most women filmmakers, the chances to be a regular part of the film industry are still limited, and their films appear against all odds. But we do not want to downplay the fact that the proportion of films made by women inside and outside Italy is increasing. It is no coincidence, though, that women filmmakers often make films about characters who are constructed as others, as outsiders, mirroring the predicament of women directors who are often marginal to the industry and to a history of aesthetics that pre-dates the advent of cinema.

Framing refers to the act of setting someone up, of contriving events to incriminate someone falsely. We have shown, however, that women are not incriminating the industry falsely. Rather, through a range of filmic styles, strategies, and practices, contemporary women filmmakers are engaging in a political critique of patriarchal attitudes and institutions that resist change and that are complicit in making it difficult even today for women's films to be made and distributed. Their films provide a multifaceted answer to the crucial question: What happens when women take up the camera and face the problematic position of being both objects and subjects of the cinematic gaze? As female role models, the filmmakers discussed in this book have appropriated the camera and reframed tradition, reframed history, and reframed contemporary social issues to add a new dimension to Italian cinema and to create a place for women's stories.

Appendix

A Conversation with Contemporary Italian Women Filmmakers

Online Supplementary Material

Interviews with Selected Women Filmmakers

Meeting and talking with Italian women directors has been fundamental to our understanding of women's filmmaking in Italy. In the course of our conversations, it became inconceivable and unacceptable to us that these women and their works were so little known both inside and outside of Italy. Our desire to bring their films to a wider public resulted in the idea, developed with Francesca Pirani, for a women's film festival in which women directors would introduce their works to audiences in Australia and New Zealand via video. The interviews included with this book were born from this initiative but extend beyond it. Recorded in Rome on November 26, 2010 in Antonietta De Lillo's Marechiarofilm studio, the interviews became the premise for a unique and much-appreciated opportunity for Alina Marazzi, Antonietta De Lillo, Costanza Quatriglio, Francesca Pirani, and Paola Sangiovanni to meet each other and discuss among themselves and with us issues regarding women's filmmaking in Italy. (As Marina Spada could not be present, she sent her interview to us.) While the interviews provide the participating directors' introductions to their films, they also include more wide ranging insights into their personal style and experience of filmmaking, their definition of women's cinema, the female gaze, and women's documentary making.

To view each interview, visit the link listed above the image on each of the following pages.

An Interview with Alina Marazzi
http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315028

Alina Marazzi
Introduction to *Un'ora sola ti vorrei/For One More Hour with You*

Alina Marazzi introduces her documentary *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* by discussing the motivation behind the film and its making, which involved the editing of a range of sources and media. Marazzi elaborates on how this intimate film, which began as a very personal, autobiographical journey in search of her own mother, evolved into a highly successful film due in large part to the universality of its message.

Il cinema al femminile: on women's cinema

Alina Marazzi discusses what women's cinema means to her, suggesting that women's filmmaking extends beyond the subject matter of the films themselves and involves experimenting with the very language of cinema.

Il documentario: on documentary

Alina Marazzi links women's attraction to the documentary form to the relational nature of documentary as well as to production factors that render it amenable to the expression of a women's poetics and aesthetic.

An Interview with Antonietta De Lillo
http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315030

Antonietta De Lillo
Introduction to *Il resto di niente/The Remains of Nothing*

Antonietta De Lillo describes *Il resto di niente* as a significant film about a very important cultural and sentimental page in her city's history, the revolution of 1799, told through the eyes of a Portuguese woman, Eleonora Piemental Fonseca. De Lillo discusses the challenges of making an historical film and her own personal choice to resist the conventions of the genre, opting instead for a documentary stylistics. She also contrasts the film's creative and artistic success to the significant production and distribution problems the film faced, problems that reflect contemporary Italy. Finally De Lillo explores the definition of Neapolitan/woman filmmaker.

An Interview with Costanza Quatriglio
http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315033

Costanza Quatriglio
Introduction to *L'isola/The Island*

Costanza Quatriglio describes her film as a coming-of-age story. She talks about the process of work with nonprofessional actors in a film that is situated between fiction and documentary. Quatriglio discusses her affection for an island she had visited frequently in her childhood and her desire to render its timeless, universal essence.

Il cinema al femminile: on women's cinema

Costanza Quatriglio discusses her struggle and coming to terms with the notion of women's cinema. Through a process of self-reflection, Quatriglio has come to identify common denominators in women's filmmaking, linked not only to the themes women directors choose, but more importantly to narrative style and to the way in which they relate to the reality they are recounting.

L'invisibile: a definition of "the invisible"

Costanza Quatriglio talks about searching for the invisible as central to her filmmaking. She defines the invisible as the space where people often don't want to go, as something complex that she tries to restore to the narrative through her creation of stories that are journeys made up of questions rather than answers.

An Interview with Francesca Pirani
http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315031

Francesca Pirani
Introduction to *L'appartamento/The Apartment*

Francesca Pirani discusses what she sees as the uniqueness of *L'appartamento,* one of the first films to confront the new wave of Italian immigration. A film about the unexpected encounter between two immigrants, it explores the positive outcomes of two people meeting on what she defines as a human plane, rather than focusing on the conflicts and differences inherent to immigration.

***Lo sguardo femminile:* on the female cinematic gaze**

Francesca Pirani defines her understanding of the female gaze, as it applies to her own style of filmmaking, which is based in part on her resistance to order, rigid scripts, and to facts. She discusses the importance of establishing reciprocal relationships with her collaborators.

An Interview with Paola Sangiovanni
http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315029

Paola Sangiovanni
Introduction to *Ragazze la vita trema/ Girls, Life Is Trembling*

Paola Sangiovanni introduces her full-length 2009 documentary film, a documentary about the 1960s and 1970s recounted by four women who lived through the women's movement in Italy. The film reflects Sangiovanni's interest in history and memory and in women's vision of history. In the interview Sangiovanni reveals her process of selection of the film's protagonists and of the wide range of archival material used in the film. She discusses the relevance and relationship of the film to the situation of women in contemporary Italy.

***Lo sguardo femminile*: on the female cinematic gaze**

Paola Sangiovanni defines the complexity of the female gaze in cinema as traced to an aesthetics born from an awareness of oneself as a woman in the world.

An Interview with Marina Spada
http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284315032

Marina Spada
Introduction to *Come l'ombra/Like the Shadow*

Marina Spada's *Come l'ombra* is a film about the encounter between two women, a native Milanese and a Ukrainian immigrant, and the life changes that take place as a result of this encounter. In her interview Spada also discusses the making of the film and the centrality of the city of Milan, and its cinematic representation, to the film's narrative.

***Lo sguardo femminile:* on the female cinematic gaze**

Marina Spada discusses her early resistance to the idea of a female gaze and of the period of reflection, which has led her to embrace the label.

Credits

Cameraman
Stefano D'Amadio

Sound
Martina Migliorini

Editing
Martina Migliorini
and Tim Page

Subtitles
Martina Depentor
and Bernadette Luciano

Translations
Martina Depentor
and Ellen McRae

Music
Tim Page

Special thanks to
Francesca Pirani

Notes

Chapter One
Introduction

1. This is how Campion's producer, Jan Chapman, describes the anniversary celebration at Cannes (Bailey).

2. All translations from Italian into English are our own, unless otherwise stated.

3. Angela Dalle Vacche also lists Bertini as codirector of *Assunta Spina* (265).

4. See Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari*.

5. In his history of the Italian documentary, *Storia del documentario italiano*, Marco Bertozzi includes a section entitled "Occhi di ragazza, dalle donne al mondo" (293–97; "Girl's eyes, from women to the world"). Similarly, Vito Zagarrio's edited volume, *La meglio gioventù*, has a chapter about women. See Cristina Paternò, "Un cinema al femminile."

6. In her conversation with us (Spada, Interview with Luciano and Scarparo), Spada confirmed that she made the film in order to give visibility to Antonia Pozzi, whom she considers to be an extraordinary poet who had been unjustly forgotten. A biography about Pozzi by Graziella Bernabò, entitled *Per troppa vita che ho nel sangue*. *Antonia Pozzi e la sua poesia*, was published in 2004. To mark the 70th anniversary of her death, a conference was also organized in Milan.

7. *Cosmonauta* premiered at the 2009 Venice Film Festival and won Best Film in the Controcampo Italiano section. It was released in cinemas in September 2009 and is available on DVD, distributed by Fandango Home Entertainment.

8. Examples of such documentaries include *Giallo a Milano* (2009) by Sergio Basso, *Ritorni* (2007) by Giovanna Taviani, *Sei del mondo* (2007) by Camilla Ruggiero, *Le ferie di Licu* (2006) by Vittorio Moroni, *Sidelki/Badanti* (2005) by Katia Bernardi, *La stoffa di Veronica* (2005) by Emma Rossi Landi and Flavia Pasquini, and *L'insonnia di Devi* (2001), *Il mondo addosso* (2006), *Migranti in cammino* (2007), and *Raíz: Radici a Capo Verde* (2004) (a three-part documentary made for RAI TRE television) by Costanza Quatriglio.

9. At the time of writing, the arts fund budget was below €300 million, compared with €500 million 3 years ago; cinema's share of FUS funding in 2011 was around €60 million.

10. These tax breaks, dating back to a law introduced in 2007, which were finally introduced in 2009, incentivize cinematic production by encouraging Italian production houses to invest in films, make it more attractive to foreign producers to make films in Italy, and incentivize business and other sectors to invest in films.

Chapter Two
The "Girls" Are Watching Us: Reconsidering the Neorealist Child Protagonist

1. For a discussion of children in Archibugi's films, see Flavia Laviosa, "Family and Art in Francesca Archibugi's Cinema: An Interview"; Aine O'Healy, "Are the Children Watching Us?"; and Giovanna De Luca, *Il punto di vista dell'infanzia nel cinema italiano e francese: rivisioni*.

2. *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema* (ed. Laura Ruberto and Kristi Wilson) contains a series of essays that look at the influence of and relationships between Italian neorealist films and cinema in a number of global contexts.

3. Shiel discusses the spaces of the city traversed by father and son, 55–56.

4. Labate's first film, *Ambrogio* (1992), set in the 1950s, is the story of a young girl who wants to become a captain in the Italian navy but runs up against numerous obstacles because of her gender. The director's second film, *La mia generazione* (1996), selected to represent Italy for the Academy Awards, also occurs over a single day and involves the transporting of a suspected terrorist from Sicily to Milan—a road movie in which landscape plays a significant role.

5. For a discussion on the *scugnizzo* in Neapolitan cinema, see Marlow-Mann, 92–97.

6. *L'isola* was screened at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival, won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Bratislava Film Festival, the CICAE Prize at Cannes, the screenplay prize at the Cuenca Film Festival in Ecuador, and a Cultural Grant from the Asia–Europe Foundation at the Busan Festival in South Korea, among other awards and nominations.

7. In order to make the film, Quatriglio lived on the island for several months. She also worked extensively to understand the inhabitants, who became the actors of the film, a part of the process of relatedness that is very important to Quatriglio and is explored in the short documentary on the making of the film, *Racconti per l'isola* (2003).

8. Quatriglio described this as an intentional event in numerous interviews, including those with Scarparo and Luciano.

Chapter Three
Reconfiguring the Mother–Daughter Relationship

1. For literary studies about the mother–daughter relationship, see, for instance, Adalgisa Giorgio's edited volume, *Writing Mothers and Daughters*. For ground-breaking psychological and sociological studies of the mother–daughter relationship, see Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Jessica Benjamin's *The Bonds of Love*, and Marianne Hirsch's *The Mother/Daughter Plot*.

2. Particularly significant are Luisa Muraro's *L'ordine simbolico della madre*, the Milan Women's Bookshop Collective's "Più donne che uomini"

and Diotima's *Il pensiero della differenza sessuale* and, more recently, *L'ombra della madre*.

3. *L'amore di Màrja* is Ciccone's second feature-length film. The film was awarded First Independent Box-Office 2004 Prize, the Jury Jeune Award at the Villerupt Festival, the Italian Golden Globe Outstanding Picture, and the Italian Golden Globe for Best New Actress for Erika Lepisto. Ciccone also wrote and directed *Le Sciamane* (2000) and *Il prossimo tuo* (2008). In addition, she wrote the screenplay for *Voce del verbo amore* (2007) and *Benzina* (1999). In 1996, she was awarded the prestigious Premio Solinas for best screenplay for *Leopoldo e Maria*.

4. Reviewers have defined the white space as a "nonluogo" (Ferraro), "un limbo in cui vive la protagonista" (Mazzia), or a "blank slate on which we can all, if we choose, write whatever future we want" (Bitel).

5. In an interview, Comencini stated, "Mi coinvolge il fatto di parlare di maternità e di parlarne al femminile" (qtd. in Almonte; "It really interests me to talk about motherhood, and to talk about it from a female point of view"). Unfortunately, the film's female-centric perspective, which some reviewers praised as evidence of "un film femminino" (Ronconi; "a feminine film"), led others to assume that it would attract primarily female viewers: "il film avrà quel successo che le storie di donne hanno sempre presso il pubblico femminile (Solinas; "the film will have the success that stories of women have always had with female audiences").

6. The judge is based on Ilda Bocassini. As Comencini explains, "Per quel personaggio ho pensato a Ilda Bocassini, nel momento della sua indagine a Caltanisetta sull'omicidio di Falcone. Avevo anche in progetto un documentario su di lei. A volte questo spazio del lavoro le donne lo devono togliere ai figli. E quando li lasciamo sentiamo sempre un grande vuoto, un senso di solitudine" (qtd. in Gallozzi, "Onora"; "For that character I thought of Ilda Bocassini, in the moment of her inquiry into the murder of Falcone at Caltanisetta. I was also planning a documentary about her. At times in order to work women have to take time away from their children. And when we leave them, we always feel a great emptiness, a sense of loneliness").

