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Antonio Pietrangeli, The Director of Women:
Feminism, Film Theory and Practice in Postwar Italy

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Italian

by

Emma Katherine Van Ness

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Antonio Pietrangeli, *The Director of Women:*

Feminism, Film Theory and Practice in Postwar Italy

by

Emma Katherine Van Ness

Doctor of Philosophy in Italian

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Thomas J. Harrison, Chair

This study will examine the work of Antonio Pietrangeli both as film theorist and as director. Critics have long considered Pietrangeli an anomaly, difficult to place into genres, since his cinema focused primarily on female protagonists. This dissertation will investigate the idea of Pietrangeli as a feminist practitioner, tying his early writings on film from the late Forties as well as his later film production from the Fifties and Sixties to feminist and film theory. While some of this theory was contemporary to Pietrangeli, what this study will show is that he was anticipating later developments in critical, feminist, and structuralist theory, in particular apparatus theory and psychoanalytic theory in film studies. Since Pietrangeli has a history of being marginalized, misunderstood, and ignored in Italian film studies, this dissertation seeks to remedy that omission by bringing his work into dialogue with other established film critics and auteurs in order to show that his unique voice, both in theory and in praxis, deserves scholarly attention and consideration.

Claudio Fogu

Lucia Re

Edward F. Tuttle

Thomas J. Harrison, Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

To Zoe Flaminia,

the only true Roman in the family, *romana de' Roma*, that she may grow up knowing that what is most interesting is often found in the margins, that the story untold is often that which deserves most to be told.

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Vita

Emma Katherine Van Ness is a fifth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Italian Department at UCLA. She came to UCLA after completing a Masters degree in Modern Italian literature and cinema at Middlebury College in 2005. Her Masters thesis is entitled “Il sentimento del vuoto: Una lettura ermeneutica del ruolo di Roma in *Le notti di Cabiria*.” Her undergraduate education includes a double BA in art history and Italian from the University of Chicago. Publications include “*Io la conoscevo bene... or did I? Antonio Pietrangeli, the Author, and the Actress*” in the journal, *Italian Culture*, “Against Sexual Moralism.” Critical edition and translation of Italo Tavolato’s “Contro la morale sessuale” in *Graphite*, and “(No) Queer Futurism: Politics, Pink Poets, and Prostitutes in Italian Futurism,” in *Carte Italiane*.

ANTONIO PIETRANGELI, FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS:
AN INTRODUCTION TO PIETRANGELI'S THEORY OF CINEMA

THE DIRECTOR OF WOMEN BUT NEVER A FEMINIST

“It became obvious to me that men don't live through female characters.”

-Meryl Streep in a recent NPR interview with Terry Gross

It may seem out of step to begin the study of a Fifties and Sixties Italian filmmaker with a quote from a contemporary American actress, but the point that Streep makes is key to understanding the difficulties in dealing with Antonio Pietrangeli's films from a historical and critical point of view. The scope of this study will be to show that Pietrangeli, in both his film theory, which I will touch on in this theoretical introduction to the director's own critical writings on cinema, and in his films which I will discuss in the following chapters, is engaging with a wide variety of feminist and film theory *ante litteram*. This operation will shed light, in turn, on the importance of Pietrangeli's films and why they should not be forgotten or marginalized as simply “women's films.” Pietrangeli's cinematic theory and his films themselves seek to overcome representational conventions when it comes to psychology and sexual difference. What is interesting and unique is the opportunity that Pietrangeli offers us; we will be able to use his own theories of film against him in order to see to what extent his films live up to his own criticism, especially in the areas of female and male “gendered” subjectivity, psychology, concern with the spectator, and apparatus theory. Streep's quote serves as evidence of the fact that, still today, these remain pressing issues.

During Streep's interview, this seventeen-time Oscar nominated actress discusses her ability to live through male characters, to identify with them, to “cross dress” as a male spectator

who is actively looking and absorbing the film narrative. Her spectatorial experience matches that described by Laura Mulvey in her famous essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”

The man controls the film fantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator... As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence.¹

Streep and other female spectators are able to identify with male protagonists, but the actress confirms Mulvey’s theory when she suggests that the inverse operation, for male spectators to identify with female protagonists, is more problematic. As Mary Ann Doane explains, “confronted with the classical Hollywood text with a male address, the female spectator has basically two modes of entry: a narcissistic identification with the female figure as spectacle and a transvestite identification with the active male hero in his mastery.”² Given that of Pietrangeli’s ten full-length films seven have female protagonists and all ten deal in some ways with gendered issues such as marriage, bachelorhood, jealousy, and infidelity, we should not find it surprising that some critics thought his films difficult to digest. This problem continues as film historians continually marginalize his films, calling them “feminine” and “delicate,” and specify that he is “particularly gifted in female portraiture.”³ On their genealogical map of Italian comedy, Tullio Masoni and Paolo Vecchi make no reference to Pietrangeli, even though they give him a brief nod in their accompanying article “Degeneri e scostumati: commedia, satira, e farsa nel cinema sonoro italiano,” in the volume *Commedia all’italiana: Angolazioni controcampi*. They write that his film *La visita* (1963) “demystifies white collar, hypocritical marriage.”⁴ These sorts of feminizing nods to Pietrangeli’s work, which do not delve into the deeper issues behind it, have come to characterize the critical attention he has received until recently. Pietrangeli may deserve

his own branch on the genealogical map of Italian cinema, but critics have been remiss in sketching out what form that branch might take. The fact that his films have provoked little serious study and even less theoretical interest, is at least partially attributable to the fact that many male film scholars were uncomfortable or unable to deal with the “dark continent” of the female protagonist that Pietrangeli’s films explore. This critical absence when it comes to responding to Pietrangeli is partially due to the difficulty in accessing copies of his films since many, including *Nata di marzo* and *La parmigiana*, are out of print, and many others available only in Italy, with Italian subtitles, are poorly dubbed in English, or are simply difficult to come by. Lately, however, he has started to garner more critical interest as evidenced by Natalie Fullwood’s 2010 article “Commedie al femminile: The Gendering of Space in Three Films by Antonio Pietrangeli,” as well as the attention paid Pietrangeli in Luca Barattoni’s 2012 publication, *Italian Post-Neorealist Cinema*. There is much work still to be done, however; in particular regarding the feminist and theoretical implications of Pietrangeli’s *oeuvre*.

The focus on gender and psychology in Pietrangeli’s unique cinema has been noted by numerous scholars, yet to speak of Pietrangeli as a feminist has seemed to many out of the question. Lorenzo Pellizari states that

his filmography has unique and unmistakable characteristics (in its thematics, poetics, and praxis of realization), with the following advantage that it warrants a specific treatment and the other evident advantage of having undergone - at that time and afterwards - a “flattening” of critical judgment both in terms of the agreeing evaluations and the lack of stimulus to “revise” these evaluations.⁵

As evidenced by this quote, Pellizari suggests that scholars have backed away from Pietrangeli’s films, refusing to take a strong position on them and furthermore refusing to apply new critical ideas to them. Piera Detassis, in her article “A Castelluccio non ci torno più..” *Storie di donne*

nell'Italia di Pietrangeli," discusses the gendered conflicts at the core of Pietrangeli's films, yet she dismisses the idea of a Pietrangeli *femminista* outright. In discussing his female characters, Detassis states that "it is the laceration that actually interests the director, and not emancipation... and even though his gaze on the male world is without the wink of an eye — implacable as is rarely found in our cinema —, notwithstanding this, to speak of 'feminism' would be misleading."⁶ Natalie Fullwood's recent and exceptional article on Pietrangeli's female triptych of *La visita* (1963), *La parmigiana* (1963), and *Io la conoscevo bene* (1965), shies away from claiming Pietrangeli's films for feminism. "Pietrangeli's films also contain several images and sequences which not only represent 'common forms of representation in commodity culture' but expose the way in which these forms work to sexualise and objectify women's bodies." Pietrangeli's film are metacinematic in that they expose the functioning of commodity fetishism in cinema, but, for Fullwood, this is not enough to excuse Pietrangeli's *use* of this commodity form. She rightly points out that "there is thus an ambiguity here between the exposure of the objectifying way in which Italian men look at women's bodies and the replication of this type of looking."⁷ Yet the tension between *Pietrangeli's* use of the female body and his exposure of *cinema's* use of the female body offers to the feminist a space in which to work. His use of the body can be exploitative in certain contexts, but it is almost always qualified by his manipulation of the scene of exploitation for narratological or didactic ends that illuminate feminist discourse. This "disruption in the fabric of male bourgeois cinema within the text of the film,"⁸ begs for a feminist reading of Pietrangeli's works, which are then seen to adhere to the definition of feminist film put forth by Teresa De Lauretis in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*.

What one may make, as a feminist filmmaker, are films 'working on a problem,' in Heath's words. Such must be, provisionally, the task of critical discourse as

well: to oppose the simply totalizing discourse of final statements... to seek out contradictions, heterogeneity, ruptures in the fabric of representation so thinly stretched - if powerful - to contain excess, division, difference, resistance; to open up critical spaces in the seamless narrative space constructed by dominant cinema and by dominant discourses... finally, to displace those discourses that obliterate the claims of other social instances and erase the agency of practice in history.⁹

By comparing this quote to a statement made by Pietrangeli, one can detect the similarities of the interests in showing “division, difference, resistance,” and in dissecting a discursive process, whether it be cinema or other commodity forms, that presents woman as the pioneer of a societal revolution against oppressive, patriarchal structures. This interest in the feminine perspective, what I will call Pietrangeli’s brand of feminism, is unusual in cinema circles at the time as well as problematic when one considers, as Fullwood mentions above, Pietrangeli’s occasional *use* of the female body as fetish object. This use of female notwithstanding, Pietrangeli declares openly his interest in changing female subjectivity in a 1967 interview with *Bianco e nero* when he states that

It’s not that I am Celestina from *Il sole negli occhi* or Adriana from *Io la conosco bene* or Pina from *La visita* like, you’ll excuse me the comparison, Flaubert was Emma Bovary. Rather, it is that in the process of social transformation that we have witnessed for twenty years or so in Italy, women are undeniably playing the role of the protagonist... And it isn’t only a change in manners but instead a radical, profound interior revolution: a process that is still going on now and that is perhaps anticipating a wider evolution of Italian society, since it is true that often it is the legal institutions themselves that seek to hold it back. This is the reason, perhaps, why a woman is often at the center of the stories of my films.... Indeed, they are women who fight against society and at the end, succumb to it. But the truth is almost all of them are able to achieve what they wanted and therefore they are only defeated in a certain sense.¹⁰

By identifying with but not transforming himself into his female protagonists, Pietrangeli is addressing major feminist concerns that can also be assimilated to those laid out by Adriana Cavarero in “Il pensiero femminista. Un approccio teoretico.”¹¹ This Italian feminist speaks of

three primary objectives of feminist theory: a criticism of patriarchy, the issue of equality, and the question of subjectivity. By showing on-screen the process of this interior, female revolution, the psychological changes of his characters as well as the evolution of society as a whole, and in particular the legal institutions of Italian society, Pietrangeli shows that he shares these same critical approaches in his films. The object of this study is to show how Pietrangeli's cinema engages with questions of psychology and of sexual difference by problematizing cinematic conventions, especially gendered cinematic conventions, and issues of femininity in particular.

Pietrangeli's closeness to feminist theory began long before his directorial debut with his involvement in neorealism as a film critic himself and his film-critical writings, completed between 1943-1952, indeed seeming to anticipate many later feminists' concerns. Called "the most implacable pen," of Italian cinema by director Alessandro Blasetti, Pietrangeli's harsh film reviews and foundational theoretical writings on the need for a return to realism have interesting parallels to issues that feminists have with "classical cinema": namely, a criticism of Hollywood and the studio system conventions, an interest in the role of the spectator, opprobrium over how Hollywood used psychoanalysis in film form and narrative, and attention to the portrayal of women and female characters by male filmmakers. Let us turn to these issues one by one in Pietrangeli's writings, beginning with the evidence of his feminist allegiance, so that before delving into the director's films in subsequent chapters, we are acquainted with his own theory on film and what cinema should be.

SPAZZATURA AMERICANA — AMERICAN TRASH AND HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

Feminists have long taken issue with Hollywood and the representational conventions that this cinematic machine as studio system perennially churns out: happy endings, fixed gender roles and types, and genre restrictions that allow little individual creativity on the part of filmmakers. Returns are king and the film is first a product; artistic considerations are a luxury. Kaja Silverman, for examples, writes of “classic cinema” or the Hollywood film of the Forties and Fifties, that it “has the potential to reactivate the trauma of symbolic castration within the viewer, and that it puts sexual difference in place as a partial defense against trauma... since it projects male lack onto female characters in the guise of anatomical deficiency or discursive inadequacy.”¹² Hollywood, as Streep mentions above, has issues with how it represents women. Laura Mulvey also lambasts Hollywood, saying, “the magic of the Hollywood style at its best (and all of the cinema which fell within its sphere of influence) arose, not exclusively, but in one important aspect, from its skilled and satisfying manipulation of visual pleasure.”¹³ Pietrangeli was on the front lines of the battle in Italy that sought to combat, with a new style that will come to be known as neorealism, the expansion of this cinematic American “sphere of influence” into Italy. By combatting, in Mulvey’s words, “mainstream film” that “coded the erotic into the language of the dominant patriarchal order,”¹⁴ Pietrangeli called for the renewal of an Italian cinema that had long been dominated by *telefoni bianchi*, bourgeois comedies associated with the Fascist regime. In fact, Pietrangeli did not hesitate to call Hollywood cinema “propaganda,” a political tool for manipulating the masses, an accusation directed towards America that gained Pietrangeli the attention of the American State Department. As Brunetta writes “the American governing forces [in Rome] gave so much consideration to Pietrangeli’s criticisms that they were regularly sent to the State Department in Washington from the Embassy in Rome with a note that

underlined the hostility [towards the films] and the consensus of opinion in the newspapers.”¹⁵

Pietrangeli was a spokesperson against the Americanization of Italian film culture, an advocate for creating a new cinematographic style that would not only be morally sound, but that would show a reality that spoke to the spectator’s experience. “Pietrangeli (nomen est omen) can ideally assume the role of apostle, angel at the gate, the foundational stone upon which the idealistic, ethical, and aesthetic framework, what the project, what a new Italian cinema as a possible world, must be.”¹⁶ Exploring what exactly he found so objectionable about Hollywood cinema illuminates his ties to neorealism and feminism, as well as his later film production as director.

Pietrangeli’s film reviews, written under the heading “Screening Room” or “Sala di proiezione,” were printed in *Star* magazine from 1944 to 1946. They offer exceptional insight into the cinematic climate of the Post-war period. With the re-entry of American film products onto the Italian market after four years of sanctioned absence, Pietrangeli is clearly disappointed with the result. He writes, after discussing the pre-war American imports, that “today, after four years, the American productions offered to us are much more desolate and squalid.”¹⁷ How so, one may ask? Pietrangeli responds,

It seems that an incurable usury has deprived the formulas and the schema of a mid-level production of every efficacy, even if only spectacular; other works - more socially committed, at least enough in their cinematography to imbue the rest of the production with this tone - either wound up on the level of the most drab and contingent propaganda, celebratory, exultant, insipid and rhetorical, or, wanting to address real, conscientious concerns of a moral and civil nature, give a most sad picture of a total confusion with moralistic emphasis, of a national outpouring of character with a preachy, bothersome tone of puritanical quackery.¹⁸

The financial concerns for making a product has emptied the Hollywood film of every sincere attempt at thematic profundity. The ideological concerns of religion, morality, patriotism, and capitalism have trumped individual, human concerns. Pietrangeli, in fact, found this ideological

preoccupation of “classical cinema” immoral and anti-educative for the spectator. In speaking of *La porta d’oro*, or *The Golden Door*, a film that that deals with immigration, the working class, and in doing so creates the myth of America as land of opportunity, Pietrangeli puts himself in the place of two spectators, a poor couple, who go to see the film. In upholding the interests of the bourgeoisie, the film represents the working class as happy, fulfilled, satisfied, all eating together around a large, abundant familial table. Pietrangeli’s fictional couple is drawn in to the jovial scene, but Pietrangeli is not fooled and begins to ask questions about the reality of the working class versus its on-screen representation.