7. According to Welsch, "reality" is shaped by linguistic convention, "feminist artists and scholars have frequently addressed the issues of language and voice." Among them "are feminist filmmakers and critics who have experimented with new cinematic and verbal vocabularies and forms and have redefined and broadened the uses of established film discourses. Through their work, filmmakers have allowed women to speak from and to their experiences, developing women's discourses around historical events, contemporary situations, and issues of language itself" (162). Hence, Welsch points out that "feminist film scholars have stressed the power of naming and of developing our own languages if we are to step beyond patriarchal thinking" (162).

8. Adriana Cavarero offers a very useful insight into the process of telling others who they are. In *Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti* (translated into

English in 2000 as *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*), Cavarero argues that one's story can only be told by someone else's tale, and that such a tale defines who one is. She cited, for instance, the Oedipus myth to show that in order for Oedipus to know who he was, he needed others to tell him his story.

9. Martha Lauzen uses this term in discussing the difficulty women have in making inroads into the cinema industry.

10. Feminist counter-cinema emerged in the 1970s and called for a feminist aesthetic that advocated a change in form as well as content on the grounds that patriarchal ideology had conditioned cinematic technique and cinematic conventions; see feminist film scholars Claire Johnston, *Notes on Women's Cinema,* and Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In later works, scholars such as Lucy Fischer in *Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema,* and Judith Mayne in *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema*, examine how women subvert patriarchal tradition in cinema.

11. See Diotima's *La sapienza del partire da sé*.

12. Addressing Ilaria Freccia, the editor of her documentary, in a letter intended for publication, Marazzi also comments that "il desiderio di realizzare un film con quelle immagini, ci ha fatto ripartire da noi, dalla nostra soggettività di spettatrici, poi di autrici e di donne nel tempo della storia. Per me è successo due volte, perché ho anche preso in mano la mia vicenda, e nel raccontare quella di mia madre 'mi' sono raccontata la storia delle mie origini, per cui è come se nel film ci fosse un doppio livello: biografico e autobiografico" (in Bertozzi, *L'idea documentaria* 92; "the desire to create a film with those images, made us begin again, from our subjectivity as spectators, then as writers and as women in history. It happened to me twice, because I also took my story into my own hands, and in telling the story of my mother I told "myself" the history of my origins, so it's as though there's a double level in the film: biographical and autobiographical").

13. This concept emerges in a well-known passage in Aleramo's text: "Perché nella maternità adoriamo il sacrifizio? Donde è scesa a noi questa inumana idea dell'immolazione materna? Di madre in figlia, da secoli, si tramanda il servaggio. È una mostruosa catena. Tutte abbiamo, a un certo punto della vita, la coscienza di quel che fece pel nostro bene chi ci generò; e con la coscienza il rimorso di non aver compensato adeguatamente l'olocausto della persona diletta. Allora riversiamo sui nostri figli quanto non demmo alle madri, rinnegando noi stesse e offrendo un nuovo esempio di mortificazione, di annientamento. Se una buona volta la fatale catena si spezzasse, e una madre non sopprimesse in sé la donna, e un figlio appendesse dalla vita di lei un esempio di dignità?" (193–94; "Why do we adore sacrifice in motherhood? Where did this inhumane idea of maternal immolation come from? From mother to daughter, for centuries, serfdom is handed down. It's a monstrous chain. We all have it, at a certain point of our lives, the awareness of what was done for our good and who did it for us; and with that awareness comes remorse for not having adequately compensated for the sacrifice of the

beloved person. Then we give as much to our children as we did not give to our mothers, denying ourselves once again, and offering a new example of mortification, of destruction. What if the fatal chain broke just once, and one mother did not suppress the woman in herself, and one son took from her life an example of dignity?").

14. Masoni and Zanetti also point out that "per quanto i volti—le identità di madre e figlia—tendano a sovrapporsi, quel che Alina davvero scopre (o conferma) è una sacrale alterità. Una distanza incolmabile, un vuoto *metafisico* che dovrà interrogare ancora, forse per *sempre*" (11; "despite the number of faces—the identities of mother and daughter—tend to overlap, what Alina really discovers (or confirms) is a sacred alterity. An overwhelming distance, a *metaphysical* emptiness that she will have to question again, perhaps *always*").

15. In her chapter on the mother in contemporary Italian narrative, Giorgio studies a number of literary texts in which the daughter writes about the mother after the mother's death and suggests that "When the mother is already dead at the time of the daughter's recollection, the texts foreground their own power to bring her to life through language" (144).

Chapter Four
Reinventing Our Mothers: Gendering History and Memory

1. The relationship between history and film has generated a growing debate among historians and film scholars. Recent publications include a 2004 special issue of the journal *Cineaste*; Marcia Landy, ed., *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media*; Natalie Davies, *Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision*; Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*; Robert Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History*; Robert Burgoyne, *The Hollywood Historical Film*.

2. Notably, there are also documentaries commissioned by Rai Due about the poet Cristina Campo, the feminist writer and philosopher Carla Lonzi, the painter Paola Levi Montalcini, and writers such as Anna Maria Ortese, Goliarda Sapienza, and Amelia Rosselli. These documentaries were commissioned by Loredana Rotondo in the years between 2000 and 2003 and were part of a series aptly called *Vuoti di memoria* ("Memory lapses"), which also included documentaries on Gino Martinoli, Giulio Maccacaro, Giuseppe De Santis, Danilo Dolci, and Giorgio Fuà. In the words of Manuela Vigorita, who directed the documentary on Amelia Rosselli, the series was designed with a view to use *Vuoti di memoria* as a means through which "un'idea apparentemente tanto neutra di omeggiare personaggi recentemente scomparsi, potesse diventare l'occasione per sperimentare un modo 'differente' di visitare la memoria" (Vigorita 8; "an apparently impartial idea of paying homage to those recently lost, became an opportunity to experiment with a 'different' way of examining memory").

3. The benchmark biography about Christine de Pisan is Charity Cannon Willard's *Christine de Pisan: Her Life and Works*.

4. *Christine Cristina* is also available in DVD (01 distribution).

5. All of the reviews and articles about *Christine Cristina* can be found on Sandrelli's website http://www.stefaniasandrelli.it.

6. Annalisa Terranova comments that "Per stessa ammissione di Stefania Sandrelli il film intende cogliere più l'umanità di Cristina che la sua eccezionalità: 'Ho preferito soffermarmi sul desiderio di pace, di serenità, di dignità che Cristina ha così chiaramente manifestato nella sua vita'" (15; "By her own admission, Stefania Sandrelli's film intends to make more of her humanity than her exceptionality: 'I preferred to linger over the desire for peace, serenity, dignity that Cristina manifested so clearly in her life'").

7. Significantly, Sandrelli points out that she was awarded her first and only David Prize while working with a female director, for her role in Francesca Archibugi's *Mignon è partita* (Mammì 78).

8. Spada's *Poesia che mi guardi* was funded by the Assessorato alla Cultura della Provincia di Milano and made on a budget of 50,000 euros. Spada and her producer donated their time in order to make the film, working for free for the three years that it took to finish it. Spada considers the making of this film as a small miracle. As she comments, "Chi vuoi che ti finanzi un film su una poetessa sconosciuta morta a 26 anni nel 1938?" (Interview with Luciano and Scarparo; "Who wants to finance a film about an unknown poetess who died at 26 in 1938?"). The film was screened at the Venice Days section (Sezione Giornate degli Autori) and released in cinemas on November 20, 2009. Made entirely by women, the film (produced by Renata Taddani, written by Spada, Simona Confalonieri, and Marella Pessina, edited by Carlotta Cristiani, and photographed by Sabina Bologna) is available on DVD, distributed by Lo scrittoio, as part of a new collection comprising all of Antonia Pozzi's poems, edited by Graziella Barnabò and Onorina Dino and published by Luca Sossella Editore. In cinemas, *Poesia che mi guardi* was shown together with *Nora*, a short film about the African dancer Nora Chipaumire by Alla Kovgan and David Hinton.

9. The film received government funding and was produced by Mariella Li Sacchi e Amedeo Letizia for Factory Srl. It premiered at the 2004 Venice Film Festival and was released in cinemas in 2005. It is available on DVD, distributed by Mondo Home Entertainment.

10. The collective comprised Loredana Rotondo (who was also a programmer at the RAI and was instrumental in the production of many programs relating to women), Maria Grazia Belmonte, Anna Carini, Paola De Martiis, Rony Daopulo, and Annabella Miscuglio.

11. *Ragazze la vita trema* premiered at the 2009 Venice Film Festival (in the Giornate degli autori section) and was awarded the Prix Special du Jury at the Festival du Cinèma Italien d'Annecy. The documentary also won Best Film prize at the 2009 Sulmonacinema Film Festival and at the 2010 Documenta Film Festival. Unfortunately, it is not yet available on DVD. *Vogliamo anche le rose* was screened at the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam, the Locarno International Film Festival, the It's All True Int'l Doc Film Festival in Brazil, the BFI London Film Festival, the International

Women's Film Festival in Seoul, the Seattle International Film Festival, the DOK.FEST München, the Torino Film Festival, and the Filmmor International Women's Film Festival in Istanbul. The film is available on DVD (with book) distributed by Mikado and published by Feltrinelli.

12. Anita, Teresa, and Valentina are the names of the three actresses who read from the diaries. The diaries were sourced from the Archivio diaristico nazionale at Piave Santo Stefano. Marazzi selected the three diaries and worked with the writer Silvia Ballestra to arrange the excerpts for the film. Clips from experimental films include Alberto Grifi's *Parco Nudo* (1976) and *Anna* (1975), Mario Masini's *X chiama Y* (1967), and Adriana Monti's *Il piacere del testo* (1977), *Il filo del desiderio*, *Ciclo continuo*, and *Bagagli*. For a discussion of Marazzi's use of these clips, see Tullio Masoni and Alberto Zanetti, "L'invisibile è politico. Alina Marazzi, *Vogliamo anche le rose*." For a discussion of these films, see Dario Zonta, "Chi è che cosa... *Vogliamo anche le rose* e il cinema underground italiano."

Chapter Five
Migration and Transnational Mobility

1. For a discussion of the relationship between Italian cinema and Italian colonialism and emigration, see Derek Duncan, "Italy's Postcolonial Cinema and Its Histories of Representation"; Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "The Italian Colonial Cinema: Agendas and Audiences"; Rodica Diaconescu-Blumenfeld, "The Desire of the Other: Balkan Dystopia in Western European Cinema."

2. Recent studies of migration to Italy have increasingly focused on the predominance of female migrations from the Philippines, Cape Verde, Eritrea, and South America. See, for example, Graziella Favaro and Maria Tognetti Bordogna, *Donne dal mondo. Strategie migratorie al femminile*; Amelia Crisantino, *Ho trovato l'Occidente: storie di donne immigrate a Palermo*; Giovanna Campani, "Immigrant Women in Southern Europe: Social Exclusion, Domestic Work and Prostitution in Italy"; Elisabetta Zontini, "Female Domestic Labour Migrants and Local Policies in Bologna: The Story of a Filippino Woman"; Jacqueline Andall, *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service: The Politics of Black Women In Italy*. See also Gabriella Lazaridis, *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe: Women on the Move,* Wendy Pojmann, *Immigrant Women and Feminism in Italy,* and the collection of essays edited by Floya Anthias.

3. This category of unaccompanied minors falls under special protection under Law No. 189 of 30 July 2002, known as the Bossi–Fini law after the names of the politicians who introduced it.

4. As Pojmann notes, "Migrant in this sense implies a more mobile, temporary status or someone who lives transnationally, or in two or more countries" (12). For a discussion of transnational forms of migrations, see also Loretta Baldassar, Cora Vellekoop Baldock, and Raelene Wilding, *Families Caring across Borders: Migration, Ageing and Transnational Caregiving*.

5. According to Torre, "nel caso della migrazione ucraina in Italia, ci troviamo di fronte a una netta preponderanza femminile, le donne rappresentano più dell'80% del totale dei titolari di permesso di soggiorno al 1 Gennaio 2007" ("in the case of Ukrainian migration to Italy, we are faced with a marked female predominance—women represent more than 80% of the total of residence permit holders on January 1, 2007"). Moreover, women from Ukraine working in Italy are comparatively older, with "il 63% delle donne in possesso di un permesso di soggiorno all'inizio del 2007 in età superiore ai 40 anni" ("63% of women holding a residence permit at the start of 2007 were over 40 years of age"). See Torre 11.

6. According to Mazierska and Rascaroli, "in European films the emphasis is either placed on crossing national borders or, in the case of national travel, on the landscapes that the voyagers traverse, moving, for instance, from deprived to wealthy areas, from the country to the city, or simply through regions presenting different cultures and characteristics" (5).

7. As Bruno argues, "There is possession implied in positing an origin which was enjoyed, lost, and capable of being reacquired. This does not define the female condition, for in psychoanalytic terms, the female subject experiences neither that possession nor the possibility of return. This condition is manifest, both historically and geographically, in writing that describes women's experience of travel" (86).

8. Given the limited production budget imposed on Pirani and Spada, it would seem logical to infer that the intimate and limited spaces of the setting of *L'appartamento* and the small total number of shots contained in *Come l'ombra* are the results of budget constrains. Comments made by Pirani and Spada, however, contradict such an assumption. Spada explains that *Come l'ombra* "è un film con 200 inquadrature, con piani sequenza di anche 4 minuti e mezzo, giocati molto sulla profondità di campo, è un film di linguaggio, un film dove trascorre il tempo e la vita [...] se tu rimani con la macchina da presa lì, può succedere che entri la vita e il tempo, sennò è una manipolazione continua del tempo [...] il problema è sempre 'che cos'è il cinema,' che è la famosa domanda di Andrè Bazin" (Spada, Interview with Tufano; "is a film with 200 shots, with long takes that last up to four and a half minutes, a film that relies very much on deep focus. It's a film about the language of cinema, a film where time and life go by; if you stand by with the camera you might enter that life and time, or you might think of it as a continuous manipulation of time. The problem is always 'what is cinema,' which is Andre Bazin's famous question"). [We are grateful to Teresa Tufano for conducting the interview while she worked as research assistant for Susanna Scarparo.] Similarly, Pirani argues that her film uses space and what she calls "lingua del cinema" to tell a story about marginalization that deliberately does not rely entirely on narrative (Pirani).

9. *Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar* is the first joint Italy/Senegal feature film project. It was an independent production in which all of the participants were co-producers, which explains the name of the company. As Nancy

Keefe Rhodes explains, *Billo* is "the result of an independent, non-studio system of film production where all participants are co-producers and owners. Aptly called The Coproducers, this small, relatively new, company was founded by four partners including Marco Bonini (who plays Paolo 1, of the gay couple Paolo and Paolo, and Laura's brother in the film) and the producer Jacques Goyard." The producers were from both countries, which meant not going with an exclusively European cast and crew into Africa, but working with the local Senegalese population as creative and technical crew and adapting to their ways of working. Although *Billo* is a film made on a small budget and shot on location in Rome and Senegal, it has gone through the festival circuit, from Rome to Mumbai to Glasgow and beyond. It was awarded the Critics' Prize at France's Villerupt Festival, and then the Jury Prize at Pierre Cardin's Italian Film Festival in Paris, just before its April US debut at the Syracuse International Film Festival. Nominated there for best feature, it won best musical score for its sound track—the first by Senegalese pop star Youssou N'Dour, also one of the film's producers (Rhodes).

10. In his studies, Duncan deals most extensively with De Domenicis's *L'italiano* (2002), Barzini's *Passo a due* (2005), Munzi's *Saimir* (2004), and the Manetti brothers' *Zora la vampira* (2000).

11. See our discussion of *L'appartamento* in Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo, "Gendering Mobility and Migration in Contemporary Italian Cinema."

12. In discussing migration and diaspora in contemporary European films, Loshitzky observes that some of the issues raised in the public discourse on the European immigration debate are "concealed, and covert because they are taboo in post-Holocaust Europe." Issues such as race and racial mixing, therefore, are "dislocated and disguised as part of a discourse on culture, social cohesion, integration, shared values, common heritage, and other similar rhetorical figures" (11).

Chapter Six
Women at Work: Negotiating the Contemporary Workplace

1. The history of work-related and promotional documentaries dates back to the early years of cinema: documentaries related to the newly industrialized Italy began to flourish in 1908, with production companies in Rome, Turin, and Milan focusing on specific industries such as fishing, ceramics, mining, cotton, etc. These highly stylized films were structured around the relationship between the worker and the working environment. For a discussion, see Bertozzi, *Storia* 51–53. In the postwar period a number of companies commissioned industrial documentaries for either internal promotional use or for broader public marketing purposes (Bertozzi, *Storia* 140).

2. *La dolce vita*, *L'avventura*, *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, *Mimi metallurgico*, and *Il sorpasso* are examples of some of the best-known Italian films that address these issues.

3. An example is *Le ragazze di piazza di Spagna* (Emmer, 1952). Certainly permanent work or a career was still not the norm for Italian women, and few films represented this unusual aspect of reality. A rare exception is *Romanzo popolare*, a film that ends in a marriage breakup and with a woman deciding to opt for independence, find work in a factory, and raise her children.

4. See Richard Sennett (both titles) for a discussion on the incompatibility of short-term contracts and the development of character grounded in loyalty and commitment.

5. *Signorina Effe* appeared on the coattails of a number of documentaries regarding Fiat, including Calopresti's *Tutto era Fiat* (1999) and later Francesca Comencini's wider-ranging documentary *In fabbrica*, inspired by *Signorina Fiat*, a documentary by Giovanna Boursier set in the early 1990s about a young woman, Maria Teresa Arisio, who lost her job.

6. Depolo's book alone provides a twenty-page bibliography of articles and books addressing the issue of mobbing.

7. Ferreri had a child a few years after making the documentary.

Conclusion
Framing the Film Industry

1. Morales Bergmann has worked on the set of Roberto Benigni, Spike Lee, Roberto Faenza, Mario Martone, Gabriele Muccino, Lina Wertmüller, Mario Monicelli, and Cristina Comencini and was awarded the prize for Best Cinematography at the 2009 San Francisco Film Festival, has won the 2008 Davide di Donatello, among other honors.

2. At least a million women, children, and men attended demonstrations not only across Italy but also in London, Paris, Madrid, and New York, demanding an end to degrading attitudes toward women and calling for Berlusconi to resign. Protesters exhibited banners saying, for example, "More kindergartens, fewer bordellos," "Our dignity isn't in peril, it's the country that's at risk," and "BastaPORCOcrazia—Enough PIG-ocracy."

3. *Il resto di niente* won the 2005 Davide di Donatello for Best Costume Design and was nominated for Best Actress. In 2005, it also won Best Actress and Best Screenplay at the Flaiano Film Festival and received six nominations at Ciak d'oro. In 2006, the film received the Silver Ribbon nomination (Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists) for Best Cinematography, Best Costume Design, Best Production Design, Best Score, and Best Screenplay.

4. Mino Argentieri cites a study conducted by Bocconi University and the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro that found that Italian films earned on average 10% from international sales, 20% from ticket sales, 20% from pay-TV and home video, and 50% from free-to-air TV. Hence, as Argentieri states, "La fruizione dei film si differenzia, si ramifica, si fraziona, attraverso tramiti capillari che non annullano l'importanza che ha la visibilità nel mercato tradizionale. Il rimescolamento delle pedine non è di superfice, si ha una

ristrutturazione che tutto trasforma e non permette esatti accertamenti sull'esito commerciale di ciascun film" (155; "The success of films branches out, splits up, takes different avenues, which doesn't negate the importance of their visibility in the traditional market. The shuffling of the chess pieces doesn't just occur on the surface; there's a total transformative restructuring going on that doesn't allow accurate monitoring of the commercial success of each film").

Works Cited

Abramowitz, Rachel. "A Best Director Nod for Bigelow Could Change Landscape for Women." *Los Angeles Times*, 7 Mar. 2010. Web. 11 Mar. 2010.

Aleramo, Sibilla. *Una donna*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1982. Print.

Allen, Peter. "Cannes Film Festival at Centre of Sexism Row over Top Award." *Daily Mail*, 14 May 2012. Web. 16 May 2012.

Almonte, Glauco. "Intervista: Francesca Comencini." *Cinema del silenzio: Rivista di cinema.* Cinema del silenzio, n.d. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Andall, Jacqueline. *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service: The Politics of Black Women in Italy*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000. Print.

Anthias, Floya, and Gabriella Lazaridis. *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe: Women on the Move*. New York: Berg, 2000. Print.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1958. Print.

Argentieri, Mino. *Storia del cinema italiano*. Rome: Newton Compton, 2006. Print.

Armocida, Pedro. Rev. of *Il resto di niente*. *Trovacinema: Repubblica italiana* about 2003. Web. 1 May 2013. http://trovacinema.repubblica.it/film/critica/il-resto-di-niente/276926.

Aspesi, Natalia. "L'esordio della Sandrelli. 'La mia eroina contro tutte le censure.'" *La Repubblica,* 20 Oct. 2009: 62. Print.

Augusto, Serena. "Conversazione con Cristina Comencini." *La commedia del cuore: Il cinema di Cristina Comencini*. Ed. Alberto Morsiani and Serena Agusto. Milan: Il Castoro, 2009. 5–25. Print.

Bailey, John. "Through the Celluloid Ceiling." *The Sunday Age,* 7 Mar. 2010: 17. Print.

Baldassar, Loretta, Cora Vellekoop Baldock, and Raelene Wilding. *Families Caring across Borders: Migration, Ageing and Transnational Caregiving*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Society under Siege*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003. Print.

Bazin, André. *What Is Cinema?* Vol. 2. Ed. and trans. Hugh Gray. Berkeley: U of California P, 1971. Print.

Benedetti, Laura. *The Tigress in the Snow: Motherhood and Literature in Twentieth-Century Italy*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007. Print.

Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "The Italian Colonial Cinema: Agendas and Audiences." *Modern Italy* 8.1 (2003): 49–63. Print.

Benjamin, Jessica. *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*. New York: Pantheon, 1988. Print.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken, 1968. Print.

Bernabò, Graziella. *Per troppa vita che ho nel sangue. Antonia Pozzi e la sua poesia.* Milan: Viennepierre, 2004. Print.

Bernardi, Katia. Personal interview with Susanna Scarparo. 22 Oct. 2008.

Bertozzi, Marco, ed. *L'idea documentaria. Altri sguardi del cinema italiano*. Torino: Lindau, 2003. Print.

———. *Storia del documentario italiano: Immagini e culture dell'altro cinema*. Venice: Marsilio, 2008. Print.

Bertuccioli, Beatrice. "La forza delle donne per Stefania regista." *Nazione-Carlino-Giorno,* 5 May 2010: 33. Print.

Bichi, Rita. *Separated Children: I minori stranieri non accompagnati*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2008. Print.

Bitel, Anton. "The White Space Movie Review." *Eye for Film.* Eye for Film, n.d. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Blunt, Alison, and Robyn Dowling, eds. *Home.* London: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Bondanella, Peter. *A History of Italian Cinema*. New York: Continuum, 2009. Print.

Borda, Jennifer. "Feminist Critique and Cinematic Counterhistory in the Documentary with Babies and Banners." *Women's Studies in Communication* 28.2 (2005): 157–82. Print.

Boscagli, Maurizia. "Brushing Benjamin against the Grain: Elsa Morante and the *Jetztzeit* of Marginal History." *Italian Women Writers from the Renaissance to the Present: Revising the Canon*. Ed. Maria Marotti. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996. 131–44. Print.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. Print.

Brunetta, Gian Piero. *The History of Italian Cinema: A Guide to Italian Film from Its Origins to the Twenty-first Century.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009. Print.

Bruno, Giuliana. *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993. Print.

Bruzzi, Stella. *New Documentary: A Critical Edition*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Burgoyne, Robert. *The Hollywood Historical Film*. Malden: Blackwell, 2008. Print.

Burke, Peter. *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001. Print.

Butler, Alison. *Women's Cinema: The Contested Screen*. London: Wallflower, 2002. Print.

Buttarelli, Annarosa. "Fare autorità, disfare potere." *Oltre l'uguaglianza: le radici femminili dell'autorità*. Ed. Diotima. Naples: Liguori, 1995. Print.

Caine, Barbara. *Biography and History*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

———. "Feminist Biography and Feminist History." *Women's History Review* 3.2 (1994): 247–68. Print.

Campani, Giovanna. "Immigrant Women in Southern Europe: Social Exclusion, Domestic Work and Prostitution in Italy." *Eldorado or Fortress?: Migration in Southern Europe*. Ed. Russell King, Gabriella Lazaridis, and Charalambos Tsardanidis. New York: St. Martin's, 2000. Print.

Campani, Giovanna, Zoran Lapov, and Francesco Carchedi. *Le esperienze ignorate: Giovani migranti tra accoglienza, indifferenza e ostilità*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2002. Print.

Campani, Giovanna, and Olivia Salimbeni. *La fortezza e i ragazzini: La situazione dei minori stranieri in Europa*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2006. Print.

Campari, Maria Grazia. "Donne sull'orlo della crisi: casi di lavoro femminile tra produzione e riproduzione." *L'emancipazione malata: Sguardi femministi sul lavoro che cambia.* Milan: Edizione Libera Università delle Donne, 2010. 36–59. Print.

Campassi, Gabriella, and Maria Teresa Sega. "Uomo bianco, donna nera: L'immagine della donna nella fotografia coloniale." *Rivista di Storia e Teoria della Fotografia* 4.5 (1983): 54–62. Print.

Caprara, Valerio. "Recensione *Il resto di niente.*" *Il Mattino,* 11 Sept. 2004. Web. 12 Apr. 2010. http://it.movies.yahoo.com/i/il-resto-di-niente/recensioni-183812.html.

Cappelli, Valerio. "Sandrelli: 'Noi donne siamo ormai ridotte a merce di scambio': Un film 'protofemminista' in costume." *Il Corriere della Sera,* 5 May 2010: 46. Print.

Castellano, Alberto. "Tra amore e sindacato nella Torino operaia." *Il Mattino,* 19 Jan. 2008. Print.

Cavarero, Adriana. "Per una teoria della differenza sessuale." *Il pensiero della differenza sessuale*. Ed. Diotima. Milan: La Tartaruga, 1987. 43–79. Print.

———. *Tu che mi guardi tu che mi racconti*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1997. Print.

CBS/AP. "A Sweet Victory for Kathryn Bigelow." *CBS News.com.* CBS Interactive, 8 Mar. 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Chell-Robinson, Victoria. "Female Migrants in Italy: Coping in a Country of New Migration." *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe.* Ed. Floya Anthias and Gabriella Lazaridis. Oxford; New York: Berg, 2000. 103–23. Print.

Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1978. Print.

Cirillo, Lidia. "L'emancipazione malata." *L'emancipazione malata: Sguardi femministi sul lavoro che cambia.* Milan: Edizione Libera Università delle Donne, 2010. 70–86. Print.

Colamartino, Fabrizio. "Conversazione con Costanza Quatriglio." *Portale dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza.* Centro Nazionale di documentazione e analisi per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza, 16 July 2009. Web. 8 June 2010.

Comencini, Francesca. "'Se non ora quando' spot per la manifestazione del 13 febbraio 2011." Youtube, 1 Feb. 2011. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Creed, Barbara. *Pandora's Box: Essays in Film Theory.* Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Moving Image, 2004. Print.