This is the fictional reality of American cinema... Not only does it avoid responding to these interrogatives, but furthermore, it seeks to impede the formulation of these questions in the consciences of men but channels the unsatisfied desire for a new reality in an ever more predictable and foreseen direction, until it is controlled in the least detail. A perfect technique - with codes and laws - a mechanism of infallible success... these are the means with which American cinema reaches its goal.¹⁹

By promoting a false consciousness in which class interests do not differ, and in which poverty, hunger, and work are not problematic, American cinema decreases the awareness of these issues in the spectator, causing instead a satisfaction in technology and codification which are really tools of oppression. Pietrangeli’s Leftist political leanings are right on the surface here. In calling for a cinema more grounded in reality, Pietrangeli wrote, “the distance that separates man from the reality that surrounds him is reduced in proportion to the increase in the faith that man has in that reality, or in the sensitivity and spirit in which he approaches it.”²⁰ A more realistic cinema that deals with everyday problems in a complex way would be a cinema that would have a positive impact on its spectators. Pietrangeli was not only proposing a new style, neorealism, but also advocating for the spectator, whose best interest his criticism always had at its core.

CINEMA: NOT A SPECTATOR'S SPORT

Concern for the film's effect on the spectator, which is crucial to Pietrangeli's critical philosophy, is also at the core of many feminist studies of cinema. Mary Ann Doane, for instance, in discussing the woman's film of the 1940's (Pietrangeli's contemporary cinema), speaks of women purchasing the image of their subjectivity through the consumer experience, including as a cinema spectator. "The female spectator is invited to witness her own commodification and, furthermore, buy an image of herself insofar as the female star is proposed as the ideal of feminine beauty."²¹ This is analogous to Pietrangeli's objections to glossy, Hollywood productions, objections largely based on the numbing effect that such productions tend to have on the spectator as films that replace legitimate social concerns with preoccupations with less important, more superficial issues. As Brunetta explains, Pietrangeli acts as a sort of customs agent for cinematic imports, "so that in a phase of a great weakening of the idealistic and moral immune defenses, the Italian spectator doesn't fall victim to the *placebo effect* of these new dreams that will continue to keep him far away from contact and knowledge of real problems."²² These new dreams, the American dreams of riches, fame, beauty, and success, are particularly enticing to an Italian population devastated physically and psychologically in the wake of World War II. In fact, as Brunetta explains, Pietrangeli's opinion of films often ran counter to popular sentiment while the film-going public often valued what he considered to be trash. Yet Pietrangeli's idea of what cinema was supposed to be also ran counter to popular opinion; for him, film was an art form capable of expressing human psychology in an unprecedented way, while for the vast majority of the public, cinema was simply spectacle. Yet

this is not enough. Pietrangeli does not want to sell the public short as his view of spectating as an activity differed from the passive spectating required by cinema as spectacle.

In a review of William A. Seiter's *Love by Appointment* (1940), starring Charles Boyer and Margaret Sullivan, Pietrangeli lays bare his frustration with both the film, which he deems banal and conventional, as well as the public that laughed at these banalities. "No one more than he [the critic] knows how devastating it is to leave a theater, embittered, when part of the public enjoyed the film, laughed, or sincerely suffered through the adventures and misadventures of the characters that it found so human and real, that he [the critic] will be forced to define as idiotic puppets."²³ He goes on to explain the difference in opinion as determined by the public's idea of film as spectacle, a visual marvel that permits the most absurd situations to pass as not only plausible but, moreover, pleasurable. This linking of the absurd, the improbable, the exceptional, is what Walter Benjamin refers to as "panoramic perception": "In filmic perception - i.e., the perception of *montage*, the juxtaposition of the most disparate images into one unit - the new reality of annihilated in-between spaces finds its clearest expression: the film brings things closer to the viewer as well as closer together."²⁴ The technical marvel of cinema makes everything possible and makes that "everything" a product that the viewer is able to consume. The mechanical ability of the director to reproduce even the most banal situations is a cause for spectatorial delight, but Pietrangeli is on to this merely technical, Hollywood game. In a review for Leslie Howard's film *The Pimpernel Smith* or *La primula Smith* (1944), Pietrangeli takes issue with D.W. Griffiths' assertion that "all you need to make a film is a girl and a gun." For the public, this is enough, according to Griffiths, but Pietrangeli is not convinced. "The public... has the mentality of a nine-year old child, more or less, and to make successful films, they must

adapt to this mentality.” But why continue to sell the public short? Pietrangeli demands more of both critics and spectators: of the former, that they do a better job educating the public about film’s technical aspects, and of the latter, that they engage in an active spectatorial examination of the film:

For this reason it would be necessary that cinema journals and newspapers treat, in the simplest and most straight-forward form possible, film’s technical aspects and, in substance, give the public the tools for taking apart the toy [i.e. the film] without destroying it. From this more external interest we should pass through a constant, collective psychological examination, with the hope, above all, of leading the most intelligent film spectators to a daily examination of their conscience. Why is the film that makes us cry a good film and why do we enjoy crying? Why is the stupid film that makes us laugh highly recommended? Everyone knows what unexplored and marvelous landscapes are available when one dives into one’s soul. When the spectator is able to carry out these introspective gymnastics, he or she will have learned not to be a sentimental spectator at the mercy of the person who knows how to artificially manipulate with a cold, speculative calculation that delicate mechanism whence chills are born, but rather a more moral and committed spectator, able to distinguish and hence to evaluate.²⁵

Pietrangeli, in 1944, is proposing a “deconstructivist” and a “structuralist” point of view on cinema and its representative mechanisms. He is anticipating a whole critical theory. Not only is the movie camera a machine that reproduces a reality on film according to certain predetermined structures, but a machine that we must learn to take apart in order to fully understand it. In so doing, the spectator, including the female spectator, will learn why the catharsis offered by tearjerkers is satisfying and why a “silly” film is one to recommend to friends. Pietrangeli seems to be working within the same parameters for viewing as Doane is when she writes,

the cinematic image for the woman is both shop window and mirror, the one simply a means of access to the other. The mirror/window takes on then the aspect of a trap whereby her subjectivity becomes synonymous with her objectification ... One must ask at this point, ‘Whose gaze is addressed?’ and ‘Who profits?’²⁶

Not only does Pietrangeli's cinema work towards transparency, but Pietrangeli's spectator, male or female, is asked to question his or her psychological relations to the film in its form and narrative structures, to wake up and examine the film with critical eyes.

CRITICAL / PSYCHOANALYTICAL

The importance of psychoanalysis as a critical theory for Pietrangeli cannot be understated. A trained medical doctor himself (he went through medical school during World War II in Rome, from 1940 to 1944), undoubtedly this first profession influence his second. Not only does his critical language bear traces of medical jargon with syntactical choices such as "effects," "doses," "cases," and "mechanisms," but his particular stance towards a film is always dependent upon the psychological portrayal of characters and the potential psychological result that the film could have upon the spectator. Film, for Pietrangeli, was like a drug; it could make the spectator feel much better by helping to cure what ailed him or her or it could have the opposite, stultifying effects of an opiate. An example of the particular attention Pietrangeli pays to the portrayal of the female psychological state can be found in his review of Ferdinando M. Poggioli's film *Sorelle Materassi* (1943), based on the novel by Aldo Palazzeschi. In speaking of the film's adaptation from written to film text, Pietrangeli differentiates between the representations of psychological depth with the two forms.

Palazzeschi described the most remote secrets of psychology—and should we say also physiology—of these four women, with the ability of a psychoanalyst, but without this falsifying or weighing upon or impoverishing in any way the humanity of his character types.... Poggioli instead, without seeking a motivation for his characters with an in-depth cinematic investigation, rattled off the exterior elements of the psychology of these women just as he found them... Rather than the essentiality of two human types, he released into the world two unrealistic examples of crazy, lecherous old ladies.²⁷

The psychological depth of a portrayal is what makes a character more or less dignified, more or less relatable, and in Poggioli's case (and not only his — Pietrangeli's reviews are riddled with accusations of psychological superficiality) stops at the surface without digging into the characters and discovering their motivations. Poggioli carries out what Doane describes as "the Medical Discourse" when his "narrativization of the woman which might otherwise be fairly difficult... is facilitated by the association of women with the pathological."²⁸ Their otherness is explained away by their dirtiness, their mental illness, symptoms confirming rather than these questioning the patriarchal order as the sisters in Palazzeschi's original version do. As Pietrangeli explains, these two frigid spinsters have never known love, succumbing to "the typical drama of repression and unconscious sensuality (censure and repressed libido are the terms psychoanalysis uses in these cases). They believed that they would transfer and repress the impulses of their flesh in a dark and obstinate dedication to work, but their in bodies, frigid and arid, the flesh will have its revenge."²⁹ A problematic film premise for the feminist, a near reversal of the usual cinematic standard of female body-as-spectacle, here the female body, reduced to a tool of work, is nonetheless a site of hysteria when the flesh comes roaring back after being neglected. In Poggioli's superficial portrayal, Doane would note that here, "psychoanalysis is used very explicitly to reinforce a status quo of sexual difference."³⁰ But, the reader may ask, does Pietrangeli's use of psychoanalysis and the portrayal of the female psyche not "reinforce a status quo of sexual difference?" The body of this dissertation that examines his films aims to show that he does not adhere to representational standards and gendered cinematic conventions, using psychoanalysis in a very different way than to reinforce the status quo.

Regarding the question of women and psychoanalysis in his critical writings, there is one case in which Pietrangeli is very close to the feminists — the case of Hitchcock. Pietrangeli reviews several of Hitchcock's films and arrives at similar conclusions as many feminist theorists; namely, that Hitchcock has mastered a formula that allows him to produce a desired effect in the spectator and maintain his position as author-authority. Feminist theorists Laura Mulvey, Teresa De Lauretis, Kaja Silverman, Mary Ann Doane, Claire Johnston, and Tania Modleski have all discussed Hitchcock's cinema in various capacities. Critics interested in *auteur* cinema, such as Stephen Heath and Raymond Bellour, have also used Hitchcock to illustrate the idea of director as cinematic authority, point of origin and of return of the film's message, "this radically dispersed and decentered '*hom(m)osexual*' economy that Hitchcock-as-director comes to be installed as the point of apparent textual origin, and as the seemingly punctual source of meaning."³¹ Not only does Hitchcock know all and see all as a director, but his films demonstrate a fear of the feminine and of the maternal in particular, in films such as *Psycho* and *The Birds*. As De Lauretis writes, "with his uncommonly keen sense of cinematic convention, Hitchcock encapsulates this search for the true image—search on the part of the hero, but equally a search on the part of the film itself—a visual parable."³² These "conventions" for De Lauretis and other critics create film products that ensure a measure of commercial success, based on the active male hero, the hysterical or dangerous woman, and the director's unequivocal visual control over the unfolding of the drama. "Only a director 'speaking' from a position as smoothly aligned with the cinematic apparatus as Hitchcock —i.e., from a position of phallic dominance—would be able to identify his own 'vision' so fully within the textual system of Hollywood that the latter can seem the extension of the former."³³ Pietrangeli could not agree

more and forty years prior took issue, albeit in different terminology, with the British director's systematic and conventional cinema.

The collections of Pietrangeli's film reviews contain discussions of a half dozen of Hitchcock's works, including *Spellbound*, *Blackmail*, *The 39 Steps*, *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, *Rebecca*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, and *The Suspect*. Pietrangeli does not have a high opinion of Hitchcock and sees him as a consummate professional, nothing more, nothing less. "Alfred Hitchcock is one of the most qualified representatives of mid-level English production, that 'standardized' cinematography, precise, mechanized, clean, that even if inferior to its sister from over the ocean."³⁴ Not only is Hitchcock's cinema of an inferior quality to Hollywood cinema, which Pietrangeli does not hold in the highest regard, but the British director is only middle of the road, his cinematography merely effective, not artistic. As an example of this, Pietrangeli cites a sequence from *Blackmail* in which the female protagonist walks through a crowd reading newspapers and discussing the murder that she herself has just committed. Pietrangeli remarks that the sound technique Hitchcock uses to demonstrate the woman's growing hysteria, in which, rather than hearing the crowd noise, she simply hears, with growing intensity, the word "knife, knife, knife," is simply asynchronism. Not a masterful invention or unique representational technique but merely a mere tool of the trade, Hitchcock, for Pietrangeli, "is not an artist and will always remain on the confines, resigned and convinced of his trade: his trade is that of an able chef, perhaps even with a little talent, capable of 'cooking up' a comedy with the usual, stale recipes out of a detailed, Anglo-American cinematographic cookbook."³⁵ Hitchcock's films are formulaic but certain to have at least a discreet success with a public that enjoys a little humor, a

little suspense, and a little sexual tension; something for everyone, but his flavors, in Pietrangeli's opinion, are muddled and of little substance.

Perhaps the most telling review is Pietrangeli's analysis of *Spellbound*, the same film that Mary Ann Doane mentions in her study of the cinematic portrayal of female sexuality and psychoanalysis. The problem, for Doane, with the popularization and diffusion of psychoanalytic discourse is that it reduced and distorted Freudian theories; "the diffusion of psychoanalytic concepts in Hollywood narrative is strong enough to provoke a counter-response on the part of the psychoanalytic establishment... [decrying] Hollywood's reductive and often fallacious representation of psychoanalytic concepts and methods."³⁶ Pietrangeli, as both a trained medical doctor and a film professional, was uniquely positioned to observe this phenomenon. His review of *Spellbound* mirrors Doane's statement. The screenplay "pretends to be a real and true cinematographic manual of psychoanalysis, a ridiculous simplification of the 'new science' and the use of all the gears, still usable but rusty, of Hitchcock's old narrative machine."³⁷ The film does not fare much better, in Pietrangeli's opinion, and he refuses to comment on it, simply repeating his initial opinion of the screenplay itself. "The fragile armature, delicate and capillary, of psychoanalysis, is utilized, clothed and chromed for a crude conference and this time not even emotionally fit for a thriller, with its minor suspensions, surprises, ambiguities, and chase scenes: the whole thing drowns in wordy investigations and pseudoscientific dissertations."³⁸ In both of these descriptions, in speaking of Hitchcock's "narrative machine" and its "gears" as well as the "armature" of psychoanalysis, Pietrangeli is referring to what would later become known as apparatus theory, a theoretical bridge between psychoanalysis and feminism..