Crespi, Alberto. "Grande Buy. Se fossimo in America vincerebbe l'Oscar." *L'Unità,* 9 Sept. 2009: 39. Print.

Crisantino, Amelia. *Ho trovato l'Occidente: storie di donne immigrate a Palermo*. Palermo: La Luna, 1992. Print.

Custen, George. "Making History." *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media*. Ed. Marcia Landy. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2001. 67–97. Print.

Dagle, Joan. "Cinema/History/Feminism: Intersecting Discourses in Rosa Luxemburg." *Literature and Psychology* 49.4 (2004): 27–42. Print.

D'Agostini, Paolo. "L'ultimo autunno di grandi passioni." *La Repubblica,* 18 Jan. 2008. Print.

Dall'Asta, Monica. "L'altra metà del cinema muto italiano." *Non solo dive: pioniere del cinema italiano*. Ed. Dall'Asta. Bologna: Cineteca di Bologna, 2008. 9–16. Print.

———. "Il singolare multiplo. Francesca Bertini, attrice e regista." *Non solo dive: pioniere del cinema italiano*. Ed. Dall'Asta. Bologna: Cineteca di Bologna, 2008. 61–80. Print.

Dalle Vacche, Angela. *Diva: Defiance and Passion in Early Italian Cinema*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2008. Print.

Davies, Natalie Zemon. *Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. Print.

de Lauretis, Teresa. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984. Print.

———. "The Essence of the Triangle or, Taking the Risk of Essentialism Seriously: Feminist Theory in Italy, the U.S., and Britain." *The Essential Difference*. Ed. Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994. 1–39. Print.

———. "Guerrillas in the Midst: Women's Cinema in the 80s." *Screen* 31.1 (1990): 6–25. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: Athlone, 1986. Print.

———. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London: Althone, 1989. Print.

De Lillo, Antonietta. Personal interview with Susanna Scarparo. 16 Dec. 2008.

de Luca, Giovanna. *Il punto di vista dell'infanzia nel cinema italiano e francese: rivisioni*. Napoli: Liguori, 2009. Print.

de Pisan, Christine. *The Book of the City of Ladies.* Trans. Earl Jeffery Richards. New York: Persea, 1982. Print.

———. *The Book of the Three Virtues.* Trans. Sarah Lawson. London: Penguin, 1985. Print.

Depolo, Marco, ed. *Mobbing: quando la prevenzione è intervento. Aspetti giuridici e psicosociali del fenomeno.* Milan: Franco Angeli, 2003. Print.

de Vincenti, Giorgio. "Premessa." *Gli invisibili: esordi italiani del nuovo millennio*. Ed. Vito Zagarrio. Turin: Kaplan, 2009. 5–6. Print.

Diaconescu–Blumenfeld, Rodica. "The Desire of the Other: Balkan Dystopia in Western European Cinema." *Moving Pictures, Migrating Identities.* Ed. Eva Rueschmann. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2003. 90–104. Print.

Dickie, John. "Imagined Italies." *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. Ed. David Forgacs and Robert Lumley. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. 19–34. Print.

Di Cori, Paola, ed. *Altre storie: la critica femminista alla storia*. Bologna: CLUEB, 1996. Print.

———. "Comparing Different Generations of Feminists: Precariousness versus Corporations?" *Feminist Review* 87 (2007): 136–40. Print.

———. Introduction. *Altre storie: la critica femminista alla storia* 9–64.

Diotima, ed. *L'ombra della madre*. Naples: Liguori, 2007. Print.

———. *Il pensiero della differenza sessuale*. Milan: La Tartaruga, 1987. 43–79. Print.

———. *La sapienza del partire da sé*. Naples: Liguori, 1996. Print.

Dominijanni, Ida. "Lost in Transition." *Across Genres, Generations and Borders: Italian Women Writing Lives.* Ed. Susanna Scarparo and Rita Wilson. Newark: U of Delaware Press, 2004. 192–209. Print.

Duncan, Derek. "Italy's Postcolonial Cinema and Its Histories of Representation." *Italian Studies* 63.2 (2008): 195–211. Print.

———. "'Loving Geographies': Queering Straight Migration to Italy." *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 6.3 (2008): 167–82. Print.

DWF (DonnaWomanFemme), ed. "Diversamente occupate." *DWF* 85.1 (2010). Print.

———. "Lavoro. Se e solo se." *DWF* 86.2 (2010). Print.

Eaton, Mick. "Laughter in the Dark." *Screen* 22.2 (1981): 22–25. Print.

Erens, Patricia. "Women's Documentary Filmmaking: The Personal Is Political." *New Challenges for Documentary*. Ed. Alan Rosenthal. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988. Print.

Escobar, Roberto. "La marcia in souvenir. 'Signorina Effe' di Labate vorrebbe raccontare gli scioperi operai a Torino degli anni '80 e il corteo." *Sole–24 Ore,* 20 Jan. 2008. Print.

Fantone, Laura. "Precarious Changes: Gender and Generational Politics in Contemporary Italy." *Feminist Review* 87 (2007): 5–20. Print.

Favaro, Graziella, and Maria Tognetti Bordogna. *Donne dal mondo. Strategie migratorie al femminile*. Milano: Guerini e Associati s.r.l., 1999. Print.

Ferraro, Pietro. "*Lo spazio bianco*, recensione." *CineManiaco.* Elibeta S.r.l., 17 Oct. 2009. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Ferreri, Silvia. Personal interview with Teresa Tufano. 26 Oct. 2007.

Ferrero-Regis, Tiziana. *Recent Italian Cinema: Spaces, Contexts, Experiences*. Leicester: Troubador, 2009. Print.

Ferzetti, Fabio. "Amore impossibile nella Torino operaia." *Il messaggero,* 18 Jan. 2008. Print.

Fischer, Lucy. *Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989. Print.

Fisher, Jaimey. "The Figure of the Child in Italian Neorealism and the German Rubble Film." *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema*. Ed. Laura Ruberto and Kristi Wilson. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2007. 25–53. Print.

Fittante, Aldo. "*L'amore di Màrja*: Recensione." *Yahoo Cinema Italia.* Yahoo!, 14 Apr. 2004. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Foot, John. *Milan since the Miracle: City, Culture, Identity.* Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001. Print.

Fraioli, Ilaria. "Poetiche del montaggio." *Quaderni del CSCI* 4 (2008): 46–51. Print.

Fumagalli, Andrea. *Bioeconomia e capitalismo cognitivo. Verso un nuovo paradigma di accumulazione*? Roma: Carocci, 2007. Print.

Gallozzi, Gabriella. "Una 'hippy' prigioniera in Sicilia." *L'Unità,* 23 Mar. 2004: 21. Print.

———. "Onora la madre: la maternità è una scelta di libertà." *L'Unità.* Nuova Iniziativa Editoriale S.p.A., 9 Sept. 2009. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

———. "La papessa e la scrittrice. Le donne fanno la storia." *L'Unità,* 5 May 2010: 42. Print.

Galt, Rosalind. *Redrawing the Map: The New European Cinema*. Columbia: New York, 2006. Print.

Ghelli, Simone. "Il sistema vigente." *Gli invisibili: esordi italiani del nuovo millennio*. Ed. Vito Zagarrio. Turin: Kaplan, 2009. 19–24. Print.

Gieri, Manuela. *Contemporary Italian Filmmaking: Strategies of Subversion*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1995. Print.

Ginsborg, Paul. *Democracy: Crisis and Renewal.* London: Profile, 2008. Print.

———. *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943–1988.* London: Penguin, 1990. Print.

———. *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State 1980–2001.* London: Penguin, 2003. Print.

———. *The Politics of Everyday Life: Making Choices, Changing Lives.* New Haven: Yale UP, 2005. Print.

———. *Silvio Berlusconi: Television, Power and Patrimony.* New York: Verso, 2004. Print.

Giorgio, Adalgisa. "The Passion for the Mother: Conflicts and Idealisations in Contemporary Italian Narrative." *Writing Mothers and Daughters: Renegotiating the Mother in Western European Narratives by Women*. Ed. Giorgio. New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2002. 119–54. Print.

Greco, Michela. "La rivoluzione delle ragazze." *Cinema Paradiso.* Ladridicinema, 25 Aug. 2009. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

———. "Susanna Nicchiarelli: Una trentenne nella Guerra fredda." *Cinema Paradiso.* Ladridicinema, 25 Aug. 2009. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Grosso, Maria. "Quel collettivo con la cinepresa: Intervista con Loredana Rotondo." *ALIAS,* 24 Nov. 2007: 2. Print.

Gutiérrez, Rachel. "What Is a Feminist Biography?" *All Sides of the Subject: Woman and Biography*. Ed. Teresa Iles. New York: Teachers College P, 1992. 48–55. Print.

Hankin, Kelly. "And Introducing… The Female Director: Documentaries about Women Filmmakers as Feminist Activism." *NWSA Journal* 19.1 (2007): 59–88. Print.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. Print.

Heffernan, Chloë. "*Un processo per stupro* and *AAA Offresi*: A Multi-layered Analysis of Two Italian Feminist Documentaries." Diss. U of Auckland, 2001. Print.

Hesford, Wendy. "Reading Rape Stories: Material Rhetoric and the Trauma of Representation." *College English* 62.2 (1999). 192–221. Print.

Hipkins, Danielle. "Why Italian Film Studies Needs a Second Take on Gender." *Italian Studies* 63 (2008): 213–34. Print.

Hirsch, Marianne. *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989. Print.

Hollinger, Karen. *In the Company of Women: Contemporary Female Friendship Films*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998. Print.

Humm, Maggie. "Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf and the Maternal." *Women's Writing in Western Europe: Gender, Generation and Legacy*. Ed. Adalgisa Giorgio and Julia Waters. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007. 170–85. Print.

Ingman, Heather. "The Evolution of the Mother–Daughter Story; Three Novels by Irish Women: From Abject to Artist." *Women's Writing in Western Europe: Gender, Generation and Legacy.* Ed. Adalgisa Giorgio and Julia Waters. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007. 186–99. Print.

Italian Core Group. Introduction. *Feminist Review* 87 (2007): 3–4. Print.

Johnston, Claire, ed. *Notes on Women's Cinema*. London: Society for Education in Film and TV, 1973. Print.

Juhasz, Alexandra, dir. *Women of Vision: 18 Histories in Feminist Film and Video*. Cinema Guild, 1998. Video.

Kadri, Francoise. "Italian Women Rally against PM Silvio Berlusconi." *The Daily Telegraph.* News Limited, 14 Feb. 2011. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Kezich, Tullio. "Review of *Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing*." *Il Corriere della Sera,* 12 Feb. 2004. Print.

Kristeva, Julia. "Is There a Feminine Genius?" *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 493–504. Print.

Landy, Marcia, ed. *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2001. Print.

———. *Italian Film.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.

Lanzoni, Rèmi Fournier. *Comedy Italian Style: The Golden Age of Italian Film Comedies*. New York: Continuum, 2008. Print.

Lauzen, Martha. "The Celluloid Ceiling Study: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women in the Top 250 Films of 2012." Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, 2012. Web. 10 Apr. 2013. http://womenintofilm.sdsu.edu/research.html.

Laviosa, Flavia. "Family and Art in Francesca Archibugi's Cinema: An Interview." *Rivista di Studi Italiani* 20.1 (2002): 499–507. Print.

———. "Francesca Archibugi's Cinema: Minimalism or Micro-history? Italian Cinema: 1980s–2000s." *Studies in European Cinema* 4.2 (2007): 99–110. Print.

Levantesi, Alessandra. *Francesca Archibugi.* Savignano sul Rubicone: Alphabet, 1996. Print.

Levine, Elana. "Feminist Media Studies in a Postfeminist Age." *Cinema Journal* 48.4 (2009): 137–43. Print.

Levitin, Jacqueline, Judith Plessis, and Valerie Raoul, ed. *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Loshitzky, Yosefa. *Screening Strangers: Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010. Print.

Lucamante, Stefania. *A Multitude of Women: The Challenges of the Contemporary Italian Novel.* Toronto: Toronto UP, 2008. Print.

Luciano, Bernadette, and Susanna Scarparo. "Gendering Mobility and Migration in Contemporary Italian Cinema." *The Italianist* 30.2 (2010): 165–82. Print.

———. "The Personal Is Still Political: Films 'by and for Women' by the New *Documentariste*." *Italica* 87.3 (2010): 487–502. Print.

———. "'Vite sospese': Representing Female Migration in Contemporary Italian Documentaries." *Italian Studies* 65.2 (2010): 192–203. Print.

Maddox, Peggy. "Retiring the Maid: The Last Joan of Arc Movie." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 3 (2003): 1–13. Print.

Maier, Elisabetta. "Il mobbing come fenomeno psicosociale." *Mobbing: Quando la prevenzione è intervento: aspetti giuridici e psicosociali del fenomeno*. Ed. Marco Depolo. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2003. 13–61. Print.

Malatesta, Gloria. *Cinema al femminile Forum*. Libreria del Cinema, Rome, 21 Oct. 2010. Speech.

Mammì, Alessandra. "Per fortuna mi sento sempre sensual. Colloquio con Stefania Sandrelli." *L'Espresso,* 8 Apr. 2010: 78–79. Print.

Manieri, Francesca. *Cinema al femminile Forum*. Libreria del Cinema, Rome, 21 Oct. 2010. Speech.

Marazzi, Alina. "Un'ora sola ti vorrei. Alina Marazzi e Ilaria Freccia." *L'idea documentaria. Altri sguardi dal cinema italiano*. Ed. Marco Bertozzi. Torino: Lindau, 2003. 89–101. Print.

———. "*Un'ora sola ti vorrei*—Synopsis." *Un'ora sola.* Domain reserved, n.d. Web. 16 May 2008.

———. Personal interview with Susanna Scarparo. 24 Oct. 2008.

———. Personal interview with Teresa Tufano. 10 Oct. 2007.

Marcus, Millicent. *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986. Print.

Marlow-Mann, Alex. *The New Neapolitan Cinema*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2011. Print.

Martin, Angela. "Refocusing Authorship in Women's Filmmaking." Levitin, Plessis, and Raoul 29–37.

Martinelli, Vittorio. *Il cinema muto italiano: I film della Grande Guerra: 1915.* Vol. 1. Torino: NuovoERI, 1992. Print.

———. "Due o tre cose che so di Elvira Notari." *Non solo dive: pioniere del cinema italiano*. Ed. Monica Dall'Asta. Bologna: Cineteca di Bologna, 2008. 133–36. Print.

Mascherini, Emanuela. *Glass Ceiling: Oltre il sofitto di vetro*. Città di Castello: Edimond, 2009. Print.

Masoni, Tullio, and Alberto Zanetti. "L'autenticità è un approdo." *Cineforum* 474 (2008): 10–13. Print.

———. "L'invisibile è politico. Alina Marazzi, *Vogliamo anche le rose*." *Cineforum* 474 (2008): 10–17. Print.

Mayne, Judith. *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. Print.

Mazierska, Eva, and Laura Rascaroli. *Crossing New Europe: Postmodern Travel and the European Road Movie*. London: Wallflower, 2006. Print.

Mazzia, Anastasia. "*Lo spazio bianco*: recenzione." *DireDonna.* DireDonna, 12 Oct. 2009. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

McCabe, Janet. *Feminist Film Studies: Writing the Woman into Cinema.* London: Wallflower, 2004. Print.

Melandri, Lea. "Lo spazio pubblico si femminilizza ma scompare il conflitto tra i sessi." *L'emancipazione malata: Sguardi femministi sul lavoro che cambia.* Milan: Edizione Libera Università delle Donne, 2010. 20–35. Print.

Melchiori, Paola. "Women's Cinema: A Look at Female Identity." *Off Screen: Women & Film in Italy*. Ed. Giuliana Bruno and Maria Nadotti. London: Routledge, 1988. 25–35. Print.

Melman, Billie. "Gender, History and Memory: The Invention of Women's Past in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." *History and Memory* 5.1 (1993): 5–41. Print.

Menarini, Roy. *Cinema dopo il cinema*. Genova: Le Mani, 2010. Print.

The Milan Women's Bookshop Collective. "Più donne che uomini/ More Women than Men." Trans. Rosalind Delmar. *Sottosopraverde,* Jan. 1983: 1–15. Print.

Morales Bergmann, Maura. *Cinema al femminile Forum*. Libreria del Cinema, Rome, 21 Oct. 2010. Speech.

Morante, Elsa. *La storia.* Turin: Einaudi, 1974. Print.

Morreale, Emiliano. "Cinema del mare: un amore recente." *La Repubblica.it.* Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso Spa, 21 Sept. 2006. Web. 20 Nov. 2010.

Morini, Cristina. "The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism." *Feminist Review* 87 (2007): 40–59. Print.

———. "Il lavoro nell'epoca delle passioni tristi. Ovvero, donne e reddito: la versione contemporanea di 'una stanza tutta per se.'" *DWF* 85 (2010): 59–69. Print.

———. "Se il lavoro conquista anche l'affetto." *L'emancipazione malata: Sguardi femministi sul lavoro che cambia.* Milan: Edizione Libera Università delle Donne, 2010. 60–69. Print.

Mulvey, Laura. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989. Print.

———. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6–19. Print.

Munslow, Alan. Editorial. *Rethinking History* 14.2 (2010): 161–63. Print.

Muraro, Luisa. *L'ordine simbolico della madre*. Milan: Riuniti, 1991. Print.

———. "Partire da sé per non farsi ritrovare." *La sapienza di partire da sé*. Ed. Diotima. Naples: Liguori, 1996. 5–12. Print.

———. "La politica è politica delle donne." *Via Dogana* 1 (1991): 1–3. Print.

Negri, Anna. "Director's Statement: *Riprendimi* (*Good Morning Heartache).*" EFEA (European Film Exporters Association), 22 Jan. 2008. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Nepoti, Roberto. "La finlandese in Sicilia scivola nella depressione." *La Repubblica.it.* Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso Spa, 9 Apr. 2004. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Nicchiarelli, Susanna. Personal interview with Teresa Tufano. 9 Oct. 2007.

Nichols, Bill. Foreword. *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*. Ed. Barry Keith Grant and Jeanette Sloniowski. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1998. 11–13. Print.

———. *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana UP. 2001. Print.

O'Connell Davidson, Julia, and Caitlin Farrow. *Child Migration and the Construction of Vulnerability*. Stockholm, Swed.: Save the Children, 2007. Print.

O'Healy, Àine. "Are the Children Watching Us? The Roman Films of Francesca Archibugi." *Annali d'Italianistica* 17 (1999): 121–36. Print.

———. "Border Traffic: Reimagining the Voyage to Italy." *Transnational Feminism in Film and Media*. Ed. Katarzyna Marciniak, Anikó Imre, and Àine O'Healy. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 37–52. Print.

———. "A Neapolitan Childhood: Seduction and Betrayal in *Pianese Nunzio 14 anni a Maggio*." *Coming of Age on Film: Stories of Transformation in World Cinema.* Ed. Anne Hardcastle, Roberta Morosini, and Kendall Tarte. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009. 12–22.

———. "'[Non] è una Somala': Deconstructing Femininity in Italian Film." *The Italianist* 29 (2009): 175–98. Print.

Pacini, Ombretta. "Il Cinema Indipendente Italiano Racconta La Flessibilità: Quattro film a confronto." Diss. Università di Pisa, 2005/2006. Print.

Parati, Graziella. *Migration Italy: The Art of Talking Back in a Destination Culture*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005. Print.

Parmeggiani, Francesca. "Lo sguardo rivolto al passato: Storia e storie nel cinema dei Taviani (1971–1984)." *Italica* 80.3 (2003): 403–21. Print.

Pasetti, Anna Maria. "Il coraggio di essere donna." *Vivilcinema* 10 (Mar.–Apr. 2010): 13. Print.

Paternò, Cristina. "Un cinema al femminile." *La meglio gioventù: Nuovo cinema italiano 2000–2006.* Ed. Vito Zagarrio. Venice: Marsilio, 2006. 135–42.

Pedroni, Tania. Personal interview with Teresa Tufano. 19 Oct. 2007.

Persico, Daniela. "Una conversazione con Alina Marazzi e Silvia Ballestra." *Le rose*. Ed. Alina Marazzi. Milan: Feltrinelli Real Cinema, 2008. 11–34.

Pickering-Iazzi, Robin. "Designing Mothers: Images of Motherhood in Novels by Aleramo, Morante, Maraini, and Fallaci." *Women's Voices in Italian Literature*. Ed. Rebecca West and Dino S. Cervigni. *Annali d'Italianistica* 7 (1989). 325–40. Print.

Pirani, Francesca. Personal interview with Susanna Scarparo. 6 Oct. 2008.

Pojmann, Wendy. *Immigrant Women and Feminism in Italy.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. Print.

Porro, Maurizio. "Dura la vita di una finlandese in Sicilia." *Il Corriere della Sera,* 10 Apr. 2004: 36. Print.

Quatriglio, Costanza. Personal interview with Bernadette Luciano. 25 Nov. 2010.

———. Personal interview with Susanna Scarparo. 20 Oct. 2008.

Quinn, Karl. "Iraq War Film Makes Oscar History." *The Age,* 9 Mar. 2010. Print.

Rabinowitz, Paula. *They Must Be Represented: The Politics of Documentary*. New York: Verso, 1994. Print.

Ramanathan, Geetha. *Feminist Auteurs: Reading Women's Films*. London: Wallflower, 2006. Print.

Randi, Paola. *Cinema al femminile Forum*. Libreria del Cinema, Rome, 21 Oct. 2010. Speech.

Recupero, Nino. "Il mobbing in Italia oggi." *Il mobbing in Italia: Terrorismo psicologico nei rapporti di lavoro.* Ed. Sandra Carrettin and Nino Recupero. Bari: Dedal, 2001. 9–47. Print.

Rhodes, Nancy Keefe. "Laura Muscardin—Interview." *Stylus.* Stylus magazine.com, 5 June 2007. Web. 20 Jan. 2011.

Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Norton, 1976. Print.

Rich, Ruby B. "In the Name of Feminist Film Criticism." *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Erens. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. 268–87. Print.

"Riforma del Lavoro: nulla di signifactivo per le donne." *Se non ora quando?* 6 Apr. 2012. Web. 1 May 2013. http://www.senonoraquando.eu/?p=9246

Robè, Chris. "Taking Hollywood Back: The Historical Costume Drama, the Biopic, and Popular Front U.S. Film Criticism." *Cinema Journal* 48.2 (2009): 70–87. Print.

Ronconi, Roberta. "*Lo spazio bianco*: Recensione." *LiberoCinema*. Libero, 9 Sept. 2009. Web. 20 Aug. 2011. Print.

Rondi, Gian Luigi. "Lotte operaie della 'Signorinaeffe' nella Fiat anni '80." *Il tempo*, 17 Jan. 2008. Print.

Rosenstone, Robert. *History on Film / Film on History*. Edinburgh: Pearson, 2006. Print.

———. *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995. Print.

Rotondo, Loredana. "La provocazione inevitabile." *Parole Incrociate: Donne e comunicazione: due convegni*. Ed. Silvia Garroni, Silvia Neonato, and Stefania Pietroforte. Torino: Editrice Cooperativa Libera Stampa, 1986. 82–88. Print.

Rowe, Kathleen. *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1995. Print.

Ruberto, Laura. "Neorealism and Contemporary European Integration." *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema*. Ed. Laura Ruberto and Kristi Wilson. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2007. 242–58. Print.

Ruberto, Laura, and Kristi Wilson, eds. *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2007. Print.

Rutiloni, Beatrice. "L'orfanite di Wilma Labate. Intervista a Wilma Labate." *Film.it*. Film.it—Nexta Srl, 2 Feb. 2001. Web. 10 Oct. 2010.

Sangiovanni, Paola. "Note di regia." *Libera Università delle donne.* LUD, 27 Jan. 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

———. Personal interview with Susanna Scarparo and Bernadette Luciano. 3 July 2010.

Sargentini, Fabiana. Personal interview with Teresa Tufano. 24 Oct. 2007.

Scarparo, Susanna. "Feminist Intellectuals as Public Figures in Contemporary Italy." *Australian Feminist Studies* 19.44 (2004): 201–12. Print.

Sciamanna, Alessandra. "Poesia che mi guardi." *Il mucchio selvaggio,* Mar. 2010: 11. Print.

Sconvegno (Manuela Galetto, Chiara Lasala, Sveva Magaraggia, Chiara Martucci, Elisabetta Onori, Francesca Pozzi). "A Snapshot of Precariousness: Voices, Perspectives, Dialogues." *Feminist Review* 87 (2007): 105–12. Print.

Selleri, Stefano. "*L'amore di Màrja*: Recensione." *Gli spietati: Rivista di cinema on line*. Gli spietati, n.d. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Sennett, Richard. *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. New York: Norton, 1998. Print.

———. *The Culture of the New Capitalism.* New Haven, CT: Yale, 2006. Print.

Shiel, Mark. *Italian Neorealism: Rebuilding the Cinematic City*. London: Wallflower, 2006. Print.

Sitney, P. Adams. *Vital Crisis in Italian Cinema*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1995. Print.

Smelik, Annette. *And the Mirror Cracked*. London: Macmillian, 1998. Print.

Smith, Sidonie. "Who's Talking / Who's Talking Back? The Subject of Personal Narrative." *Signs* 18.2 (1993): 392–407. Print.

Solinas, Stelio. "Margherita Buy: 'Ecco la mia sfida di mamma.'" *Il Giornale.it*. Il Giornale, 9 Sept. 2009. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Spada, Marina. Personal interview with Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo. 29 June 2010.

———. Personal interview with Teresa Tufano. 11 Nov. 2007.

———. Recorded interview for Bernadette Luciano. 6 Dec. 2010.

Steedman, Carolyn. *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain: Margaret McMillan, 1860–1931*. London: Virago, 1990. Print.

———. *Landscape for a Good Woman*. London: Virago, 1986. Print.

Steimatsky, Noa. *Italian Locations: Reinhabiting the Past in Postwar Cinema*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008. Print.

Tashiro, Charles. "Passing for the Past: Production Design and the Historical Film." *Cineaste* 29.2 (2004): 40–44. Print.

Taviani, Giovanna. "La carica dei trentenni." *La meglio gioventù. Nuovo cinema italiano 2000–2006*. Ed. Vito Zagarrio. Venezia: Marsilio, 2006. 109–14. Print.

Terranova, Annalisa. "Christine, Paladina delle Donne." *Secolo d'Italia,* 5 May 2010: 15. Print.

Thompson, William. "The Treu (1997) and Biagi (2002) Reforms." *The Political Economy of Reform*. Ed. Federico Sturzenegger and Mariano Tommasi. Paris: OECD Publishing: 2009. 247–68. E–book.

Toplin, Robert Brent. "Cinematic History: An Anatomy of the Genre." *Cineaste* 29.2 (2004): 34–40. Print.

Tornabuoni, Lietta. "Recensione *Il resto di niente*." *La Stampa*, 25 Mar. 2005. Web. 12 Apr. 2010. http://it.movies.yahoo.com/i/il-resto-di-niente/recensioni-183812.html.

Torre, Andrea R. "Migrazioni femminili verso l'Italia: tre collettività a confronto." *Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale.* Working Papers 41/2008. Web. 15 July 2009.