The apparatus “specifies a series of relations: relations between spaces, operations, temporalities. The psyche is not a monolithic block but must, instead, be conceptualized as a dynamism of parts.”³⁹ The rusty gears of Hitchcock’s cinema, for Pietrangeli, brings this psychic dynamism to a grinding halt, as it does in Poggioli’s version of *Sorelle Materassi*. While Pietrangeli does not, in the case of Hitchcock and psychoanalysis, mention the issue of gender, both in his later film productions and elsewhere in his film criticism he demonstrates awareness of gender issues. And perhaps, as Doane writes, awareness of the apparatus was the first step towards a feminist film theory, since “feminist film theory inherits many of the assumptions of this mode of theorizing - its transference onto psychoanalysis is mediated by apparatus theory.”⁴⁰ In his discussions of actresses and their on-screen portrayals, Pietrangeli not only deals with the enunciative apparatus, but also the male gaze and other issues of gender and commodification.

DIETRICH’S ASBESTOS DRESS

Just as Pietrangeli pays special attention to issues of spectatorship and psychoanalysis, he also was acutely aware of the importance of the actress’s representation to a film’s success. In his laudatory review of *Ossessione* (1943), film on the set of which he gained his first behind-the-scenes experience as Visconti’s assistant director, Pietrangeli not only mentions that it is the kind of cinema that shows a “cultural maturity capable of combatting lazy spectating habits,”⁴¹ but emphasizes the centrality of Clara Calamai’s performance to the film’s efficacy as a “human document.” “Calamai is the true creation of the film, who from moment to moment gives life to an exemplary character through sudden or melodious outbursts of her gestures, through the suspension of her speech, obedient to an internal, secret rhythm that transcends the immediate

design of the phrase.”⁴² Pietrangeli recognizes that Calamai’s psycho-sexual conflict is the motor that moves the plot forward. As a sort of quotidian *femme fatale*, it is her unsatisfied subjectivity, her frustrated ambition and desire that allow the narrative to take place, resulting in her husband’s death as well as her own. She is not the passive object of the male gaze but rather a threat to patriarchy in the form of her husband and his business, the tavern / gas station. In short, she is a threat to stability, a sort of lack that, nonetheless, is crucial, the cornerstone of the film’s structure.

Yet Pietrangeli recognizes that without this instability, there would be no drama, a core conflict at the heart of film theory. “Film theory’s preoccupation with lack is really a preoccupation with male subjectivity, and with that in cinema which threatens constantly to undermine its stability,” the fictional, representational act that is cinema itself. As Doane says, “she *is* the problem.”⁴³ Pietrangeli’s analysis of Calamai’s performance distinguishes between the actress and her character, the divided subjectivity not only of the actress, but of the character that the actress was portraying, whose outward behavior and speech and inner psychological state were at odds. Calamai’s performance of lack, of the mask of subjectivity, this uncertainty of the truth behind the look is the tension on which this *film noir* hinges, since “the seductive power attributed to the figure of the *femme fatale* in film noir exemplifies the disparity between seeming and being, the deception, instability, and unpredictability associated with the woman... she confounds the relation between the visible and the knowable.”⁴⁴ By discussing Calamai’s “secret rhythm,” as the “true creation of the film,” Pietrangeli is hinting at the gendered tension, the idea of woman as epistemological threat, that organizes the film’s libidinal and narrative structure.

It is not only in Calamai's portrayal that Pietrangeli recognizes the importance of the female character to the film's artistic and commercial success. For Pietrangeli, in fact, the more castrating and transgressive the female character, the better. In describing Marlene Dietrich's Lola-Lola, he expresses an admiration for her performance that matches Doane's discussion of the function of the masquerade. Pietrangeli writes that Sternberg

launched into the world his beautiful robot, his seductive and dangerous toy for adults: Lola-Lola. The splendid eyes that are an invitation to drunkenness, cheekbones almost marked by a loving heartbeat, a raspy, full voice that expresses itself using few words or in a brutal song. Her hands on her hips, feet planted wide apart, her chest puffed out, provocative and irritating: that's Lola-Lola. The black stockings, the whiteness of her thighs, her skirt lifted, all following one another in a geometric progression. Attributes of sentimental sluttiness, exciting for the public. But a definite detachment holds this sensuality hostage, keeping it from superficiality. Behind those luminous eyes, those subtle, cutting lips that contradicted themselves in smiles or in scorn, in a whim and in love, each person felt, or thought he felt, a complex and indifferent soul that ironically ceded to her unfortunate destiny.⁴⁵

This lovely robot, this seductive automaton that used sexuality as a mask to hide a deeper vulnerability, this is the Marlene Dietrich that both feminists and Pietrangeli have upheld as a transgressive model of subversive femininity on screen. As Doane writes, "*apropos* of a recent performance by Marlene Dietrich, Silvia Bovenschen claims, '... we are watching a woman demonstrate the representation of a woman's body.' This type of masquerade, an excess of femininity, is aligned with the *femme fatale*."⁴⁶ It is this excess, this break, that makes the screen image so captivating for the spectator. Since this "this defamiliarization of female iconography... carries a threat, disarticulating male systems of viewing,"⁴⁷ we can assume that Pietrangeli, in a certain sense, does not identify with the classical male gaze. He does not just consume the image of Lola-Lola, her eyes, lips, thighs, without thinking of the actress, Marlene Dietrich, who resides behind the provocation. In fact, he locates the origin of Lola-Lola not only in Dietrich

herself, but in Sternberg, the creator of the image, the director, the look behind the cinematic apparatus. The interdependence of these entities, Sternberg, Dietrich, and Lola-Lola, make them difficult to separate from each other. “The woman is revealed as no longer simply the privileged object of the gaze in the cinema but the support of the cinematic image... all this heightens the eroticism, makes her more desirable, stimulates the envy of the filmmaker (‘Marlene is me.’ Sternberg once said).”⁴⁸ Yet for the on-screen image of Dietrich, as Pietrangeli intimates, awaits the “unfortunate destiny” of all actresses - she, and her image, must age.

In his review of *The Lady is Willing* or *La signora acconsente* (1942), Pietrangeli is troubled by the latest manifestation of an aging Dietrich in this film produced and directed by Mitchell Leisen. This Hollywood-produced version of the star has nothing in common with Sternberg’s *Blonde Venus*; this latest version of Dietrich, “enclosed in a scaly, silver shell, [...] sings and smiles, but she has nothing more to say to us, Marlene.”⁴⁹ This is due to her portrayal by Leisen, who rather than allowing her to perform her seductive masquerade has reduced her to a mere display, an aging body on which to hang a new product. While watching the film, Pietrangeli mentions that someone sitting near him remarked that Marlene’s dress, her “scaly, silver shell,” was a new American invention, a fabric made of glass and asbestos. The dress garnered more of the crowd’s attention than Marlene herself. Of his fellow spectator’s comment, Pietrangeli writes,

it may not be true, but it is very likely that in America they sought to ‘launch’ a new product by suggesting it through Marlene, a new ‘autarchic’ product that has all the inconstant and icy qualities of asbestos and glass. But only a mad beast of a producer and director like Leisen could have allowed Marlene to be enclosed in a similar cocoon. Perhaps it is the cocoon, in which the butterfly Dietrich, burnt out and wilting at this point, will enclose herself to die.⁵⁰

Rather than allow her a dignified performance, Leisen uses the former femme fatale as a mannequin, a spokesperson for this new product, and in so doing, ushers in the death of Dietrich as castration threat. She is a commodity and that is all. Not only does Pietrangeli's reaction to this portrayal of Dietrich foreshadow his later portrayals of the commodification of actresses and models in *La parmigiana* (1963) and *Io la conoscevo bene* (1965), but he shows a sensitivity in distinguishing between the types of performances, one a challenge to and the other an affirmation of the male gaze that seeks to objectify the female screen image. Pietrangeli's reaction towards this evolution in Dietrich's career is one of disgust - this cannot be emphasized enough. "Seeing Marlene in *The Lady is Willing*, we felt like a man who had asked for some wine and was offered a glass filled to the brim with dirty dish water."⁵¹ The lady whose true will had always been perceptible beneath the surface has been whitewashed - now she is simply "willing" to do whatever the producer asks of her, including wear a dress that, in hindsight, could have really contributed to her death due to the make-up of its material, asbestos. This uncanny, cancerous vestment represents a loss for cinema, in Pietrangeli's opinion, since the product overshadows the formerly transgressive woman who wears it. Pietrangeli develops this tension between subjectivity and objectivity in the female characters of his own films, whose perceptions of gender roles often clash with the traditional, patriarchal views of those roles.

I'M NOT A PSYCHOLOGIST, I JUST PLAY ONE IN THE MOVIES

After his experience as Visconti's assistant director on the set of *Ossessione* and the years spent as a film critic, Pietrangeli could be found collaborating on several important films, including as a narrator and screenwriter on Visconti's *La terra trema* (1948), and Rossellini's

Europa '51 (1951), *Viaggio in Italia* (1952), and *Dov'è la libertà* (1953).⁵² While it is impossible to pinpoint his exact contributions to each film, in closing this theoretical introduction to Pietrangeli's film critical and screenwriting activity, *Europa '51* offers an opportunity for a semiotic reading of Pietrangeli himself as cinematic sign since he appears in the film as an actor. As Antonio Maraldi writes, "Pietrangeli's involvement in this film is total: not only as a co-screenwriter and assistant director, but also as a brief appearance as an actor, playing the role of a doctor who administers a psychological test to the protagonist (Ingrid Bergman)." ⁵³ Not only behind the script and the camera, but in front of the camera as well in a metacinematic moment Pietrangeli, man of medicine and of cinema, can be seen doing what will come to characterize his directorial activity, investigate the psyche of a woman. Yet here, he shows the psychological investigatory process in all of its brutality, superficiality, and destructive potential.

The question then becomes, why did he and Rossellini decide to portray the psychological-medical institution, of which Pietrangeli was at least a partial member, in such a harsh light? A potential response to this question can be found in Slavoj Žižek's reading of the film in his chapter "Why is *Woman* a Symptom of Man," from his work, *Enjoy Your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*. By reading Pietrangeli's presence *into* or *between the lines* of this Marxist-Lacanian examination of Rossellini's encounter with Ingrid Bergman, Pietrangeli's presence not only illuminates Žižek's interpretation of Bergman's relation to Rossellini, but inversely, Žižek's interpretation of this relation also informs Pietrangeli's directorial relationship with women. This double helix of signification, doubly informing the theories and practices of Žižek and Pietrangeli, can be seen as a further example of Žižek's Lacanian declaration that in an encounter with the Real, the absence of ideology, "the only letter

that nobody can evade, that sooner or later reaches us, i.e., the letter which has each of us as infallible addressee, is death.” Žižek’s letter to Pietrangeli, this chapter in which Pietrangeli is an “uncanny” absence fills in some of the theoretical blanks in Pietrangeli’s films, Pietrangeli’s “letter” to Žižek.

Žižek, without knowing it, mentions Pietrangeli in his chapter on Bergman and Rossellini. Pietrangeli is a theoretical “third wheel” lurking between the lines of Žižek’s writing on Rossellini and Bergman, a Marxist writer playing the role of psychoanalyst on the pages of a Marxist psychoanalytical philosopher’s study. He is a sort of mirror *within the text* of Žižek himself, as well as a mirror of Rossellini, since both Pietrangeli as psychiatrist and Rossellini as director analyze and decide the fate of Bergman’s Irene. In the summary of Rossellini’s film, a summary entitled “*Europa ’51: Escape into guilt*,” Žižek outlines the numerous traumas that characterize the plot development of Bergman’s Irene, including the suicide of her son, the ensuing survivor’s guilt, the ideological encounters with Communism and Catholicism, and ultimately, the law. After getting involved with a thief, persuading him to surrender rather than turn him in herself, she is proclaimed mentally incompetent by a court of law, an incompetence brought on by the shock of the death of her child. She is sent to a psychiatric hospital and there has her cinematic encounter with Pietrangeli.

Žižek writes, “after a series of tests, a cold and distanced psychiatrist proclaims her insane; the family leaves her and, at the end of the film, we see her alone in a cold and sterile cell, while in front of the hospital, the poor whom she tried to help gather and hail her as a new saint.”⁵⁴ This “cold and distanced psychiatrist” is in fact Pietrangeli, and his role in the film in which he diagnoses the mental illness of the female protagonist puts him in the Lacanian position

of “subject supposed to know” but like Rossellini himself, this subject position is characterized by a radical failure, namely, the failure of psychoanalysis to conceptualize the female. If Pietrangeli embodies this failure as a psychiatrist in *Europa '51*, then one could say he spends the rest of his career behind the camera trying to make up for it.

This study is not alone in reading Pietrangeli as an “uncanny moment” in Italian cinema. As Fullwood explains, “Pietrangeli was a lone voice in *commedia all'italiana*, and arguably in Italian cinema more widely, to highlight the distance which had opened up between both traditional and contemporary Italian society’s conception of women, and their own desires for autonomy.”⁵⁵ His film production anticipated and reflected social changes in gender roles and as such, death looms large over many of his films, including *Io la conosco bene*. Not only, however, did his last full-length feature end with a suicide, but Pietrangeli’s own life, his own directorial activity, ended with his death on-set. He drowned off the coast of Gaeta while setting up a shot for the film *Come, quando, perché*, in July 1968. The cinema that he used as an investigative tool seems to have swallowed him up - he perished while struggling with the activity of representing. Yet Žižek would say that with suicide, “the only successful act,” with which Pietrangeli begins and ends his directorial career,

the difference masculine/feminine no longer coincides with that of active/passive, spiritual/sensual, culture/nature, etc. The very masculine *activity* is already an escape from the abysmal dimension of the feminine *act*. The “break with nature” is on the side of woman, and man’s compulsive activity is ultimately nothing but a desperate attempt to repair the traumatic incision of this rupture.⁵⁶

Pietrangeli’s female characters, often described as “lacerated” or “bearing signs of rupture,” are in fact the ones who act, while Pietrangeli’s directorial *activity* records this laceration. In speaking about this tendency of recording this social change in his female characters, the director

states that, “they are all bound together by the same ‘red thread,’ not only represented by my preference for this or that type of woman, but more so by the various aspects that the journey towards emancipation of Italian women could have taken.”⁵⁷ The political and social struggle of his characters speaks to a larger, epochal change, while Pietrangeli’s directorial mission is to record this process of change as it happens. In Žižek’s terms, the *act* is that of the Italian woman and Pietrangeli’s *activity* simply records the actions of his protagonists as they attempt to break with the ideological constraints with which they have been saddled.

These gendered “acts” are as follows, in chronological order according to the films I will discuss in this study. In *Il sole negli occhi* (1953), Celestina, the protagonist, wrestles with finding her identity as well as dealing with work, love, friends and ultimately single motherhood moving from the countryside to Rome. In *Nata di marzo* (1957), the titular character Francesca, six years before the publication of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, discovers that being a wife alone does not satisfy her variable nature. With *Adua e le compagne* (1960), Pietrangeli’s darkest and most political film (it should come as no surprise that I have drawn parallels here with Andrea Dworkin and other radical feminists), the director shows how gender functions within structures of social and legal domination. *Fantasma a Roma* (1961) sees the filmmakers grappling with the conflictual intersection of Roman history, post-industrial society, and metacinema, anticipating Gilberto Perez’s characterization of film as “the material ghost.” Pina (Sandra Milo), the protagonist in *La visita* (1963) must decide between the lesser of two evils, marriage to an unworthy man or being alone and Dora, in *La parmigiana* (1963), poses a problem to the spectator accustomed to seeing women cast as certain types since she defies facile characterization. *Il magnifico cornuto* (1964) is cinematic parable about the dangers of jealousy

in marriage, a exposition of infidelity and insecurity and a meditation on the power of vision. Finally, with *Io la conosco bene* (1965), Pietrangeli explores the effects of the male gaze and how it functions in the world of cinema and in particular, how it works on the skin of the the female subject *seen*, or coded, as object-to-be-looked-at.