Traverso, Antonio. "Migrations of Cinema: Italian Neorealism and Brazilian Cinema." *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema*. Ed. Laura E. Ruberto and Kristi M. Wilson. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2007. 165–86. Print.

UNICEF. "Uscire dall'invisibilità. Bambini e adolescent di origine straniera." Rome: Dossier Caritas Diocesiana–UNICEF Italia, 2005. Print.

Varikas, Eleni. "L'approccio biografico nella storia delle donne." *Altre storie: la critica femminista alla storia*. Ed. Paola Di Cori. Bologna: CLUEB, 1996. Print.

Vercellone, Carlo, ed. *Capitalismo cognitivo*. Rome: Manifestolibri, 2006. Print.

Verdone, Mario. *Cinema del lavoro*. Rome: Realtà, 1961. Print.

Vigni, Franco. *Questione di sguardo: Il cinema di Francesca Archibugi*. Firenze: Aska, 2010. Print.

Vigorita, Manuela. "Dell'insieme, creare. Donne senza scrivania." *Via Dogana* 65 (2003): 7–9.

Vosko, Leah F., Martha MacDonald, and Iain Campbell, eds. *Gender and the Contours of Precarious Employment.* London: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Wagner-Martin, Linda. *Telling Women's Lives: The New Biography*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1994. Print.

Wagstaff, Christopher. *Italian Neorealist Cinema: An Aesthetic Approach*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007. Print.

Waldman, Diane, and Janet Walker. *Feminism and Documentary*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999. Print.

Weaver, Matthew. "Kathryn Bigelow Makes History as First Woman to Win Best Director Oscar." *Guardian.co.uk.* Guardian News and Media, 8 Mar. 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2011.

Welsch, Janet R. '"Bakhtin, Language, and Women's Documentaries.'" *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism.* Ed. Diane Carson, Linda Dittmar, and Janice R. Welsch. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994. 162–75. Print.

White, Hayden. "Questions to Filmmakers and Historians." *Cineaste* 29.2 (2004): 76. Print.

———. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978. Print.

Willard, Charity Cannon. *Christine de Pisan: Her Life and Works.* New York: Persea, 1984. Print.

Wood, Mary P. *Italian Cinema*. Oxford: Berg, 2005. Print.

Woollard, Rob. "Women Directors Face 'Celluloid Ceiling.'" *The Telegraph.* Telegraph Media Group, 4 Mar. 2010. Web. 11 Mar. 2010.

Young, Deborah. Personal interview with Teresa Tufano. 24 Oct. 2007.

———. "The Remains of Nothing (*Il resto di niente*)." *Variety,* 18–24 Oct. 2004: 37. Print.

Zaccagnini, Edoardo. *I "mostri" al lavoro! Contadini, operai, commendatori ed impiegati nella commedia all'italiana.* Rome: Sovera, 2009. Print.

Zagarrio, Vito. *La meglio gioventù: Nuovo Cinema Italiano 2000–2006.* Venice: Marsilio, 2006. Print.

Zamboni, Chiara. Prefazione. *La sapienza di partire da sé*. Ed. Diotima. Naples: Liguori, 1996. 1–3. Print.

Zanardo, Lorella. *Il corpo delle donne*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 2010. Print.

Zonta, Dario. "Chi è che cosa… *Vogliamo anche le rose* e il cinema underground italiano." *Le Rose*. Ed. Alina Marazzi. Milan: Feltrinelli Real Cinema, 2008. 83–97. Print.

Zontini, Elisabetta. "Female Domestic Labour Migrants and Local Policies in Bologna: The Story of a Filippino Woman." *The Politics of Recognizing Difference: Multiculturalism Italian Style*. Ed. Ralph Grillo and Jeff Pratt. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. Print.

Filmography

AAA Offresi. Dir. Maria Grazia Belmonti, Anna Carini, Roni Daupoulo, Paola De Martiis, Annabella Miscuglio, and Loredana Rotondo. Maestranze & Tecnici Cinema, Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI), 1981. Television.

Accattone. Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini. Perf. Franco Citti, Franca Pasut, and Silvana Corsini. Arco Film, Cino del Duca, 1961. Film.

Ambrogio. Dir. Wilma Labate. Perf. Francesca Antonelli, Roberto Citran, Marco Galli, Fabio Poggiali, Anita Ekberg, Paolo Graziosi, Lucio Allocca, Giovanni Vettorazzo, Enrico Brignano, Luciano Federico, Salvatore Puntillo. Istituto Luce, 1992. Film

L'amore buio. Dir. Antonio Capuano. Perf. Irene de Angelis, Gabriele Agrio, and Luisa Ranieri. L. G. M. Ellegiemme, Rai Cinema, 2010. DVD.

L'amore di Màrja. Dir. Anne Riitta Ciccone. Perf. Laura Malmivaara, Vincenzo Peluso, and David Coco. Francesco Torelli Productions, 2002. DVD.

L'amore molesto. Dir. Mario Martone. Perf. Anna Bonaiuto, Angela Luce, and Gianni Cajafa. Lucky Red, Teatri Uniti, Rai Tre Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1995. Video.

L'appartamento. Dir. Francesca Pirani. Perf. Koyna Ruseva, Edam Ibrahim, and Anita Laurenzi. Filmalbatros, Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1997. Television.

Assunta Spina. Dir. Gustavo Serena and Francesca Bertini. Perf. Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, and Carlo Benetti. Caesar Film, 1915. Film.

I bambini ci guardano. Dir. Vittorio De Sica. Perf. Emilio Cigoli, Luciano De Ambrosis, and Isa Pola. Invicta Film, Scalera Film S.p.a., 1944. Film.

Bellissime 1. Dir. Giovanna Gagliardo. Perf. Luisella Beghi, Francesca Bertini, and Lina Cavalieri. Istituto Luce, 2004. DVD.

Bellissime 2. Dir. Giovanna Gagliardo. Bianca Film, Rai Cinema, Rai Teche, Istituto Luce, 2006. Video.

Bello, onesto, emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata. Dir. Luigi Zampa. Perf. Alberto Sordi, Claudia Cardinale, and Riccardo Garrone. Documento Film, 1971. Film.

Bianche Eolie. Dir. Renzo Avanzo, Quintino di Napoli, and Pietro Moncada. Panaria Film, Edizioni Fortuna Roma, 1947. Film.

Bianco e nero. Dir. Cristina Comencini. Perf. Fabio Volo, Ambra Angiolini, and Aïssa Maïga. Cattleya, Rai Cinema, 2008. DVD.

Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar. Dir. Laura Muscardin. Perf. Marco Bonini, Boubacar Ba, and Lella Costa. The Coproducers, 2008. DVD.

Cacciatori sottomarine. Dir. Francesco Alliata, Renzo Avanzo, Quintino di Napoli, Pietro Moncada, Giovanni Mazza (Panaria Film). Edizioni Fortuna Roma, 1946. Film.

I cento passi. Dir. Tullio Giordana. Perf. Luigi Lo Cascio, Luigi Maria Burruano, and Lucia Sardo. Rai Cinemafiction, Tele+, Titti Film, 2000. DVD.

Certi bambini. Dir. Andrea Frazzi and Antonio Frazzi. Perf. Gianluca Di Gennaro, Carmine Recano, and Arturo Paglia. Pequod, Alba Produzioni, 2004. DVD.

Le chiavi di casa. Dir. Gianni Amelio. Perf. Kim Rossi Stuart, Andrea Rossi, and Charlotte Rampling. Rai Cinema, Jean Vigo Italia, ACHAB Film, 2004. DVD.

Christine Cristina. Dir. Stefania Sandrelli. Perf. Antonella Attili, Alessio Boni, and Paola Tiziana Cruciani. Cinemaundici, Diva, Rai Cinema, 2009. DVD.

Come l'ombra. Dir. Marina Spada. Perf. Anita Kravos, Karolina Porcari, and Paolo Pierobon. 2006. DVD.

Il conformista. Dir. Bernardo Bertolucci. Perf. Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Gastone Moschin. Mars Film, Marianne Productions, Maran Film, 1970. Video.

Il corpo delle donne. Dir. Lorella Zanardo, Marco Malfi Chindemi, and Cesare Cantù. Self-produced, 2009. Web.

Cosmonauta. Dir. Susanna Nicchiarelli. Perf. Marianna Raschillà, Claudia Pandolfi, and Sergio Rubini. Fandango, Rai Cinema, 2009. DVD.

Di madre in figlia. Dir. Fabrizia Sargentini. Lula Production, 2004. DVD.

La dolce vita. Dir. Federico Fellini. Perf. Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg, and Anouk Aimée. Riama Film, Gray-Film, Pathé Consortium Cinéma, 1960. Film.

Domani. Dir. Francesca Archibugi. Perf. Marco Baliani, Ornella Muti, and Valerio Mastandrea. Cinemello S.r.l., Rai Cinemafiction, 2001. DVD.

Domenica. Dir. Wilma Labate. Perf. Claudio Amendola, Domenica Giuliano, and Annabella Sciorra. Rai Cinemafiction, Sidecar Films & TV, 2001. DVD.

Elizabeth. Dir. Shekhar Kapur. Perf. Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, and Christopher Eccleston. Polygram Filmed Entertainment, Working Title Films, Channel Four Films, 1998. DVD.

Elizabeth: The Golden Age. Dir. Shekhar Kapur. Perf. Cate Blanchett, Clive Owen, and Geoffrey Rush. Universal Pictures, Studio Canal, Working Title Films, 2007. DVD.

Fuga dall call center. Dir. Federico Rizzo. Perf. Angelo Pisani, Isabella Tabarini, and Natalino Balasso. Ardaco, Gagarin, 2008. DVD.

Il gattopardo. Dir. Luchino Visconti. Perf. Burt Lancaster, Alain Delon, and Claudia Cardinale. Titanus, Société Nouvelle Pathé Cinéma, Société Générale de Cinématographie (S.G.C.), 1963. Film.

Generazione 1000 euro. Dir. Massimo Venier. Perf. Alessandro Tiberi, Valentina Lodovini, and Carolina Crescentini. Trio International, Andrea Leone Films, Rai Cinema, 2009. DVD.

Germania anno zero. Dir. Roberto Rossellini. Perf. Edmund Moeschke, Ernst Pittschau, and Ingetraud Hinze. Produzione Salvo D'Angelo, Tevere Film, 1948. Film.

Giorni e nuvole. Dir. Silvio Soldini. Perf. Margherita Buy, Antonio Albanese, and Giuseppe Battiston. Amka Films Productions, Lumière & Company, Radiotelevisione Svizzera Italiana (RTSI), 2007. DVD.

La guerra di Mario. Dir. Antonio Capuano. Perf. Emanuele Annunziata, Anita Caprioli, and Rosaria De Cicco. Fandango, Indigo Film, 2005. DVD.

The Hurt Locker. Dir. Kathryn Bigelow. Perf. Jeremy Renner, Anthony Mackie, and Brian Geraghty. Voltage Pictures, Grosvenor Park Media, Film Capital Europe Funds (FCEF), 2008. DVD.

In fabbrica. Dir. Francesa Comencini. Rai Cinema, Rai Teche, OffSide, 2008. DVD.

L'insonnia di Devi. Dir. Costanza Quatriglio. Rean Mazzone, 2001. DVD.

Invisibili. Dir. Tania Pedroni. Fuori Luogo Film, Kamera Film, Minnie Ferrara & Associati, 2002. DVD.

L'isola. Dir. Costanza Quatriglio. Perf. Veronica Guarrasi, Ignacio Ernandes, and Marcello Mazzarella. Dream Film, Rai Cinemafiction, Tea Nova, 2003. DVD.

Isole di cenere. Dir. Quintino di Napoli, Pietro Moncada, Francesco Alliata. Panaria Film, 1947. Film.

Joan of Arc. Dir. Victor Fleming. Perf. Ingrid Bergman, José Ferrer, and Francis L. Sullivan. Sierra Pictures (II), 1948. Film.

Joan the Woman. Dir. Cecil B. DeMille. Perf. Geraldine Farrar, Raymond Hatton, and Hobart Bosworth. Cardinal Film, Paramount Pictures, 1916. Film.

Ladri di biciclette. Dir. Vittorio De Sica. Perf. Lamberto Maggiorani, Enzo Staiola, and Lianella Carell. Produzioni De Sica, 1948. Film.

Malacarne. Dir. Pino Mercanti. Perf. Amedeo Nazzari, Mariella Lotti, and Otello Toso. Organizzazione Filmistica Siciliana (OFS), 1946. Film.

Mamma Roma. Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini. Perf. Anna Magnani, Ettore Garofolo, and Franco Citti. Arco Film, 1962. Film.

Marie Antoinette. Dir. W. S. Van Dyke. Perf. Norma Shearer, Tyrone Power, and John Barrymore. Loew's, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), 1938. Film.

Mary of Scotland. Dir. John Ford. Perf. Katharine Hepburn, Fredric March, and Florence Eldridge. RKO Radio Pictures, 1936. Film.

La meglio gioventù. Dir. Tullio Giordana. Perf. Luigi Lo Cascio, Alessio Boni, and Jasmine Trinca. BiBi Film, Rai Cinemafiction, 2003. DVD.

La mia generazione. Dir. Wilma Labate. Perf. Claudio Amendola, Silvio Orlando, Francesca Neri, Vincenzo Peluso. Maurizio Tini–Rai, 1996. Film.

Mio fratello è figlio unico. Dir. Daniele Luchetti. Perf. Elio Germano, Riccardo Scamarcio, and Angela Finocchiaro. Cattleya, Babe Film, Film Commission Torino-Piemonte, 2007. DVD.

Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing. Dir. Francesca Comencini. Perf. Nicoletta Braschi, Camille Dugay Comencini, and Rosa Matteucci. BIM Distribuzione, Bianca Film, Rai Cinemafiction, 2004. DVD.