These “acts,” portrayed in film as the conflicts that Pietrangeli’s protagonists face, revolve around gender, around suppositions about what a man is supposed to be or what a woman is supposed to do. Pietrangeli’s films and the conflicts in them center on the cultural superego and how it preserves the status quo against which his characters rebel. His accidental death on-set while shooting a film thus pales in comparison with the powerful life-and-death conflicts he portrayed in his films. In other words, the cinematic death which ends his career as director, the one represented in *Io la conosco bene*, is bestowed with all of the powerful significance that his accidental death, a meaningless tragedy on-set, is missing.

The rest of this study will be dedicated to showing how Pietrangeli, in his film praxis, carries out the theoretical concerns I have discussed here, namely his preoccupation with psychology and how it is used in film, issues of gender, especially female portrayals, and how cinema is used and how it affects the spectator; in other words, how do Pietrangeli’s theories and praxis anticipate the fields of gender studies, psychoanalytic theory, spectator studies and apparatus theory? Do Pietrangeli’s films live up to the rigorous standards the director himself has set for cinema in his own critical writings? As we shall see, this varies from case to case, from film to film. What I have attempted to show in this theoretical introduction to Pietrangeli was that the high stakes he plays with in his films were not coincidental but very intentionally drawn out of the director’s own cinema theory, outlined here, with the special attention he pays to the

spectator, the portrayal of females by actresses, and his awareness of the cinematic apparatus, the self-referential or metacinematic nature of his films. After his own premature death on a film set in 1968, finally, over forty years later, it is time to give Pietrangeli the critical and theoretical attention he deserves, since the issues he investigated both in theory and in praxis continue to be problematic and relevant today, if not more so.

Chapter One.

Maid from the Margins: *Il sole negli occhi*

“More than one time I’ve been asked what is the ‘thesis’ of my film, or what it is that I want to show with *Il sole negli occhi*. I don’t know if it is too ambitious or too modest to say that I wanted to show absolutely nothing, at least in the usual way of conceiving things.”⁵⁸

“He went to her only in the evenings, and knew nothing of how she spent her time during the day, any more than of her past; so little, indeed, that he had not even the tiny, initial clue which, by allowing us to imagine what we do not know, stimulates a desire for knowledge. And so he never asked himself what she might be doing, or what her life had been.”⁵⁹

SUN IN HER EYES?

Pietrangeli’s first film, *Il sole negli occhi* (1953), was supposed to be entitled *Celestina*, the title corresponding with the name of the protagonist, a country girl who comes to Rome to work as a maid. Yet as Pietrangeli himself admits in an interview with Lino Dal Frà in *Cinema Nuovo*, maids don’t draw a public. “It was a grave error,” Pietrangeli states, “because the work was presented and publicized without specifying the tone and the characteristics of the film. The definitive title is simply all wrong... *Celestina* seems to me still today the title that most fits the story, simple and modest.”⁶⁰ Accompanying the director’s admission that his formal decisions were impacted by fiscal concerns, Pietrangeli also states that “I’ve been asked by numerous parties what is the ‘thesis’ of my film, or what I wanted to show with *Il sole negli occhi*. I don’t know if it is overly ambitious or overly modest to say that I did not want to show anything, at least not anything with its usual meaning.”⁶¹ Not only was the title wrong, but Pietrangeli wanted to defy a certain standard of cinematic representation, a standard in which maids were marginal characters, not protagonists. From the outset of the director’s debut, the content of the film is in

an antagonistic position with cinematic norms, although it was not packaged that way. *Il sole negli occhi* or even worse, the English translation of the title, *Empty Eyes*, immediately implies that the protagonist has a sort of visual impairment, an inability to see clearly, a naïveté that reduces Celestina (Irene Galter) to a passive observer, unseeing, a sort of late-neorealist heroine of *feuilletons*. She, like the protagonist Barberina in *Una fra tante* by Emilia Ferretti Viola, comes to the big city and by entering into the economic sphere and seeking work, she exposes herself to both economic and sexual exploitation. But unlike this pitiful character, Celestina also manipulates and, in some ways, masters her new environment. Celestina, therefore, does not reflect a certain social class or type, but is instead the representation of a conflict between two historical moments. As she moves from Castelluccio to Rome, she also transitions from rural to urban and from a family structure to personal autonomy and independence. The move is not simply a geographical or a temporal shift from past to present, but a psychological appropriation of selfhood and a questioning of patriarchal social norms.

With this film, Pietrangeli is attempting to merge two narratological trends - the “woman’s film” and the neorealist project - making it simultaneously a historical and universal story, but one that speaks primarily to the female spectator. It should not surprise the film scholar to learn that Suso Cecchi D’Amico was involved, along with Lucio Battistrada and Ugo Pirro, in the writing of the screenplay.⁶² Of the eight hands that contributed to the writing of the film, at least two were female, a factor that contributes to its hybrid nature. Of the woman’s film, Mary Ann Doane writes, “the films deal with a female protagonist and often appears to allow her significant access to point of view structures and the enunciative level of the filmic discourse.”⁶³ Pietrangeli’s film follows Doane’s definition by allowing Celestina to access the enunciative

structures of the film, but unlike many of the films in Doane's study, Pietrangeli's film does not just "appear" to speak from Celestina's point of view; it actually does. Throughout the film, Celestina learns to manipulate her situation and her vocal capacity becomes ever more decisive. While there are moments when she struggles, the engine that moves the film is Celestina's ebb and flow of control over her own destiny. The film's title, however, belies this enunciative ability, whereas had the film been entitled *Celestina*, the issue of subjectivity would have been more clear. Because she ostensibly cannot see clearly, the spectator is constantly doubting her, undermining her. The film is problematic because it is packaged as a "woman's film," when it is really a film about women. The title, however, sows the seed of doubt in the spectator regarding Celestina's vision and judgment, setting the viewer up to be dismissive of or question Celestina's ability to act autonomously.

Doane's definition of "woman's film" clarifies the difference between this type of film and a "film about women." "There is something extremely compelling about women's films with their constantly recurring figures of the unwed mother, the waiting wife, the abandoned mistress, the frightened newlywed or the anguished mother... For these mythemes of femininity trade on their familiarity and recognizability."⁶⁴ In the woman's film, we are used to a female protagonist in some way suffering, incomplete, unable to fully occupy the role of subject. The enunciative authority in the woman's film is always the male director. Doane continues that "the woman's film does not provide us with an access to pure and authentic subjectivity, much as we might like it to. It provides us instead with a repertoire of poses - classical feminine poses and assumptions about the female appropriation of the gaze."⁶⁵ As the title of Pietrangeli's film suggests, Celestina's gaze is faulty, dysfunctional, broken. Yet the film itself refutes this titular

assumption, which is perhaps why Pietrangeli ultimately regretted using this melodramatic title *Il sole negli occhi* rather than the more fitting *Celestina*.

The question of woman's ability to look with authority is not a new one in film studies. The blindness the title attributes to Celestina is a symptom of her overall "lack" as the female psychological condition. According to Kaja Silverman's general position on women's enunciative power in film, "what this castration [ie. blindness] in fact entails is her exclusion from symbolic power and privilege. That exclusion is articulated as a passive relation to classic cinema's scopic and auditory regimes as an incapacity for looking, speaking, or listening authoritatively, on the one hand, and with what might be called a 'receptivity' to the male gaze and voice, on the other."⁶⁶ Not only does Celestina's blindness imply that she is a partial subject, but also that she is vulnerable to male violence, whether rhetorical, psychological, or physical. Yet if one examines the film itself, this is not entirely true. Yes, Celestina is excluded from "symbolic power and privilege" in the form of patriarchy, but she also finds an alternative in her community of women, the servants. The film and the title are at odds; the sign of the title contradicts the signifying process that the film narrative and form represent.

As Pietrangeli himself states, he wanted to say "nothing," with this film; his authorial position is one of self-effacement, an attempt to remove himself *as much as possible* from the film-making process. While this is an impossible goal, his attempt to do so can be seen as an ontological counter-investment in his protagonist, whose dislocations and relocations, whose linguistic and epistemological development, dominate the narrative. What the film presents to the spectator is the eclipsing of the authorial, male signature with the depiction of a female subject, not a mere female image as absence from the text. Pietrangeli disavows his own authorial desire

(“Non volevo dire niente” or “I didn’t want to say anything” but merely show...) in favor of a female-driven plot. Teresa De Lauretis’ declaration about the scope of feminist film studies fits Pietrangeli’s cinematic programme precisely when she writes in *Alice Doesn’t* that “the question then is how to reconstruct or organize vision from the ‘impossible’ place of female desire.”⁶⁷ Pietrangeli’s attempt to render passive the apparatus with a camera that reproduces or simply “shows” the female image can be seen as anticipating his later attempt to make visible the apparatus (see Chapter Eight on *Io la conosco bene*). Rather than a protagonist who is defined by a gaze that “is depicted as partial, flawed, unreliable, and self-entrapping,”⁶⁸ as the title imposed by the producers suggests, the question of Celestina’s (in)ability to see is ultimately undermined by her definitive seeing of the truth and her refusal to enter into a relationship with Fernando, a conclusion as “happy ending” that would have upheld the patriarchal, Oedipal construction that the film problematizes throughout the narrative.

To reiterate, by portraying Celestina as a desiring female protagonist, Pietrangeli aligns his filmic text with this “impossible” place of female libidinal desire, which is why he has no thesis in the traditional sense of the word. Celestina’s vision is interwoven with her desire in various places - the more she desires, the less clearly she sees, and vice versa. Pietrangeli’s film, unlike most narrative film, does NOT “work for Oedipus,” in De Lauretis’ terminology. Unlike the heroine of traditional narrative cinema who “has to move on, like Freud’s little girl, and take her place where Oedipus will find her awaiting *him*,”⁶⁹ Celestina moves on alone, or better, in the company of women. The narrative of Pietrangeli’s film, which refuses Oedipal resolution, highlights the problematic nature of Celestina’s desire in defining her subjectivity as a woman.

The following examination of the formal elements of the film will serve as proof of Pietrangeli's refusal of the Oedipal structure of traditional film narrative.

FEMMI-NEOREALISMO

More than one critic noted the relationship between Pietrangeli's film and De Sica's film that came out the previous year, *Umberto D* (1952). Before examining the plot elements and composition of *Il sole negli occhi*, it is important to highlight Pietrangeli's development of this marginal maid character from De Sica's film. This intertextual sign shared by the two films can be seen not only as a link to Pietrangeli's involvement in the theoretical development of neorealism, but also his distinctly female divergence from this critically-acclaimed but relatively unpopular cinematic moment.⁷⁰ Several critics note the stylistic importance of De Sica's maid. In a mixed review of *Umberto D*, André Bazin comments upon the episode as well as its containment within the narrative structure stating that it is formally the strongest moment of the film but adds little to the story itself. "The most beautiful sequence of the film, in which the little maid gets up, has - strictly speaking - no dramatic resonance at all: the girl gets up, potters about in the kitchen, chases away the ants, grinds the coffee ... and all these 'unimportant' actions are recorded for us in strict temporal continuity."⁷¹ The "unimportance" of these events, however, highlights their formal value for Neorealists, who, following Zavattini's formula of "stalking" the character, inevitably find more interest when these events are in some way Other to them. The domestic sphere, the daily nature of this routine, and the feminine nature of these activities imbue them with formal interest for these critics. Their stylistic curiosity stems from the knowledge to know more about the maid, but the demands of traditional cinematic narrative

require that the scene end so that the plot can move forward. Bazin questions Zavattini about the inclusion of this scene and why it is so interesting, and Zavattini's response, included in Bazin's article, demonstrates the screenwriter's reliance on the female image.

When I pointed out to Zavattini that this last scene sustained unfailing interest while Umberto D going to bed did not, he replied, 'You see that it is not the aesthetic principle which is at issue, only the way it is used. The more the scriptwriter turns his back on drama and spectacle, the more he intends his story to conform to the living continuity of reality, the more the choice of the minute events which form its texture becomes delicate and problematic. If I bored you with Umberto's sore throat but moved you to tears with my little heroine's coffee grinder, it only proves that in the second case I knew how to choose what I didn't know how to imagine in the first case.'⁷²

Zavattini's syntax here is revelatory: his choice to include the pregnant maid sequence represents, for him, a closing in on reality and a rejection of drama and spectacle. Yet the psychological drama of the maid, soon to become a single mother, is really the organizing tension behind this scene. The maid, instead, is a plot detail, a "delicate and problematic" object inserted into the narrative for effect, a foil to the titular character, Umberto D, rather than a subject in her own right. Her subjectivity is elided, covered over by the narrative flow which is organized around Umberto and his struggle as *pensionato*, not around her. The psychological turmoil that the problem of her pregnancy represents is confined to the character herself, as if the filmmakers were ultimately to have said, "that is HER problem to resolve, not ours." She is a sort of stylistic vignette that imbues the film with a realistic tone, a formal stylistic marker whose subjectivity is hinted at and then ignored, relegated to the level of realist description.

Bazin is not the only critic who notes the importance of this scene. Gilles Deleuze picks up where Bazin left off and does address the symbolic value of the maid's pregnancy. Deleuze, in fact, begins his *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* with a discussion of this moment from *Umberto D*,

which for him represents a cinema based on the unfolding of sound and vision in real time, a wedding of ontology to film that for him defines neorealism. Yet this critic commits the opposite error of reading the maid not as a woman, a psychological enigma, but as Woman, a symbol of social injustice, a sort of Eve of neorealism, painfully birthing a style, a “pure optical situation.”

He declares that:

the young maid going into the kitchen in the morning, making a series of mechanical, weary gestures, cleaning a bit, driving the ants away from a water fountain, picking up the coffee grinder, stretching out her foot to close the door with her toe. And her eyes meet her pregnant woman’s belly, and it is as though all the misery in the world were going to be born. This is how, in an ordinary or everyday situation, in the course of a series of gestures, which are insignificant but all the more obedient to simple sensory-motor schemata, what has suddenly been brought about is a *pure optical situation* to which the little maid has no response or reaction. The eyes, the belly, that is what an encounter is...⁷³

This filmic moment, for Deleuze, is “pregnant” with signification because it represents for him the crisis of the movement-image in which the filmmaker, De Sica, is taking a step away from action-image towards a cinema based on representing time in its duration. Yet Deleuze, like De Sica, relegates the maid to the domestic sphere where she is trapped not only by her profession, but by her body as well. She is an obstacle; her belly is in her way, an obstacle, just as this filmic moment resides outside of the narrative unfolding of the story of *Umberto D*. This descriptive moment of realism, this encounter, is perhaps a purely optical situation for them, but within the maid, if the spectator looks hard enough, one can intimate a psychological drama unfolding beneath the banal gestures of domesticity. The consequences of this interior drama are marginalized, however, to the narrative unfolding of the titular character, Umberto D himself, a character based on De Sica’s own father. The maternal conflict retreats into the background as the paternal dominates the film’s plot.

Doane discusses the female position in a famous photograph in similar terms. This maid in *Umberto D* assumes the same position as the marginalized female gaze in Robert Doisneau's realist photograph "Un Regard Oblique" (1948), a photo that has at its center a woman as object of the gaze even though her centrality would suggest that she were the subject of the photo. The subject of the photo, Doane argues, is the peripheral male subject whose gaze defines the photo, and Doane asks, "what is it that makes the photograph not only readable but pleasurable - at the expense of woman?"⁷⁴ Like the maid, whose quotidian suffering and toil hints at a subjectivity that is ultimately undermined by the looking of the spectator and the filmmaker, this false subject of the photo serves as a guarantor of our pleasure, the dominance of our gaze to consume the image, in this case, the "realistic" image of a pregnant young woman who will, in all likelihood, be abandoned by the father of her child. She stands in to guarantee the realistic style and our spectatorial and emotional catharsis (Zavattini's "tears," Deleuze's "all the misery in the world") in an operation, when seen from this perspective, that borders on representational sadism. We take pleasure in seeing our maid suffer and in knowing that there is no hope of resolution for her. As Gilberto Perez writes of the maid's functioning in the plot of *Umberto D*,

when the old man at last despairs of life and, intending to do himself in, leaves the room where he is not wanted, says goodbye to the maid, gets on a streetcar and sees her receding from him at an upstairs window, something remarkable happens: suddenly the whole world seems to recede irretrievably, suddenly what had seemed close at hand seems far away, suddenly the illusion of presentness gives way to a vertiginous pastness. No other work so chillingly conveys the mood of suicide.⁷⁵

While it may seem paradoxical, De Sica allows *Umberto* the luxury of contemplating a death by suicide - he moves away from an undesirable situation towards a possible, if tragic, resolution. He does not go through with it, however, and is saved by his canine friend, Flike. The maid

remains closed, a picture in the window frame of a domestic space. While the value of life is ultimately, in some way, reaffirmed by Umberto's love for Flike, we spectators are left wondering what will become of the maid and her baby? In my examination of the formal elements of *Il sole negli occhi*, I hope to show that while Pietrangeli's film relies on Celestina's failures to move the plot forward, these shortcomings are learning experiences counterbalanced by Celestina's gradual assumption of self-awareness and self-consciousness. Pietrangeli's final film product is a working through of the issues of desire and knowledge, central to the subjectivity of the female protagonist, Celestina.

The story "embodies a working through of desire,"⁷⁶ along the lines of the traditional narrative, yet, in this case, the gender roles of subject-object as found in the classical film structure are reversed. One may ask, was this a conscious choice on Pietrangeli's part to "turn *Umberto D* on its head" from a gendered perspective? It seems unlikely. *Umberto D* was released in 1952, only a year before *Il sole negli occhi*, although Pietrangeli had already elaborated a treatment for his film in 1951 entitled *Il lungo viaggio di Celestina*.⁷⁷ Consequently, the similarities between the maid characters are purely coincidental and it is impossible to say that the former was a source of inspiration for the latter. What is worth noting is that Pietrangeli takes a character from the margins of the filmic text, a text that has become canonical and exemplary in film studies, *Umberto D*, and makes of this marginal character a subject of her own narrative. Celestina does not submit to the masochistic position required by the traditional story, nor does the film end in Oedipal resolution. The woman is the subject-hero and the man is the object-to-be-overcome, simply put, although the film is more complicated as it unfolds. As Maurizio Grande has written about the *commedia all'italiana*, the comic form relies on the maladroito

entrance of the subject into a pre-established society, a movement from a pre-social to a socialized being.⁷⁸ This is the case for Celestina. Yet unlike many of the protagonists, who are then cast out again (hence Grande's use of the term *epos capovolto*) Celestina's process of adaptation to the new society has proven to be relatively successful, professionally and socially. Her emotive stumbling block, her obstacle, is her love for Fernando, the object of her affection, and her resulting pregnancy. The gender roles are reversed: Fernando is the *homme fatal* and Celestina is the heroine of Pietrangeli's urban epic.

SERVILE ITALY: FROM WHORE TO CONSUMER

The process of adaptation and becoming as entrance into a new society is thematically present from the beginning of the film. Celestina is first seen in motion, running toward the bus that will take her from Castelluccio to Rome. Pietrangeli emphasizes her liminal or transitory nature; she is in a state of flux, a movement from rural to urban, from pre-cultural to cultured. Ostensibly, she reflects the state of a society in transition and appears as a sort of allegory for Italy during the Economic Miracle, a metaphor, a symbol. What Pietrangeli is doing is attempting to tie together the disparate formal tendencies of realism and of allegory to create a unique exploration of female subjectivity that is grounded in reality but finds resonance in the symbolic as well, giving her protagonist a symbolic existence usually reserved for male characters. Consequently, Celestina's subjectivity is one in formation, which explains Pietrangeli's preoccupation in showing her linguistic, psychological, and emotional development while in Rome.

The attention our director pays to exploring Celestina's psyche reflects his technique of exploring tensions and contradictions as the protagonist adapts to her new life in a post-industrial, urban environment. Celestina's first job as a servant is a learning experience, but it is also an opportunity for Celestina to enter into the realm of the symbolic by expressing her personal dissatisfaction— what Piera Detassis calls, “the recognition of the break, the sign of laceration, the certainty of the impossibility of returning to the past.”⁷⁹ Her numerous failures and misunderstandings are painful for the spectator to watch, and in fact, the plot is clearly propelled forward by the sadistic mechanism of Celestina's inability to satisfy her employer and her knowledge of being stuck in her new position. Her confinement to the domestic sphere, her frustration in dealing with her boss and her boss's baby who cries non-stop, and her loneliness are all symptoms of alienation that she must overcome. Yet before she can overcome them, she must recognize her position, express her anxiety in speech. In a moment of formal acknowledgment of the female voice, Pietrangeli shows Celestina writing a letter to her family. Her difficulty in expressing herself comes through not only in the contents of her letter, her admitting that she “understands nothing” about these *padroni*, but also in Pietrangeli's use of dialect. Her improper Italian marks her as different, as Other, so that her lack of understanding resides on a linguistic as well as a semantic level. In Marxist terms, she, the proletariat, does not speak the same language as her bourgeois employers.

In an article entitled “*Why Dialect?*” (*Perchè il dialetto*), Pietrangeli responds to the question about his use of dialect in the film in much the same terms, offering a Gramscian motive behind his formal choice. Rather than put a false, cultivated Italian of the upper classes in the mouths of his lower-class characters, he chooses to use a more realistic language, dialect, the

spoken language “of the people.” He also takes the opportunity to comment that Italian, like Italy, unified less than a century ago (at that time), is a language split in two, much like Celestina herself. Pietrangeli emphasizes the link between language and psychology when he says “... I must say that I tried consistently to make every line, even in the construction of the sentence, appropriate for the dialect and the psychology in dialect of the character who had to speak it.”⁸⁰ Celestina’s psyche can only be expressed in dialect as she writes home about not understanding where she is or how this new household economy works. Her awkwardness in expressing herself mirrors her professional and social awkwardness. When she is forced outside one Sunday, her employer gives her a pair of her old shoes to wear - Celestina walks uncomfortably past the group of fellow maids and their beaus (including Fernando) who mock her inability to navigate her new environment in these high heels, a fetish object of both femininity and luxury, and Celestina’s attempt to “walk in her mistress’s shoes” shows her to be lacking in experience. As the object of their gaze and of their scrutiny, her awkwardness as she walks in her mistress’s shoes causes an outburst of laughter. Because of her lack of ability, symbol of her general Lacanian, feminine Lack, Celestina “is there as the butt of the joke - a “dirty joke” which ... is always constructed at the expense of woman.”⁸¹ While in this case, Celestina reacts with hostility towards her fellow maids, she soon discovers that they speak dialect as well. The discovery of their mutually shared difference and profession creates a bond between the women. This leads to the discovery that what we viewers perceived as a lack in Celestina is merely inexperience.

When Celestina returns from her first Sunday out and about in her mistress’s shoes, she discovers her brothers awaiting her. She lets them in and they inform her that they will be emigrating to Australia. She replies by asking “so I’ll never go back to Castelluccio?” Her

brothers have sold the house in order to pay for their trip and with this selling of her pre-symbolic past, Celestina is irreversibly thrust into the present, alone, and with no familial structure. Her brothers, surrogate father figures representative of and heir to patriarchy, are shown as failures, *morti di fame*, incapable of providing for themselves. In fact, when Celestina's employers discover her brothers in their house, the husband remarks that they are probably thieves. This difficult and pathetic scene which ends with Celestina chasing after her brothers into the staircase of the building, begging them to write her while she weeps desperately, also ends with Celestina's entry into another "family," that of the servants in her building, a female chorus comprised of different dialects and regional representatives. These maids embody alternative ways of conceptualizing the role of servant. Marcella, for example, will become Celestina's confidante and will show her the ropes, while another, named Italia, later in the film becomes a prostitute on the side to increase her personal finances. Rather than laugh at Celestina as they had previously (also due to Celestina's initial diffidence) they adopt her, take her into their fold.

Not only does this female chorus anticipate Pietrangeli's later films, such as *Adua e le compagne* (1960), but it also provides an alternative metaphor for the linguistic variation that represents Italy itself, comprised of disparate female voices. This allegorical structure is later used, for example, by Lina Wertmüller in *Love and Anarchy* (1973), with the different dialects of the prostitutes at the table in the brothel suggesting a historical Italy as a servant or prostitute.

Millicent Marcus, in *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, states that

In keeping with a long literary tradition, Wertmüller has made this house of prostitution a figure for Italy in all her anguished history of foreign conquest and moral compromise. 'Oh, servile Italy,' Dante wrote, 'inn of pain / Ship without a pilot in a great storm / Not a woman of the provinces, but of a brothel' (*Purg*, VI.

76-78). Like Dante, Wertmuller identifies Italy with the whore in her physical beauty, which has been ravished by so many conquerors, and in her willingness to accede to dishonest foreign embraces for immediate personal gain. Thus when Wertmuller gives her prostitutes accents from all over the country, she is doing more than adding linguistic variety to her dialogue, she is making a bitter commentary on Italy's history of whoring for short-term political gain.⁸²

Pietrangeli's maids, with their multitude of dialects, are the forerunners of Wertmuller's prostitutes, both of whom come to represent an Italy that is not simply a whore, but servile. This class of working women, whose history has largely been marginalized in favor of an Imperial male history, is given an opportunity to speak in these representations which should be read as alternatives to, and in opposition of, patriarchal discourses. These are the contradictions of the "Economic Miracle" that come to light in Pietrangeli's film.

Celestina, once brought into the fold of her fellow servants, is still desperate, depressed, longing for the past. She cries as she does laundry on the rooftop, surrounded by her new companions. Marcella shows concern for her new friend who bemoans the fact that now she's stuck in Rome forever, being a servant ("*devo stare sempre qua, a fare la serva!*"). In what must be recognized as a rare cinematic moment of female mentoring and solidarity, this wiser and more experienced servant woman suggests that Celestina look at things differently. This moment is in fact an illustration of later Italian feminist practice, what Adriana Cavarero calls *affidamento*, roughly translated as "entrusting."⁸³ "To value in oneself 'the excess' recognized in the other woman, and to make of this disparity a measure of the symbolic and political female order, constitute the keystone of this theory that is developed by these practices."⁸⁴ Not only does this sharing of their mutual dissatisfaction create discourse and friendship, but the possibility for a re-evaluation of identity. "The desire for symbolic and political existence - and therefore the positive and affirmative character of this desire - substitutes negativity and victimization."⁸⁵

Marcella not only points out that they are all in the same boat, all disgraced and poor (“*siamo tutte disgraziate*”) but that Celestina has the opportunity to make the best out of the situation in which she finds herself. When she tells Celestina, “you need to change your system,” Marcella is in fact suggesting a re-evaluation of the semiotics of Celestina’s situation and what it means to the younger woman to be maid. While from a certain point of view, being a servant is a difficult fate to accept, Marcella points out that there are positive aspects - for one, they are free to go out and have fun. These women, inserted into the household economies of other families, are not subject to the same paternalistic regulation that they were as simply wives or daughters. They are permitted a margin of freedom to indulge themselves with dancing, movies, dinners, and day trips *fuori porta*. This allows them a limited autonomy that they did not have otherwise, that Celestina had never experienced in Castelluccio. In fact, these servant women are forming their own micro-economies; they have become consumers.

This is true of their sexual adventures as well, a issue which continues to be a struggle for a sexual liberated, modern woman, witness to the double sexual standards of gender. Herbert Marcuse, in describing our post-industrial society as an “unfree society,” points out the dangers of indulging too fully. “This society,” he writes, “turns everything it touches into a potential source of progress *and* exploitation, of drudgery *and* satisfaction, of freedom *and* of oppression. Sexuality is no exception.”⁸⁶ Pietrangeli shows this to be true with his protagonist Celestina, who after her first Sunday out with her friends, forgets her curfew, giddy with her amorous feelings for Fernando. When Celestina arrives at her post, she is wearing the make-up her female friends applied for her. Her mistress yells at her, reprimanding her not only for her tardiness, but also for her appearance. The mistress remarks that she is looks like a whore and that she has “learned as

quickly as the others.” To a certain extent, this is true; she has learned, she has adapted, revealing the hypocrisy of this mistress who demands that she learn, but only *certain* things. Celestina is coming to see that desire in an industrialized society is fulfilled in the pleasures of consumption, pleasures that require a knowledge of their consequences. Expressing her sexual desire, even in a limited way, such as dancing with Fernando and applying beauty products to enhance her appearance, has resulted in her being called a whore. Her sentimental education cannot be complete without the stumbling block of female sexuality. As the film continues, Celestina becomes more adept at manipulating these consequences, until she meets with resistance from the male protagonist, Fernando, as well as her employers in the form of families and couples. The dynamics, power struggles, and psychological conditions of couple-hood can be found in all of Pietrangeli’s films, in one way or another, and this is true here as well, for while Pietrangeli is mostly remembered as the “director of women,” in fact his films are almost always about a couple. Detassis defines this conflict within Pietrangeli’s films as the “irreducibility of the female world to the male world.”⁸⁷ The result of this gendered conflict will be Celestina’s inability to successfully reinsert herself into an Oedipal familial structure, the central conflict in the remainder of the film. With her brothers as surrogate father figures long gone, Celestina’s search for another Oedipal “master” proves to be more difficult than traditional cinema would have spectators believe.

THE RIDDLE OF THE SERVANT

Within Pietrangeli’s film, we spectators witness Celestina’s transformation, at the level of the plot, from a passive to an active expression of femininity. Accompanying this transformation

is a shift in Celestina's relationship to the Oedipal structure of the family; not only does she become less servile and more self-sufficient, but she begins to challenge certain patriarchal structures within the film. This can be seen in Celestina's various jobs. At her first post, in her desperation to stop the her infant charge from crying, Celestina tries to use trick she heard about from one of her fellow maids. She takes the baby in the kitchen and opens the gas valve - but instead of letting the baby breathe the gas and fall asleep, like she was supposed to, she lights the burner and holds the baby over the flame. This causes the baby to cry, waking her master and mistress who fire her on the spot, the mistress going so far as to accuse her of attempting infanticide. She begs these tyrannical "parents" to keep her on, despite their cruelty and their mistreatment of her, fearing expulsion from the nest. Her first maladroit attempt at being proactive and undermining her masters and their tacit understanding that she must suffer in silence results in Celestina turning to the church, to a priest (another Oedipal father) who places her in her second position as a servant to a poor, elderly couple of Sicilian immigrants.