Il mondo addosso. Dir. Costanza Quatriglio. Perf. Cosmin Luca Aron and Mohammad Jan Azad. Dream Film, Rai Tre Comandare, 2006. DVD.

Mouchette. Dir. Robert Bresson. Perf. Nadine Nortier, Jean-Claude Guilbert, and Marie Cardinal. Argos Films, Parc Film, 1967. Film.

Noi credevamo. Dir. Mario Martone. Perf. Luigi Lo Cascio, Valerio Binasco, and Toni Servillo. Palomar, Les Films d'Ici, Rai Cinema, 2010. DVD.

Norma Rae. Dir. Martin Ritt. Perf. Sally Field, Beau Bridges, and Ron Leibman. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1979. Video.

North Country. Dir. Niki Caro. Perf. Charlize Theron, Jeremy Renner, and Frances McDormand. Warner Bros. Pictures, Industry Entertainment, Participant Productions, 2005. DVD.

Novecento. Dir. Bernardo Bertolucci. Perf. Robert De Niro, Gérard Depardieu, and Dominique Sanda. Produzioni Europee Associati (PEA), Les Productions Artistes Associés, Artemis Film, 1976. Video.

Un'ora sola ti vorrei. Dir. Alina Marazzi. Bartlebyfilm, Venerdi, 2002. DVD.

L'orizzonte degli eventi. Dir. Daniele Vicari. Perf. Valerio Mastandrea, Gwenaëlle Simon, and Lulzim Zeqja. Fandango, 2005. DVD.

Paisà. Dir. Roberto Rossellini. Perf. Carmela Sazio, Gar Moore, and William Tubbs. Organizzazione Film Internazionali (OFI), Foreign Film Productions, 1946. Film.

Pane e cioccolata. Dir. Franco Brusati. Perf. Nino Manfredi, Anna Karina, and Johnny Dorelli. Verona Produzione, 1974. Film.

La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc. Dir. Carl Dreyer. Perf. Maria Falconetti, Eugene Silvain, and André Berley. Société générale des films, 1928. Film.

Pasqualino settebellezze. Dir. Lina Wertmüller. Perf. Giancarlo Giannini, Fernando Rey, and Shirley Stoler. Medusa Produzione, Jadran Film, 1975. Video.

Pescherecci. Dir. Vittorio De Seta. Vittorio De Seta, 1957. Film.

The Piano. Dir. Jane Campion. Perf. Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel, and Sam Neill. The Australian Film Commission, CiBy 2000, Jan Chapman Productions, New South Wales Film & Television Office, 1993. Video.

Il più bel giorno della mia vita. Dir. Cristina Comencini. Perf. Virna Lisi, Margherita Buy, and Sandra Ceccarelli. Cattleya, Rai Cinemafiction, The Producers Films, 2002. DVD.

Poesia che mi guardi. Dir. Marina Spada. Perf. Carlo Bassetti, Marco Colombo Bolla, and Enrica Chiurazzi. Miro Film, 2009. DVD.

Il portiere di notte. Dir. Liliana Cavani. Perf. Dirk Bogarde, Charlotte Rampling, and Philippe Leroy. Ital-Noleggio Cinematografico, Lotar Film Productions, 1974. Video.

Processo per stupro. Dir. Loredana Dordi. Perf. Fiorella, Tina Lagostena Bassi, and Angelo Palmieri. Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI), 1979. Television.

Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti. Dir. Marco Tullio Giordana. Perf. Alessio Boni, Michela Cescon, and Rodolfo Corsato. Cattleya, Babe Film, Rai Cinemafiction, Aquarius Films, 2005. DVD.

Queen Christina. Dir. Rouben Mamoulian. Perf. Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, and Ian Keith. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), 1933. Film.

Questione di cuore. Dir. Francesca Archibugi. Perf. Antonio Albanese, Kim Rossi Stuart, and Micaela Ramazzotti. Cattleya, Rai Cinema, Cinemello S.r.l., 2009. DVD.

Ragazze la vita trema. Dir. Paola Sangiovanni. Perf. Maria Paola Fiorensoli, Liliana Ingargiola, and Marina Pivetta. Fake Factory, Metafilm, 2009. DVD.

Respiro. Dir. Emanuele Crialese. Perf. Valeria Golino, Vincenzo Amato, and Francesco Casisa. Fandango, Medusa Produzione, Telepiù, 2002. DVD.

Il resto di niente. Dir. Antonietta De Lillo. Perf. Maria de Medeiros, Enzo Moscato, and Rosario Sparno. Factory, Film Corsari, 2004. DVD.

Riprendimi. Dir. Anna Negri. Perf. Alba Rohrwacher, Marco Foschi, and Valentina Lodovini. Bess Movie, 2008. DVD.

Roma città aperta. Dir. Roberto Rossellini. Perf. Anna Magnani, Aldo Fabrizi, and Marcello Pagliero. Excelsa Film, 1945. Film.

Il sangue dei vinti. Dir. Michele Soavi. Perf. Michele Placido, Barbora Bobulova, and Alessandro Preziosi. Media One Entertainment, Rai Fiction, 2008. DVD.

Sanguepazzo. Dir. Marco Tullio Giordana. Perf. Monica Bellucci, Alessio Boni, and Luca Zingaretti. BiBi Film, Paradis Films, Orly Films, 2008. DVD.

Sciuscià. Dir. Vittorio De Sica. Perf. Rinaldo Smordoni, Franco Interlenghi, and Annielo Mele. Societa Cooperativa Alfa Cinematografica,1946. Film.

Senso. Dir. Luchino Visconti. Perf. Farley Granger, Alida Valli, and Heinz Moog. Lux Film, 1954. Film.

Sidelki/Badanti. Dir. Katia Bernardi. Provincia di Trento, 2007. DVD.

Signorina Effe. Dir. Wilma Labate. Perf. Filippo Timi, Valeria Solarino, and Sabrina Impacciatore. Bianca Film, Rai Cinema, 2007. DVD.

Signorina Fiat. Dir. Giovanna Boursier. Gagè Produzioni, Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico, 2001. DVD.

Silkwood. Dir. Mike Nichols. Perf. Meryl Streep, Kurt Russell, and Cher. ABC Motion Pictures, 1983. Video.

Lo spazio bianco. Dir. Francesca Comencini. Perf. Margherita Buy, Gaetano Bruno, and Giovanni Ludeno. Fandango, Rai Cinema, Campania Film Commission, 2009. DVD.

Staffette. Dir. Paola Sangiovanni. Metafilm Srl, 2006. DVD.

Star Wars: Episode 1. Dir. George Lucas. Perf. Ewan McGregor, Liam Neeson, and Natalie Portman. Lucasfilm, 1999. DVD.

La stoffa di Veronica. Dir. Emma Rossi Landi and Flavia Pasquini. Zanahoria Produzioni, 2005. DVD.

La storia. Dir. Luigi Comencini. Perf. Claudia Cardinale, Francisco Rabal, and Lambert Wilson. Films A2, Maran Film, Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI), Televisión Española (TVE), Ypsilon Cinematografica, 1986. Television.

Storia del movimento femminista in Italia. Dir. Lorella Reale. Aleph Film di M. Buono, P. Riccardi per RAI Educational, 2006. DVD.

Stromboli, terra di Dio. Dir. Roberto Rossellini. Perf. Ingrid Bergman, Mario Vitale, and Renzo Cesana. Berit Films, RKO Radio Pictures, 1950. Film.

Sud side stori. Dir. Roberta Torre. Perf. Forstine Ehobor, Roberto Rondelli, and Mario Merola. Gam Films, Istituto Luce, Rai Cinema, VIP Media, Dania Film, Tele+, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (MiBAC), 2000. DVD.

Lu tempu di li pisci spata. Dir. Vittorio De Seta. Vittorio De Seta, 1954. Film.

La terra trema. Dir. Luchino Visconti. Perf. Luchino Visconti, Antonio Pietrangeli, and Antonio Arcidiacono. Universalia Film, 1948. Film.

Il terzo occhio. Dir. Susanna Nicchiarelli. Perf. Annagrazia Bassi, Federica Nicchiarelli, and Susanna Nicchiarelli. Pupkin Production, 2003. DVD.

Tornando a casa. Dir. Vincenzo Marra. Perf. Aniello Scotto D'Antuono, Salvatore Iaccarino, and Giovanni Iaccarino. Classic, 2001. DVD.

Travolti da un insolito destino nell'azzurro mare d'agosto. Dir. Lina Wertmüller. Perf. Giancarlo Giannini, Mariangela Melato, and Riccardo Salvino. Medusa Produzione, 1974. Film.

Tutta la vita davanti. Dir. Paolo Virzi. Perf. Isabella Ragonese, Massimo Ghini, and Valerio Mastandrea. Motorino Amaranto, Medusa Film, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (MiBAC), 2008. DVD.

Uccellacci e uccellini. Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini. Perf. Totò, Ninetto Davoli, and Femi Benussi. Arco Film, 1966. DVD.

Uno virgola due. Dir. Silvia Ferreri. Comune di Roma, 2005. DVD.

L'uomo che verrà. Dir. Giorgio Diritti. Perf. Maya Sansa, Alba Rohrwacher, and Eleonora Mazzoni. Aranciafilm, Rai Cinema, 2009. DVD.

Il vangelo secondo Matteo. Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini. Perf. Enrique Irazoqui, Margherita Caruso, and Susanna Pasolini. Arco Film, Lux Compagnie Cinématographique de France, 1964. Film.

Vincere. Dir. Marco Bellocchio. Perf. Giovanna Mezzogiorno, Filippo Timi, and Fausto Russo Alesi. Offside, Rai Cinema, Celluloid Dreams, 2009. DVD.

La vita è bella. Dir. Roberto Benigni. Perf. Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi, and Giorgio Cantarini. Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica, Cecchi Gori Pictures, Melampo Cinematografica,1997. DVD.

Viva l'Italia. Dir. Roberto Rossellini. Perf. Renzo Ricci, Paolo Stoppa, and Franco Interlenghi. Galatea Film, Cinematografica RI.RE, Tempo Film, 1961. Film.

Vogliamo anche le rose. Dir. Alina Marazzi. Perf. Anita Caprioli, Teresa Saponangelo, and Valentina Carnelutti. Mir Cinematografica, Rai Cinema, Ventura Film, 2007. DVD.

Volevo solo dormirle addosso. Dir. Eugenio Cappuccio. Perf. Giorgio Pasotti, Cristiana Capotondi, and Faju. Claudio Vecchio, 2004. DVD.

Index

AAA Offresi (Belmonti et al.), 107–08
Aleramo, Sibilla, 49–50, 67, 206n13
amore buio, L' (Capuano), 38
amore di Màrja, L' (Ciccone), 13, 50, 51–55, 67, 79, 205n3
amore molesto, L' (Martone), 38
anti-Fascist resistance, 27, 46, 81, 112
appartamento, L' (Pirani), 18, 118, 131–34, 148, 149, 151, 199, 210n8, 211n11
Archibugi, Francesca, 3, 5, 11, 13, 190
Aspesi, Natalia, 87
Assunta Spina (Serena and Bertini), 4

Bazin, André, 8, 25
Bellissime 1 (Gagliardo), 84, 111
Bellissime 2 (Gagliardo), 84, 111
Bellocchio, Marco, 83
Benedetti, Laura, 49
Berlusconi, Silvio, 20, 58, 154, 182, 189, 212n2
Bernardi, Katia, 17, 117, 118–23, 125, 149, 203n8
Bertini, Francesca, 4–5, 203n3
Biagi reforms, 154–55
Bianco e nero (C. Comencini), 18, 136–43, 145–48, 151
Bigelow, Kathryn, 1, 9
Billo—Il Grand Dakhaar (Muscardin), 18, 118, 136, 142–48, 210n9
biography, 14–15, 85, 88–89, 203n6, 207n3
Borda, Jennifer, 107
Boscagli, Maurizia, 192
Bresson, Robert, 24, 39
Brunetta, Gian Piero, 5, 193
Bruno, Giuliana, 5, 35, 124, 150, 203n4, 210n7
Burgoyne, Robert, 85, 98, 207n1
Buttarelli, Annarosa, 54–55

Caine, Barbara, 14, 115
Campion, Jane, 1
Cannes. *See* film festivals: Cannes
Capuano, Antonio, 11, 12, 35, 38
Casa delle donne, 113–14
Cavarero, Adriana, 63, 130, 205n8
cento passi, I (Giordana), 83
Christine Cristina (Sandrelli), 83, 86–87, 90, 207n4, 208n5
Ciccone, Anne Riitta, 13, 50–51, 53, 65, 205n3
cinematic traditions, 10, 81. *See also* neorealist cinema
cinéma de qualité, 81
Comencini, Cristina, 5, 50, 57, 58–59, 63–64, 141, 193, 205nn5 and 6
Comencini, Francesca, 5, 11, 28, 31, 47, 50, 58–59, 162–67, 169, 190, 193
commedia all'italiana, 23, 135, 136, 153
Communism (Italian), 15, 103, 116
Come l'ombra (Spada), 18, 118, 131–35, 149, 151, 191, 201, 210n8
conformista, Il (Bertolucci), 83
corpo delle donne, Il (Zanardo), 188, 189
Cosmonauta (Nicchiarelli), 15, 83, 86, 96, 103, 203n7
Crespi, Alberto, 58
Custen, George, 85

Dagle, Joan, 81
Dall'Asta, Monica, 4
de Lauretis, Teresa, 47, 66
Deleuze, Gilles, 8, 25, 36

De Lillo, Antonietta, 6, 14, 15, 86, 96–97, 99–102, 115–16, 193, 197
de Pisan, Christine [Cristina da Pizzano], 14–15, 84, 86–88, 91, 94, 115, 207n3
De Santis, Giuseppe, 36, 207n2
De Sica, Vittorio, 11, 24, 27, 32–33, 36–37, 60, 61
diaspora. *See* immigration
Di madre in figlia (Sargentini), 6, 12, 13, 49, 65, 67, 71–73, 77, 206n13
Domenica (Labate), 12, 24, 25, 34–39, 46
Dreyer, Carl, 97