This childless couple is one of the most apparent Freudian structures in the film. Celestina becomes for them not only a servant, but a sort of surrogate daughter, and they even go so far as to leave her their land in Canicattì. Her status, therefore, momentarily shifts from protagonist to object-to-be-desired since she now has the possibility of a dowry. This also explains the presence of the Sicilian policeman who becomes Celestina's suitor, a temporary intrusion into the plot of this figure of surveillance and patriarchy who attempts to deviate the narrative and re-establish the Oedipal structure. De Lauretis observes that "in Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* the hero's quest or action is directed toward 'the sphere of action of a princess (a sought-for person) and of her father.'"⁸⁸ Yet this Oedipal structure will prove faulty in

a number of ways in Pietrangeli's film. Celestina is the party who seeks Fernando through most of the film, she who has no father. In fact, as Detassis has noted of the director's films, "the father is inexorably expelled from Pietrangeli's universe."⁸⁹ Throughout Celestina's professional trajectory, she is shown dealing with the mistress of the household. The women are the stronger member of the couple, the male or father often absent, mealy-mouthed, or physically deficient. One is morbidly obese and the Sicilian professor is frail and malnourished, and as he has failed to produce an heir, impotent. An expert in Dante, this erudite scholar spends all of his extra money on rare books, leaving little with which to support his "family" - he is hardly the breadwinner-type. A scene in the market at Campo de' Fiori, the comments in Roman dialect from the vendors who say that the professor has ruined himself with study, and the return home with too-few groceries in a light basket, all serve as testament to Pietrangeli's exposition of the condition of hunger in which Celestina finds herself. Yet Celestina's libidinal desire, here expressed in her desire for sustenance, violates the passivity to which her role relegates her. At a certain point, she can stand the gnawing at her stomach no longer and dashes across the street to a butcher's shop, where she uses her salary to buy a cut of meat, "*tutto*," the whole thing, which she then shares with her elderly "parents" who express satisfaction and gratitude. Her voracious appetite and her unique ability to satisfy herself where others fail signal Celestina's willingness to act autonomously on her own desire, undermining the assumptions of the patriarchal family structure with father as breadwinner.

Yet Celestina will not find her fairy tale ending on a farm in Sicily. When the rest of the professor's family hears about his plans to name Celestina as his heir, they precipitate to Rome and threaten to declare him incompetent, further testimony to his inadequacy as father figure, and

threaten to have Celestina arrested. She runs to her policeman / boyfriend and asks him to help. Pietrangeli takes advantage of this moment to show that this ostensibly “heroic” figure, or rather this caricature of a heroic figure, is in fact a coward whose excuses for not intervening smack of bureaucratic hypocrisy. He cannot help because it is not his jurisdiction to do so. He, the hero in the Oedipal farce, remains passive, tethered by legal regulations, and rather than help Celestina, he instead suggests that they live together “like brother and sister” until he is able to marry her in a few years time. While he has previously acted the galant suitor, he here makes his move and tries to kiss Celestina and lay her down on his bed. She rebuffs him, attacks him with pillows, and calls him a coward. She will not be falsely coaxed back under the Oedipal yoke by him. In fact, Celestina is quite hard on her suitors - earlier in her stay with this family, Fernando comes to the house, acquiring access by lying and claiming to be Celestina’s brother. Afraid of both her feelings for Fernando and of losing yet another job because of him, Celestina causes a scene and the professor’s wife calls for help, giving the Sicilian policeman an opportunity to introduce himself to Celestina’s “parents,” only after he carries out his official duties; in this case getting rid of his competition. Yet Pietrangeli undermines the heroism of the policeman with his inability to act in a moment of crisis. This farcical, cowardly, Sicilian police officer will reappear later in *La parmigiana*, but in this early version, he is just another fallible father figure.

Celestina is forced out of her job working for the Sicilian couple and again finds herself without work. She turns to Marcella for advice, and Marcella suggests that she go to an agency that can find her a position wherever she wishes. Celestina becomes a free agent and wants to find a job close to Fernando who has moved up in the world and is now working in Via Monte Parioli, a wealthy, upper-class part of Rome. At this point in the narrative, we spectators witness

a change in Celestina, who goes from being the hunted to being the huntress, ruthless in her pursuit of Fernando. She refuses any other job and once she finds the right one, risks and does in fact lose it by taking a hammer to the bathroom faucet; she needs an excuse to call the plumber, that is, Fernando. While she breaks the faucet at her first job by accident, this manipulation of her duties as servant shows her rebelling against the subjection of her work and her pursuit of her libidinal desires by the only means accessible to her - her domesticity. What is more is the praise that she garners - she breaks the faucet, calls the plumber, and her mistress praises her for her “initiative” in the latter, while we as spectators understand the double entendre of this joke. Rather than the butt of this joke, Celestina is the trickster, the joker, the one telling the lie. Ultimately, her mistress catches her in an embrace with Fernando and fires Celestina, but now, Celestina doesn’t care. She laughs as she leaves the house with Fernando - our little maid, it seems, has finally gotten her man and knows that she can get work at the agency. She is erotically and professionally satisfied, for the moment.

Celestina struggles to fulfill her desires, to drive the plot forward in a way that is satisfying to her, but encounters resistance throughout, especially from the character of Fernando. Fernando, unlike Celestina, submits himself to an Oedipal family economy. In short, he must marry his boss’s sister to become partner in their shared business. It is in the case of Fernando that Celestina can be said, returning to the theme of vision implied by the title, to be “blinded” by her feelings of love for him. This process begins with Celestina’s active pursuit of Fernando, her putting demands on him for companionship and for dialogue. Her vocal pursuit of him in the form of incessant phone calls at work interferes with Fernando’s compartmentalizing of his erotic and his economic spheres. Fernando’s boss warns him to break it off with Celestina

and to get serious about his, the boss's, sister. While all this unfolds, Celestina is unaware of Fernando's ulterior motives. She does not see, as we spectators do, that Fernando already has a partner, in fact, two partners, due to the gendered doubling of his male boss and his fiancée, his boss's sister. The spectator sees Fernando's deceit towards both his double bosses as well as towards Celestina, while Celestina is not privy to this information.

In one sequence, in particular, she instead waits for him anxiously as he borrows a motorcycle from a friend in front of his bosses in order to take Celestina on a day trip to Castel Gandolfo. He shows up late, and she remarks that she has been running around the piazza for an hour, thinking that she might have been mistaken about where they were supposed to meet. Even as she waits, she is in motion. He apologizes with the excuse that he had been caught at work, which in some ways is true as he was busy making excuses to his boss and his fiancée. Celestina forgives him, thankful as she is to see him, and they head off to Castel Gandolfo, where they will consume their sexual relationship. After this encounter, Celestina remains pregnant, a fact which she discovers later while she is on vacation in Ladispoli with the final family that hires her during the film, rotund Roman merchants that had to serve as inspiration for Fellini's Roman hosts in *Roma* (1973).⁹⁰ During Ferragosto, she waits for Fernando to come and visit her, or at least to respond to her letters, her appeals for dialogue. Yet she hears nothing from him. After a few weeks of this, Celestina ends up fainting on the beach, too much "sun in her eyes." Fainting, the cinematic symptom of pregnancy, is used in the same narratological capacity in films such as *I vitelloni* (1953), a female loss of consciousness, a cessation in the film's action, that stands in for the unspeakable that is unwed pregnancy. In fact, this scene in general, likely formulated to mimic the dizzying symptoms of early pregnancy, is characterized by blindness, a loss of

consciousness, as well as an inability to hear. The howling of the wind on the beach rings in Celestina's ears as well as the ears of the spectator. The spectator experiences this auditory disorientation along with Celestina, whom we view in this difficult moment of realization. This lapse in Celestina's consciousness is a narrative trope that Pietrangeli adopts in order to "speak that which must not be spoken," a strategy that he later overrides by explicitly addressing the consequences of Celestina's pregnancy, as well as single motherhood in general. Pietrangeli's contentious relationship with these representational conventions is evident in the use of blindness as well. The title, then, with its attribution of blindness to Celestina, is ultimately a reference to her sexual ignorance, the trap of female sexuality that, when satisfied, punishes the guilty woman with motherhood. But it is a title that Pietrangeli problematizes in the film's conclusion and that he later rejects in his interviews about the film.

Pietrangeli depicts the issue of motherhood in the film in a distinct way. There are very few traditional maternal figures in the film. In the families for whom Celestina works, the women are either ostensibly childless or too preoccupied with social and economic tasks to think much of motherhood. As with Celestina's first family in Rome, in acting as the nursemaid, she plays the role of mother in taking care of the child.⁹¹ Yet many of the maids themselves are mothers, as we discover is the case of Marcella, Celestina's best friend, who works in order to support her child who lives with another caretaker outside of Rome, in the countryside.

Pietrangeli's exposition of this matriarchal sub-economy does not stop at a mere mention of it. There is a particular sequence when Celestina is between jobs during which she goes and stays with Marcella in her *padrona's* apartment. Marcella's boss is out of town and the two maids have the place all to themselves. Marcella's son is visiting and Pietrangeli shows a rare scene of

domestic tranquillity as the two maids, discussing Marcella's *padrona* as they don her nightgowns and climb into her bed together, manage to create a more convincing picture of a nuclear family, albeit one with two mothers, than elsewhere in the film. During this conversation, Marcella explains that her *padrona*, a former "friend of a Count," is not a *contessa* but rather a former mistress or prostitute. Yet as these women discuss yet another aberration from the traditional family and lie down in bed together with Marcella's son between them, Celestina cannot help but fantasize about wearing a nightgown as beautiful as that of the contessa on her wedding night. The dream of satisfying this patriarchal myth of marriage, despite overwhelming evidence of its troubled status, continues to characterize Celestina's romantic notions about love, until she returns from Ladispoli and tries to tell Fernando about her pregnancy. Arriving at Fernando's new apartment, Celestina discovers that she has been replaced with a more economically-viable partner.

RAGAZZA-MADRE

When Celestina tracks Fernando down and rings the doorbell, Fernando's new wife opens the door. Celestina understands everything now, sees all too clearly what has happened in her absence. She leaves the apartment building and then encounters Fernando himself below outside of a cafe. After a brief interrogation about why he never wrote, never came to visit as he had promised, and seeing that he continues to avoid telling her the truth about his new marital status, she, like Emma Bovary or Anna Karenina, dashes towards the tram and throws herself underneath it. Fernando is, of course, horrified, but denies knowing her, denies having talked to her moments before her desperate act.. "*Chi l'ha mai vista?*" - "Who has ever seen her before?"

he remarks to his fellow onlookers, a denial of *seeing* that not only mimics the blindness in the title, only partially, in the case of Celestina, but also shows Fernando's denial of knowledge and participation in creating this impossible love story, one that can only generate the death or punishment of the woman, according to Doane.

In a patriarchal society, the myth of romantic love is always there to act as an outlet for any excess energy the woman may possess, to, somewhat paradoxically, *domesticate* her. But, it is precisely because there is so much at stake here that the genre [of the love story] has the potential to interrogate the woman's position - to explode in the face of patriarchal structures. For the myth of romantic love is at odds with the domestic routinized work expected of women and this is a structuring contradiction which generates others.⁹²

As a domestic worker, Celestina's libidinal core relies on the romantic fantasy of her love for Fernando. Yet, as Doane points out, her desire for Fernando is also a desire to fill a role in his domestic space as wife in a fetishizing of marriage and the role of wife that keeps husbands and fathers at the top of the patriarchal structure. Seeing her place in Fernando's home usurped by another woman fills in the blind spot in Celestina's vision, shows her the contradiction to which her romantic fantasies led. Her resulting horror comes not only from the disillusion of her romantic dreams but from witnessing the untenability of romance and the domestic, the conflictual nature of her desire. Death seems to be the only way out for Celestina, and denying any influence over that choice the only option for Fernando.

Yet Celestina does not die; she is injured, taken to the hospital, and undergoes surgery. Yet the preoccupation with vision rests even as Celestina is relegated to the passive role of patient. She begs the doctor, "to not look at her like that," (*non mi guardar cosi*) as the blinding surgical lamps cloud the spectator's vision. Celestina, an unwed, pregnant young woman, demands not to be seen in the conventional way; she demands a new sort of look. As in the

fainting sequence when Celestina discovers that she is pregnant, here this loss of consciousness represents yet another shift in the scopic, auditory, and hence epistemological regimes of the film. Celestina, in an unlikely, passive position, garners control over these sensory regimes. She embodies the knowledge of both her unborn baby, unbeknownst to the baby's father, as well as control over the subsequent dialogue in the film. Her victimization becomes a point of departure for her autonomous subjectivity. This becomes clear when Fernando arrives at the hospital. In asking for information about Celestina, he turns to a young nurse / novice, who reveals to Fernando the limits of his knowledge. He asks about "*la ragazza ferita*," the wounded girl, and instead discovers that while she was wounded, he was unaware of a significant piece of information regarding his paternal status, namely that the wounded girl was, in fact, the pregnant girl, "*la ragazza incinta*." Moreover, in revealing this illicit information for which she is subsequently reprimanded by her superior, the novice states that Celestina was lucky to have kept the baby, contrary to the logic of paternal law. Bastard children are unwanted children, but that is not the case here. Something has shifted.

Fernando is led to Celestina's hospital room and there, confesses to her his guilt and admits his love for her. This outpouring of information from Fernando includes the fact that he married his wife's boss for the money. Fernando, ostensibly satisfied in his economic and erotic desire, states that in fact, he has compromised one for the other. This adulterous confession compromises Fernando's moral position within the narrative and, more importantly, in front of Celestina herself, while leaving Celestina's in tact, despite her status as unwed mother. Celestina becomes privy to Fernando's duplicitous nature and thus privy to the same epistemological regime as the spectators. Her vision of him is made whole, while his sign as her "romantic hero"

is reduced to adulterer. As Stephen Heath notes, “to commit adultery is to adulterate, to render counterfeit, corrupt, to debase ‘by base admixture’ (the definition given by the OED). Adultery, in fact, is ‘category confusion,’ the slide from identity to indifference, a total indistinction of place.”⁹³ It is Fernando, ultimately, who does not see clearly and who commits the action that compromises the fulfillment of his own desires. Unlike the traditional love story, where the man commits adultery and the woman alone suffers and often dies, Fernando is shown here to not only as repentant, but marked for life by his actions. He pleads with Celestina, “*perché uno ha sbagliato una volta sbaglia per tutta la vita?*” Just because I made one mistake, I am marked by that mistake for the rest of my life? In Pietrangeli’s film, the subject of this sentence is clearly a masculine subject, while the question is traditionally a female one. Celestina, while suffering, is the moral authority, whose categorical confusion is resolved by her suicide attempt, a tragic moment that, paradoxically, restores her vision, as for Umberto, whose love for Flike reaffirms that he does have something that makes life worth living. Fernando asks her for an answer to this question, as she is the one who will decide the future of their relationship, and she refuses to respond to him. She controls the auditory regime and her refusal to speak signals Fernando’s fate. Fernando, the father, the paternal figure, the husband of another woman, is cast out of the film, out of Celestina’s life.

Celestina does speak, however, to the nun / nurse who is taking care of her, calling her “*madre,*” mother. As Detassis notes, “In *Il sole negli occhi*, the community of women... takes care of the pregnant girl, helping her to reach the decision to refuse the father and live her maternity in solitude.”⁹⁴ This film ends with a focus on the female characters, mothers, domestic servants, nurses, nuns, and the solidarity between these figures. While according to Doane,

“motherhood is usually foreign to the discourse of the love story because it always threatens to completely displace female desire,”⁹⁵ Celestina’s desire is alive and well, although it no longer finds satisfaction in serving as a mirror-object to Fernando in a traditional romantic relationship. Her libidinal subjectivity is characterized by a drive to speak. She begs of the nun, “You must help me! I never want to see him again! Let me speak, tell me that you’ll help me! Listen, I never want to see him again!” In taking control of her own scopic regime, Celestina proposes a new way of going forward, a refusal of old patterns of romantic love and a looking through the “rose-colored glasses” that characterizes female spectatorship, according to Doane. Whereas “the tropes of female spectatorship are not empowering,”⁹⁶ it is tempting to see Celestina’s assumption of visual control as a gender-based *coup d’état*. The men are exiled out of the narrative, leaving the final word to the women, the *ragazze-madri*, in an ending with a matriarchal focus.

In the final scene of the film, set outside of the gates of the hospital, the spectator witnesses Marcella exit after visiting Celestina and join the group of servant women who, throughout the film, have served as a sort of Greek chorus. Here, they end the film on disparate notes. On one hand, after hearing Marcella’s account of Celestina’s sad tale with Fernando, they repeat their chorus from the washing scene, “*siamo tutte disgraziate*,” or we are all wretches, all unfortunate, and that men are all scoundrels, “*tutti mascalzoni*.” Yet this somber note is undermined by the maids’ laughter, as they decide they had better head home before their mistresses start nagging them. The impression that one maid does of her mistress’s nagging sets off rollicking laughter among the servant women. While the class issue here is very much on the surface, the semiotic significance of this final laughter can be read in Kristeva’s semiotics as a

proximity to sublimation. “The imprint of an archaic moment, the threshold of space, the ‘chora’ as primitive stability absorbing anaclitic facilitation, produces laughter.”⁹⁷ The emotional and psychological support that these women represent for each other, their “anaclitic” function as friends, as an alternative support system to traditional, patriarchal family,, first takes shape as “a blocking barrier of earnest sullenness” as they share their fate as the unlucky ones, soon supplanted by “a riant, porous boundary,” of laughter. As Kristeva writes of these two phenomena, the barrier of sullenness or the riant, porous boundary, “the child gets one or the other from its mother.”⁹⁸ We, as spectators, are also left with both sadness and laughter as the film ends. This chorus of women is also witness to the events of the film itself as a proxy for the film’s audience, a film about maids and servants for maids and servants.

This group of mothers, or mothers and daughters, some who receive, some who give, advice, counsel, goods, and other forms of help, are a community of women who are enacting Italian feminist practice *avant la lettre*. Pietrangeli’s tale of *Celestina* shows a young woman leaving behind one system of signification, in which romantic love and marriage and the patriarchal structures they represent, were her ultimate goal, and entering into another system, that of the maternal, in which Marcella represents what Luisa Muraro theorized as the “symbolic mother.” This figure

doesn’t function as a model of female virtue nor as an obligatory paradigm of identification. Instead she assumes a role as a constitutive principle between women that allows for debt and disparity... [that] finds its measure in the vertical nature of the relationship, referring to the exchange between recognition of authority and facility of language, between debt and giving.⁹⁹

By depicting through these servant-women, Marcella and *Celestina* in particular, this feminist mother-daughter relationship, Pietrangeli interweaves the issues of physical maternity and

symbolic maternity in order to explore the unspeakable realms of female sexuality that are adultery, premarital sex, and single motherhood. His film, accompanied by the director's declaration that with this film, he didn't want to say anything in the usual way of saying it, presents a gendered account of reality that flew in the face of many contemporary critics. From calling it "a lost occasion" to accusing Pietrangeli of individualism and absenteeism, to calling the film simply "gray" and "quotidian," the critics did not understand what Pietrangeli was getting at.¹⁰⁰ What this chapter has sought to show is that, in the case of this film, theory needed to catch up with practice. As the quote from *Remembrance of Things Past* at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates, the male gaze tends to see a woman as a mere sexual object, and without knowing about a woman's day, a woman's past, there is little to spark one's curiosity. Pietrangeli instead seems to suggest that the servant women in this film have something to offer us in the way of knowledge and experience, a knowledge and an experience ontologically wed to a changing social and cultural reality and the contradictions it places on women as representatives of the domestic, the sexual and the reproductive realms, and more recently, the work force. Maids don't draw a public, but, Pietrangeli's film suggests, maybe they should. They are, more and more, *the* public.

Chapter Two

The Coming of Age of a Teenage Bride: *Nata di marzo*

PRODUCING THE COUPLE, BUT NOT THE HAPPY ENDING

With *Nata di marzo* (1958), Pietrangeli returns to the trope of problematizing marriage as he did in his first film, *Il sole negli occhi* (1953), but from a very different point of view. Rather than tell the story of a maid or a playboy as he had in *Lo scapolo* (1955), the Alberto Sordi vehicle and rare male-centered take on marriage, Pietrangeli's fourth full-length film begins with a past participle, *nata*, or "born," that clues the viewer immediately into a quality key to Francesca's, the protagonist's, characterization. To briefly summarize the plot of the film, Francesca (Jacqueline Sassard), a young, wealthy Milanese girl falls in love with Sandro (Gabriele Ferzetti), an architect, and she manipulates her way into a marriage which she ultimately finds stifling and unsatisfying. Throughout the film, she acts as a self-conscious narrator, confessing her errors and her missteps diegetically to her friend Carlo and extra-diegetically, to us, the spectators, who experience her marriage through flashback and voice-over narration. This other, reliable narrator is a more mature, wiser version of the Francesca of the beginning of the film.

While those "born in March" are said to be variable in nature, and Francesca is described by Antonio Maraldi as "spoiled, a liar, capricious, windy, and unstable,"¹⁰¹ the core conflict of the film itself centers not around Francesca's character, but around Francesca's youth and inexperience, exacerbated, of course, by her innate characteristics. The structure of Pietrangeli's narrative, which questions the idea of marriage as happy ending and problematizes what Žižek would call Hollywood's ideological scope of the "production of the couple"¹⁰² at a time when

marriage in Hollywood films was proposed in a reactionary way. Betty Friedan's work *The Feminine Mystique* also serves to illuminate Pietrangeli's critique of marriage and being a wife as *the* happy ending. At a time in history, the Fifties, when women of the Baby Boom generation married younger and younger, abandoning their careers and educations in order to be wives and mothers, Francesca succumbs to the mystique of housewifery only to find herself ultimately unsatisfied with the gender role assigned to her. Pietrangeli tells the story of this very young bride who goes from happy spouse to desperate housewife, carefully dissecting the psychology behind this Italian version of the feminine mystique.

The film is framed as such an ideological critique told from Francesca's point of view. In the first sequence, Francesca is out with her friend Carlo recounting her marriage and she tells him as well as the viewer that she was seventeen when she was married. During her first "date" with Sandro, her future husband, Pietrangeli and his screenwriters again choose to highlight her youth, with Sandro telling her that "when you were born (in 1940), I was in my second year of architecture school." The age difference between the couple transforms their marriage into a generation conflict over gender roles in marriage, and the film, narrated by Francesca, takes the form of an ideological critique of the Oedipal family narrative so typical of Hollywood films in which marriage is the be-all, end-all for a woman, the happy ending *par excellence* as she transitions from daughter to wife, from a father's to a husband's control. Francesca's tale, which traces her own ideological mystification with the institution of marriage, hence becomes a cautionary tale for child brides and, in fact, all those who believe that marriage is simply a "happy ending."

It may be helpful, at the beginning of the examination of this film, to include a few details about the evolution of the creative process for the filmmakers and Pietrangeli's intentions regarding the film's message. Originally, flying directly in the face of the Hollywood model in which Žižek's "production of the couple" becomes the primary scope of film, Francesca and Sandro were to separate definitively, a risky ending in a time before divorce was legalized in Italy (it was finally legalized in 1971). However, "the production imposed the happy ending,"¹⁰³ with Sandro and Francesca reconciling, yet Francesca manages to attain a measure of the moral equality she demanded. Ettore Scola, one of Pietrangeli's screenwriters on the project, emphasizes the original ending when speaking about the film in *L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano 1935-1959*, and Antonio Maraldi writes that "the production insisted on the happy ending and got it. Looking carefully, however, we are dealing with a not-so-happy ending (and even more so, a problematic one) that does not annul the female character's moments where she tends towards independence and equality."¹⁰⁴ How does this ostensibly happy ending, then, simultaneously satisfy the conservative regulations imposed by the production and the Left-wing critics? The truth is that it did not truly satisfy either group, it seems, but what interests us for the purposes of this study is the attempt at compromise itself. When Francesca comes to discover that Sandro, during their separation, has slept with their neighbor, she invents a lover as well. Unless Sandro can accept that she too can be forgiven for her adultery and in so doing, betray the traditional cultural double standard in which a husband can cheat on his wife, but not vice versa, she will not reconcile with him. When he finally does accept her false dalliance and runs after the tram as she leaves, she jumps off and confesses that it was a lie - she's been faithful throughout.

This compromise between Pietrangeli's moral message and the happy ending, the reconciliation forced on the director by production, results in an ambiguous final sequence in which everyone and no one is satisfied. As Detassis writes, "the happy ending is safe and Pietrangeli's 'moral' reasoning too... but on the question of marriage, the director leaves no room for doubt." When asked in an interview by Stelio Martini whether the film was a defense of marriage, he responds:

I wouldn't say so: my perspective is otherwise. It is true that the two characters reconcile at the end, but they do it like two beaten dogs who have paid a high price, the penalty for their lack of preparation for marriage. What the film brings to light, therefore, are the difficulties of marriage.¹⁰⁵

By problematizing the Hollywood happy ending, what Žižek calls the Oedipal logic of patriarchal ideology's "production of the couple," Pietrangeli's film offers a critique of this cinematic trope as well as a locus for the advancing of an alternative view of marriage, one based on equality, dialogue, and partnership instead of paternalistic domination. One gets the sense, at the end of the film, that the work for this couple has just begun. In fact, the film ends with a close-up of Francesca's face as she embraces Sandro; despite the swell of soundtrack that would signal the happy ending, she is shown in tears. This realistic "marriage of a different sort" could not be more timely, as Hollywood productions of the late Fifties obsessively posited marriage as the only economic alternative for women, not to mention the slew of women's magazine publications, advertising, and other cultural forces that drove women back into the domestic realm. The postwar period insisted on the return of women to the home, but Francesca's libidinal economy, as Pietrangeli represents it, is not satisfied by the domestic alone.

THE FIFTIES CHILD BRIDE

Marjorie Rosen's article "Popcorn Venuses or How Movies Have Made Women Smaller than Life," traces Hollywood's depiction of femininity throughout the twentieth century. Moving decade by decade, she discusses how the socio-political and cultural climate dictated and influenced the ways in which women were portrayed in film. As she puts it, "money, entertainment, and morality were inextricably intertwined, yet often they worked at cross-purposes, creating a Cinema Woman who has been a Popcorn Venus, a delectable but insubstantial hybrid of cultural distortions."¹⁰⁶ While the Forties saw a strong, patriotic model of femininity that corresponded to women's reality as she entered the workforce to take the place of men as they went off to war, the Fifties were marked by a return to the status quo. "Johnny was home from the war. And by the fifties the industry was reaffirming male dominance and female subservience."¹⁰⁷ Rosen discusses not only the fact that women were marrying earlier than ever, so that "in 1951 one in three had found a husband by the age of 19," but that "marriage was the be-all and end-all." Not only were women increasingly young as they headed into marriage, but marriage was held up as the primary aim of a woman's existence. "Women's films divorced themselves from timely plots and controversial subjects and became 'how-to's' on catching and keeping a man."¹⁰⁸ From the titles Rosen discusses, from *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953) to *Love is a Many Splendored Thing* (1955), it is clear that Pietrangeli's film, and Italian cinematic production in general, is proposing a model of femininity that questions the American, Hollywood model.

In Italy as well as in America, 1958 is a banner year for cinematic representations of marriage. "Marriage is a constant theme of this year,"¹⁰⁹ writes Lorenzo Pellizzari, who points

out that Loy and Puccini's *Il marito*, Bolognini's *Giovani mariti*, and Blasetti's *Amore e chiacchiere* all came out between 1957 and 1958. Italian film production was taking its cues from Hollywood, but in Pietrangeli's case, it was not simply a question of seeing Hollywood as a model. As the introduction to this study discusses, Pietrangeli was highly skeptical and vocally critical of American cinema. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that his films on marriage should also critique Hollywood's formulaic and stereotypical portrayal of this gendered institution. Francesca's narration of her own partially failed matrimonial experiment shows a female protagonist, a teenage bride conscious of her own youth and naiveté, in the act of telling a cautionary tale, a tale that takes the form of an ideological critique of the Oedipal, paternalistic logic of traditional marriage. For while Francesca is certainly a product of Fifties culture, she is also a sign of the change that was to come, "hovering at the edge of the sixties." "By the close of the decade middle class girls [like Francesca] were *expected* to attend college. And while a good percentage were hunting for husbands, others picked up degrees and career ambitions."¹¹⁰ Francesca serves as an Italian example of the American phenomenon Rosen and Friedan discuss, and Pietrangeli portrays this internal, feminine conflict when, for example, as a result of one of Sandro and Francesca's fights, Francesca vows to return to university. In America, "as divorce rates skyrocketed, the first generation brought up on 'happily ever after' Hollywood endings discovered that reality delivered something else."¹¹¹ In Italy, where divorce was not yet legal, reality perhaps delivered something very similar to Pietrangeli's description of a matrimonial reconciliation between a couple reduced to the status of "two beaten dogs," resigning itself to life together.

Francesca's cautionary tale, from beaming teenage bride to desperate, "beaten dog," revolves around the lack of libidinal satisfaction she finds in the domestic sphere, anticipating Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* of 1963. In fact, much of Pietrangeli's portrayal of Francesca centers on her isolation and boredom within her new role as wife. In a decidedly anti-Freudian manner that mirrors Friedan's own critique of Freud's idea of femininity and the role of the wife, Pietrangeli shows that Francesca is all but subservient to her husband. Rather, she is strong-willed, manipulative, and headstrong. As fitting for Francesca's situation as for her contemporary in America, Friedan describes the feminine mystique as a woman's psychic distress that is associated with the pressure to get married and be a housewife, stating that

the problems and satisfaction of their lives, and mine, and the way our education had contributed to them, simply did not fit the image of the modern American woman as she was written about in women's magazines, studied and analyzed in classrooms and clinics, praised and damned in a ceaseless barrage of words even since the end of the Second World War. There was a strange discrepancy between the reality of our lives as women and the image to which we were trying to conform, the image that I came to call the feminine mystique. I wondered if other women faced this same schizophrenic split, and what it meant.¹¹²

Friedan's Fifties housewife syndrome, which she described in her 1963 feminist work, corresponds to the internal conflict that marriage produces in Francesca. Her libidinal economy in the form of her education, intelligence, and ambition do not find satisfaction in the role of wife alone, demonstrating that this postwar female phenomenon of the mystique was not exclusive to the United States. Pietrangeli, in his (neo)realist style, takes on the Italian feminine mystique and its effect on Francesca. The following formal analysis of the film itself will proceed to examine some of the reasons why. It will show how Pietrangeli's portrayal of Francesca pushes the ideological boundaries of marriage as an Oedipal, paternalistic structure for which she, born in March, is particularly unsuited.