Elizabeth (Kapur), 97
Elizabeth: The Golden Age (Kapur), 97
Erens, Patricia, 106

Fallaci, Oriana, 50
Fantone, Laura, 156, 174–75
Fascism, 30, 83
femininity, 26, 102, 115, 161, 187
feminism, 2, 6–8, 21, 126, 127, 157, 161, 173, 186, 191
feminist philosophers, 49, 62
  third-wave feminists, 156–57, 174–75
Ferreri, Silvia, 19, 157, 175, 180–83
Filangeri, Gaetano, 97
film festivals, 208n11
  Cannes, 1, 2, 203n1, 204n6
  Rome, 20, 87, 93
  Venice, 93, 193, 203n7, 208n9, 208n11
Finocchiaro, Angela, 190
Fondo Unico dello Spettacolo (FUS), 20
Fonseca Pimentel, Eleonora de, 15, 96, 98, 102, 115
Fraioli, Ilaria 110, 111
framing (in cinema), 8
Fratini, Sara, 187
Fremaux, Thierry, 2
Fuga dal call center (Rizzo), 155

Gagliardo, Giovanna, 84
gattopardo, Il (Visconti), 81
gender, 6, 41, 43, 53, 85, 92, 97, 101, 106, 117, 124, 132, 140–41, 145, 148, 156, 159, 165, 171, 185, 204n4
Generazione 1000 euro (Venier), 155
Germania anno zero (Rossellini), 39, 60
Giordana, Marco Tullio, 83
Giorgio, Adalgisa, 55, 204n1(ch3), 207n15
Giorni e nuvole (Soldini), 155
guerra di Mario, La (Capuano), 11
Guzzanti, Sabina, 6

Hollinger, Karen, 102
Hollywood, 2, 5, 14, 28, 85, 86, 139, 171, 193, 207n1

immigration, 10, 16, 117, 137, 148, 151, 163, 211n12
In fabbrica (F. Comencini), 162, 212n5
Invisibili (Pedroni), 157, 175–80
isola, L' (Quatriglio), 11, 12, 24, 26, 40–45, 46, 198, 204nn6 and 7
Isole di cenere (di Napoli et al.), 45

Joan of Arc (Fleming), 97
Joan of Arc, 87, 97
Joan the Woman (DeMille), 97

Kapur, Shekhar, 97
Kezich, Tullio, 165
Kristeva, Julia, 54, 74

Labate, Wilma, 11, 12, 19, 24, 34–37, 157–64, 204n4

labor relations, 154–58
  Biagi Law, 154
  "Italia 2020" program, 175
  mobbing, 19, 29–30, 163–71, 212n6
  precariousness, defined, 18
  Treu package, 154
Ladri di biciclette (De Sica), 26–31, 37, 60
Landi, Emma Rossi, 17, 117, 203n8
Landy, Marcia, 26, 35, 37
Lauzen, Martha, 2, 206n9
Levine, Elana, 6
Levitin, Jacqueline, 2
livre de la cité des dames, Le (de Pisan), 84, 86
livre des trois vertus, Le (de Pisan), 87
lower class. *See* social class
Luchetti, Daniele, 83

Malatesta, Gloria, 188
Mamma Roma (Pasolini), 35, 39
Manieri, Francesca, 187
Maraini, Dacia, 50
Marazzi, Alina, 7, 12–13, 14–16, 50, 51, 65–71, 77, 78, 79, 84, 86, 94, 106, 108–10, 115, 116, 126, 194, 196, 206n12, 209n12
Marcus, Millicent, 28
Martinelli, Vittorio, 4, 192
Martone, Mario, 38, 81, 83, 212n1
masculinity, 26, 142
Medusa, 20
meglio gioventù, La (Giordana), 83
meglio gioventù, La (Zagarrio), 203n5
Melchiori, Paola, 124, 186
Melman, Billie, 85, 88–89
middle class. *See* social class
migration. *See* immigration
Milan Women's Bookshop, 54, 74, 204n2(ch3)
Mio fratello è figlio unico (Luchetti), 83
Mi piace lavorare—Mobbing (F. Comencini), 11, 12, 19, 24, 27–40, 46, 155, 157, 163–70, 180, 181
mobbing. *See* labor relations
mondo addosso, Il (Quatriglio), 17, 117, 119, 127–30, 203n8
Morales Bergmann, Maura, 186, 212n1
"mostri" al lavoro, I (Zaccagnini), 153
motherhood, 14, 19, 20, 49–59, 69, 71, 95, 97, 169, 175, 178–81, 183, 205n5, 206n13
Mouchette (Bresson), 39
Muraro, Luisa, 67, 204n2(ch3)
Muscardin, Laura, 18, 142, 145, 147, 151

Naples, 12, 15, 35–39, 96–97, 115. *See also scugnizzo*
Neapolitan Revolution, 15, 115
Neapolitan Republic, 96
Negri, Anna, 19, 157, 172–74
neorealism, 4, 10, 11, 12, 23–26, 36, 46, 47, 204n2(ch2)
neorealist cinema, 10, 11, 25–26, 36, 204n2(ch2)
New German Cinema, 81
New Italian Cinema, 65, 81
Nicchiarelli, Susanna, 12, 13, 14, 15, 50, 65–67, 74–79, 83, 86, 102–03, 115–16
Noi credevamo (Martone), 81, 83
Notari, Elvira, 5, 35, 60, 192, 203n4
Novecento (Bertolucci), 83

O'Healy, Àine, 18, 62, 137, 139, 204n1(ch2)
Olmi, Ermanno, 153
ora sola ti vorrei, Un' (Marazzi), 12, 13, 50, 65, 77, 95, 196
orizzonte degli eventi, L' (Vicari), 155

Paisà (Rossellini), 26, 27, 37, 60
Parmeggiani, Francesca, 83
Parrella, Valeria, 56
Pasolini, Pier Paolo, 12, 23, 24, 35, 39
Pasquini, Flavia, 17, 117, 203n8
Passion de Jeanne d'Arc, La (Dreyer), 97
patriarchy, 11, 30, 47, 52, 60
Pedroni, Tania, 19, 157, 175–79, 182–83
Pescherecci (De Seta), 45
Piano, The (Campion), 1
Pickering-Iazzi, Robin, 49–50
Pirani, Francesca, 18, 131, 199, 210n8
più bel giorno della mia vita, Il (C. Comencini), 13, 50, 59, 64, 65, 78, 79, 103
Plath, Sylvia, 84
Plessis, Judith, 2
Poesia che mi guardi (Spada), 14, 15, 84, 86–97, 208n8
portiere di notte, Il (Cavani), 83
posto, Il (Olmi), 153
Potamkin, Harry Alan, 97
Pozzi, Antonia, 14, 15, 93–96, 115, 203n6, 208n8
Processo per stupro (Dordi), 107

Quando sei nato no puoi più nasconderti (Giordana), 10
Quatriglio, Costanza, 11, 17, 24, 40, 44–45, 47, 117–18, 128, 129, 130, 191, 198, 203n8, 204n7
Queen Christina (Mamoulian), 97
Questione di cuore (Archibugi), 11, 23

Rabinowitz, Paula, 110
Ragazze la vita trema (Sangiovanni), 14, 84, 86, 106–15, 200, 208n11
Rai Cinema, 20
Ramanathan, Geetha, 187
Ramondino, Fabrizia, 50
Randi, Paola, 2
Raoul, Valerie, 2
Reale, Lorella, 84
Respiro (Crialese), 46
resto di niente, Il (De Lillo), 14, 83, 86, 96–99, 193, 197, 212n3(Concl)
Rich, Adrienne, 49
Rich, Ruby, 11
Riprendimi (Negri), 19, 157, 171–75
Risorgimento, 81
Robè, Chris, 97
Roma città aperta (Rossellini), 26
Rome Film Festival. *See* film festivals: Rome
Rosenstone, Robert, 83, 85, 86, 90, 98, 207n1
Rossellini, Roberto, 11, 23, 24, 26, 37, 39, 44–45, 60, 81, 83, 90
Rotondo, Loredana, 107, 207n2, 208n10
Ruberto, Laura, 26, 204n2(ch2)

Sandrelli, Stefania, 14, 15, 83, 86–93, 115–16, 208nn5–7
Sangiovanni, Paola, 14, 106–15, 200
sangue dei vinti, Il (Soavi), 83
Sanguepazzo (Giordana), 83
Sargentini, Fabiana, 6, 12, 13, 50, 51, 65–67, 71–74, 75, 78, 79
Sciuscià (De Sica), 27, 60
scugnizzo, 11, 12, 35, 204n5
Se non ora quando movement (SNOQ), 58, 175, 189
Senso (Visconti), 81
Serena, Gustavo, 4
Sidelki/Badanti (Bernardi), 17, 117, 119, 122–25, 149–51, 203n8
Signorina Effe (Labate), 19, 157–60, 212n5

Smith, Sidonie, 85
Soavi, Michele, 83
social class, 25, 28, 37, 41, 60, 66, 69, 95, 102, 106, 127, 132, 139–40, 141, 153, 156, 158–62, 177, 180
Spada, Marina, 9, 14, 16, 18, 84, 86, 93–96, 115–16, 118, 131–32, 150, 191, 201, 203n6, 208n8, 210n8
spazio bianco, Lo (F. Comencini), 13, 14, 50, 55–59, 78–79, 205n6
Staffette (Sangiovanni), 112
Steedman, Carolyn, 84–85
Steimatsky, Noa, 40
stoffa di Veronica, La (Landi and Pasquini), 17, 117–22, 149, 151, 203n8
Storia del movimento femminista in Italia (Reale), 84, 111
Striano, Enzo, 96
Stromboli, terra di Dio (Rossellini), 11, 44
subaltern, 8, 112–13

Taviani, Giovanna, 23–24, 203n8
Taviani brothers, 83
television, 16, 72, 87, 107, 155, 162, 163, 188–89, 198, 203n8
tempu di li pisci spata, Lu (De Seta), 45
terra trema, La (Visconti), 11, 40–44
terzo occhio, Il (Nicchiarelli), 12, 13, 50, 65, 67, 74–78
Tornando a casa (Marra), 46
Torre, Roberta, 5, 6, 137
trade unions, 158, 162
Treu, Tiziano, 154. *See also* Biagi reforms; labor relations
Tutta la vita davanti (Virzi), 155

Uccellacci e uccellini (Pasolini), 35
Uno virgola due (Ferreri), 19, 157, 175, 180–83
uomo che verrà, L' (Diritti), 10
upper class. *See* social class

vangelo secondo Matteo, Il (Pasolini), 35
Venice Film Festival. *See* film festivals: Venice
Verdone, Mario,153
Via del Governo Vecchio, 113
Vincere (Bellocchio), 83
Visconti, Luchino, 11, 23–24, 36, 40, 41, 42, 81
Viva l'Italia (Rossellini), 81
Vogliamo anche le rose (Marazzi), 7, 14, 16, 84–86, 106–12, 114, 126, 194, 208n11, 209n12
Volevo solo dormirle addosso (Cappuccio), 155
von Bingen, Hildegard, 101
von Trotta, Margarethe, 101

Wagstaff, Christopher, 27, 33, 36, 44
Welsch, Janet R., 63–64, 205n7
Wertmüller, Lina, 5, 145, 212n1
White, Hayden, 82
working class. *See* social class

Young, Deborah, 2, 99

Zaccagnini, Edoardo, 153–54
Zagarrio, Vito, 65, 203n5
Zanardo, Lorella, 188–89

About the Book

Reframing Italy: New Trends in Italian Women's Filmmaking
Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo
PSRL 59

In recent years, Italian cinema has experienced a quiet revolution: the proliferation of films by women. But their thought-provoking work has not yet received the attention it deserves. *Reframing Italy* fills this gap. The book introduces readers to films and documentaries by recognized women directors such as Cristina Comencini, Wilma Labate, Alina Marazzi, Antonietta De Lillo, Marina Spada, and Francesca Comencini, as well as to filmmakers whose work has so far been undeservedly ignored.

Through a thematically based analysis supported by case studies, Luciano and Scarparo argue that Italian women filmmakers, while not overtly feminist, are producing work that increasingly foregrounds female subjectivity from a variety of social, political, and cultural positions. This book, with its accompanying video interviews, explores the filmmakers' challenging relationship with a highly patriarchal cinema industry. The incisive readings of individual films demonstrate how women's rich cinematic production reframes the aesthetic of their cinematic fathers, re-positions relationships between mothers and daughters, functions as a space for remembering women's (hi)stories, and highlights pressing social issues such as immigration and workplace discrimination.

This original and timely study makes an invaluable contribution to film studies and to the study of gender and culture in the early twenty-first century.

About the Authors

Bernadette Luciano, University of Auckland, New Zealand, specializes in Italian cinema and cultural studies. She has published articles and book chapters on Italian cinema, film adaptation, Italian women's historical novels, women's autobiographical writing, and literary translation. She is author of *The Cinema of Silvio Soldini: Dream, Image, Voyage* (2008) and co-editor of an interdisciplinary book on cross-cultural encounters between New Zealand and Europe.

Susanna Scarparo, Monash University, Australia, works on Italian cinema and literary and cultural studies. She has published numerous articles and book chapters on Italian women's historical writing, women's life writing, Italian feminist theory, Italian-Australian literature and Italian cinema. She is author of *Elusive Subjects: Biography as Gendered Metafiction* (2005) and has co-edited *Violent Depictions: Representing Violence across Cultures* (2006), *Across Genres, Generations and Borders: Italian Women Writing Lives* (2005), and *Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Italian Culture: Representations and Critical Debates* (2010).