FRANCESCA, DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE

The critical reception of the film reveals an unease, a discomfort with Francesca's character that speaks to her unpredictable nature. As Pellizzari reports, Francesca, in the eyes of the critics of the time, represented a sociological phenomenon, a type that was easily found amongst the Milanese upper-middle class. As evidence of this, it is enough to cite Giuseppe Turrone in *Filmcritica*, who wrote, "Francesca is a Milanese of the upper bourgeoisie, so real it is scary. A certain type that should cause shudders in her unfortunate husband. A type that is more than common today among the well-off, so much so that the character doesn't even seem typical; but it is."¹¹³ This frightening type of woman described by Turrone is none other than the conflicted child bride described by Friedan, her irrational behavior nothing other than a symptom of domestic malaise. Turrone is not the only critic to attribute a typology to Pietrangeli's protagonist; Giulio Castello in fact calls Francesca "*a certain type* of seventeen year-old":

as the narration proceeds, one realizes that the protagonist is not properly *the type* of seventeen year-old that has confronted for a while now the problems derived from marriage, but *a certain type* of seventeen year-old... a creature *sui generis*, who has much more in common with other girls her age who have been raised in a certain way, but what's more, she has the qualities that derive from being 'born in March,' that is, a capricious and airy character.¹¹⁴

Castello realizes that Francesca is the latest development in the blushing, youthful bride department, but goes on to emphasize that her innate character only enhances her tendency to rebel against the constraints of marriage. Her wealthy upbringing, during which her mother and grandmother have spoiled her, has only amplified what appears to both critics to be a genuine sociological phenomenon, women who threaten to undermine the stability of the institution of marriage. For this reason, Francesca's character should cause shudders to run up the spine of

husbands and is a new development *sui generis* among the unhappy Noras of traditional matrimony. She flies in the face of our Oedipal expectations because, ironically, her “happy ending” was only the beginning of the story.

Pietrangeli sets Francesca up for failing to submit to the patriarchal yoke of matrimony in many ways, not the least important of which is his depiction of Francesca’s own family structure. As is typical of Pietrangeli’s female protagonists, Francesca does not come from a typical, nuclear family. Instead, she is the product of a double matriarchy and lives with her mother and her grandmother. Her household is also dominated by the imposing presence of a maid who seems to always be by Francesca’s side during the sequences in her childhood home. Not only are these maternal figures numerous, but they are unconventional as well. Francesca’s grandmother, for example, is a heavy smoker who has outlived two husbands. This grandmother, bastion of female strength and wisdom in the face of male weakness, gives advice about marital happiness to Francesca during a scene that takes place literally over the tombs of her dead husbands. She suggests that Francesca demonstrate a more self-sacrificial attitude when it comes to Sandro and that this is the origin of domestic happiness in marriage. “I always turned the light off when [my husband] asked me to, even if I felt like reading for hours,” she says. “But as soon as he fell asleep, I turned it back on.” This tango of compromise, where subservience is only an appearance and even becomes the means to subversion and independence, is the most sage, albeit traditionalist, advice Francesca receives about making her marriage work during the film. Unlike her grandmother, Francesca has trouble putting Sandro’s desires before her own.

Francesca’s childhood household is not only unconventional regarding the double (or triple) matriarchal structure that dominates it, but also because it represents the co-habitation of

the domestic and the economic spheres. Within their home, Francesca's mother and grandmother run a successful business that manufactures lingerie, and specifically, corsets. These independent women who are their own bosses and employ a significant number of female staff are Francesca's models of femininity. They are not compatible with the later version of married Francesca, confined within her home, maniacally buying and moving furniture to pass the time while she awaits her husband's return home from work. While her mother and grandmother make corsets, they are depicted as no-nonsense women, in contrast to their housewife clientele, the wearers of their corsets, among whom Francesca will find herself. Pietrangeli foreshadows Francesca's discomfort in her new role when, at the beginning of the film, she steals a corset from her mother's and grandmother's workroom in order to go see Sandro. She slinks out of the house as they frantically look for the missing corset, only to realize afterwards that Francesca has taken it when they watch her walking uncomfortably but provocatively, her waist nipped tight, as she leaves the house. The corset, however, does not agree with Francesca, and she is later shown trying to adjust it, short of breath. Her physical discomfort within this constricting, feminine undergarment that she thought she wanted to wear to enhance her small waist, sign of female beauty of the Fifties, becomes all too apparent to Sandro, who asks if she "needs some help" to loosen it up. Her desires are not in line with her needs - her desire to appear fashionable and beautiful according to the fashion and standards of female beauty of the time impinge upon her comfort, giving Sandro the opportunity to gain the upper hand in the exchange and relegating her to the role of inexperienced child. The corset does not fit Francesca, a sign that presages the couple's struggle over gender roles that is on the horizon.

This triumvirate of maternal figures not only highlights Francesca's impending conflict with the paternal figure of her much-older husband, Sandro, upon whom she is also economically dependent, but also points to a larger Pietrangelian theme - the missing father. As discussed in the context of *Il sole negli occhi* and other films in this study, in the case of *Nata di marzo*, it is indeed true what Piera Detassis writes, that "the father is inexorably expelled from Pietrangeli's universe."¹¹⁵ Mary Wood echoes this statement when she writes of the new generation of postwar, male actors that, "the younger actors are almost never fathers... [and] represent, symbolise, or are emblematic of aspects of male power in conflict with that of an older generation."¹¹⁶ Sandro is an interesting variation on Wood's analysis of the younger male generation as he in fact represents a male struggle to modernize, to accept new definitions of femininity while contemporarily being held back by traditional gendered roles. This is evidenced not only by Sandro's buying a car for Francesca when she lies to him about being pregnant - he fulfills the role of provider for his wife whom he believes to be fulfilling her role as baby-maker - but also by his moral conflict over whether to accept Francesca's alleged adultery and her sexual betrayal of him, overturning the double standard status quo in which male adultery was almost a given and wives were expected to remain eternally faithful. In Freudian terms, Francesca's id and ego override the paternal super-ego of the Fifties and the imperatives that it imposes on her. Sandro, in many ways, represents this super-ego and the male struggle to adapt, since, according to Friedan, "this Freudian super-ego worked for growing numbers of young and impressionable American women since as Freud said the super-ego works to perpetuate the past." While Francesca is not American, she is still subject to the same reactionary social and cultural forces at work during this time, reactionary forces that sought to re-impose the paternal,

Oedipal ideology, such as imported, Hollywood films. The generational, female-centered conflict described by Friedan can be read into Pietrangeli's portrayal of Francesca, whose capricious, airy nature defies control of the paternal super-ego.

HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE FRANCESCA?

The title of this portion of the study is borrowed from *The Sound of Music* and it is not a coincidence. The problems that her fellow nuns attribute to Maria, Julie Andrew's character, is similar to those that other characters attribute to Francesca. "How do you catch a cloud and pin it down?" and "How do you keep a wave upon the sand?": two questions that the nuns ask themselves regarding Maria's changeable nature, indicating that it is an innate quality in her to defy control. The same is true of Francesca. Her unbridled nature, Pietrangeli shows, is problematic to the men that surround her, and she is constantly shown challenging male authority. This portion of the study will trace this tendency through the film itself, but it may be helpful to recall briefly, at this point, Betty Friedan's analysis of Martha Freud, Sigmund Freud's wife. Freud's own child bride was herself a point of frustration for the psychoanalyst, whose writings about women may, according to Friedan, be more based on the desire for his feminine ideal than on his actual experience with his wife herself. Friedan quotes Jones, Freud's biographer, who writes that, "as Freud was painfully to discover, she was not at heart docile and had a firmness of character that did not readily lend itself to being moulded. Her personality was fully developed and well integrated."¹¹⁷ Martha was, in short, not docile enough for the tastes of her Austrian doctor husband, raised as he was in a traditional Jewish household. This is true of Francesca as well, who does not submit easily to the yoke of paternal ideology that guides

traditional marriage. Instead, as Pietrangeli takes great pains to demonstrate, Francesca openly defies the traditional gender roles that she thought she wanted. In this way, Francesca as narrator traces her own ideological mystification as matrimonial experience gone wrong, offering a unique critique in an era characterized by glossy cinematic manuals on “How to Marry a Millionaire.” As a sort of *bildungsroman* or a coming of age tale, Francesca’s story shows her transformation from a spoiled, young girl to a sort of Marxist feminist. Let us examine how Pietrangeli depicts this transformation.

The film’s form itself cues the spectator to Francesca’s self-reflection as we first see her and her friend Carlo in the eye socket of the *Sancarlone*, a colossal statue of San Carlo Borromeo, patron saint of Lombardy, located outside of Milan in Arona. Not only does this statue geographically locate the pair, but it sets the tone for moral reflection as well as the idea of cultural exchange with America. San Carlo Borromeo was, after all, not only a saint whose moral and sexual standards were famously rigorous, but the *Sancarlone* statue itself may have served as a model for the Statue of Liberty. Francesca’s appearance inside the head of the saint, essentially playing a game of peek-a-boo with her male friend, shows Pietrangeli’s female protagonist as the control center of the film, the person “into whose head” the film will dig. In fact, this film marks the debut of Pietrangeli’s experimentation with the flashback form, which he will use with great success and subtlety in later films such as *La visita*, *La parmigiana*, and *Io la conosco bene*. In this 1958 film, however, the flashback form enhances the traditional narrative structure of the film (the couple meets, courts, and is married) by allowing Pietrangeli to have Francesca’s narration move freely from present to past, and vice versa. This past-present temporal conflict further enhances the feeling that Francesca has grown up over the course of the film.

From the outset of the film's dialogue, Francesca is challenging the male status quo. She complains repeatedly to Carlo about men in general, how they don't open the car door for women, for example. Carlo is generally uninterested in her discourse on gender roles and when they stop to go for a swim in a lake, he is more concerned with catching a glimpse of Francesca changing into her bathing suit in the side-view mirror. Yet Francesca does not relinquish control of the film's visual regime so easily - she catches him and insists that he move farther away so as not to cede any visuals to his prowling male gaze. Francesca is already posing a challenge to the scopophilic cinematic regime of Hollywood cinema, which according to Laura Mulvey, the woman is coded as object "to-be-looked-at."¹¹⁸ Moreover, Pietrangeli is depicting an unmarried couple engaging in this repartee. As we will soon learn, Francesca is a married woman and is confiding in a male friend with clear sexual interest in her. This is an unconventional, potentially adulterous situation Francesca finds herself in, but she seems at ease, if not outright enjoying, the risk involved. When the couple decides to jump into the lake together, Francesca again defies the established rules and pushes Carlo in before she is herself pulled into the lake by him. Through this struggle - who is going to jump first? - the stage is set for the gendered conflict that moves the film's plot forward. In fact, as the two are dressing, Francesca again begins to discuss gender roles, a discussion that leads into her first flashback about how she met her husband.

Francesca tells Carlo that, "I think too much. A girl shouldn't think too much, nor speak too much." This is, in fact, the docile child bride-enforcing paternal super-ego speaking through Francesca. Clearly she does not fit this mold and what's more, she recognizes that it is not a comfortable fit for her. This is an example of Francesca testifying to Friedan's "tyranny of the 'shoulds' which chains women to an old image, prohibits choice and growth, and denies them

individual identity.”¹¹⁹ Francesca’s ego has come to realize that she is in conflict with the paternal super-ego. Her narratological task is to sort through her own mystification, how she “undermines the family myth *from within*,”¹²⁰ to use Žižek’s terminology, and in order to successfully undermine the myth, she must first become a reliable narrator. Pietrangeli’s use of Francesca’s voice, then, differs from what Silverman would call the traditional use of the female voice as “cry” in cinema, since “what is demanded from woman - what the cinematic apparatus and a formidable branch of the theoretical apparatus will extract from her by whatever means are required - is involuntary sound, sound that escapes her own understanding, testifying only to the artistry of a superior force.”¹²¹ This is certainly not the case with Francesca, whose narratological strategy throughout the film demonstrates her manipulation of her accounts of the truth. Rather than a voice-over structure that, in Silverman’s analysis of traditional cinema’s gendered vocal binary, “turns the [female] body ‘inside-out’” and “equates diegetic interiority with discursive impotency and lack of control,”¹²² Pietrangeli’s use of Francesca’s voice departs from the female paradigm in which “the embodied voice-over designates not only psychological but diegetic interiority - that it emanates from the center of the story, rather than from some radically other time and place.”¹²³ Francesca’s voice, on the other hand, is omnipresent: present, past, center and “radically other” as she tells her own story from a changed point of view. Ultimately, Francesca’s voice, while still in the form of a confession that turns the private public, remains a source of the unknown. In other words, she is a liar, a “gaslighter,” while simultaneously confessing, telling the truth. The three flashback sequences, ostensibly recounting different phases of Francesca’s marriage, also see her development into a somewhat trustworthy narrator, whose voice, while it remains problematic, comes to serve her own needs for equality rather than those imposed by an

external ideological system. Her lies come to serve her need for equality and not her desire for marriage and a “happy ending” at all costs. Francesca’s lying initially gets her into a marriage and her lying then serves to establish a (somewhat) equal playing field for husband and wife. Francesca’s maturity means learning how to manipulate the truth to *truly* serve her ends. She must learn how to act in her own interests, but first she must learn what those interests are.

The first flashback sequence, showing how she met Sandro and their courtship period, starts by showing Francesca acting at odds with her own interests. At a party, she lets the air out of Carlo’s tires. Carlo, however, is her ride home, so instead of going with him, she is forced to take the tram. On the tram, all but empty besides the ticket collector and the driver, she encounters Sandro for the first time. He stares at her the whole ride and she is clearly uncomfortable. When the tram has an accident with a car, Francesca and Sandro are forced into contact with one another. When Francesca arrives home, she must justify her tardy re-entry and exaggerates her account of the accident to her mother and grandmother who are awake, waiting for her. It is at this point where the spectator is cued to Francesca’s unreliability as narrator, her manipulation of her mother and grandmother. She does not tell the truth, but instead gives a story that ultimately serves her ends. What is more, as if to further emphasize Francesca’s vocal independence from not only Sandro but from what may be considered a reliable, epistemological account of the Truth with a capital T, a few days later Francesca is called as a witness to the accident. Since she knows that she will see Sandro, she goes dressed in the “borrowed” corset. In the following scene, immediately after the trial, Sandro chides Francesca for contradicting him in front of the court, making *him* seem like the unreliable witness, *his* the unreliable testimony. In this previous courtroom scene off-camera, Sandro’s account of the truth is understood to be the

reliable one, and Francesca's manipulation of the truth a personal provocation directed towards Sandro. In the division public / private, Francesca's interests here are simply private. She manipulates her legal testimony to acquire what she desires - Sandro's attention - and as a consequence perjures herself.

The following sequences show Francesca in noisy pursuit of Sandro. She shows up at an architectural seminar he is giving on Le Corbusier and not only do her footsteps cause the floor to creak loudly, but she also claps at an inopportune moment. At a later moment, she and Sandro go to the top of the newly completed *Torre Velasca* in what is supposedly another one of their cultural exchanges, Sandro playing the part of the knowledgeable teacher and Francesca the student. Yet the whole scene is dominated by Francesca's voice, not by the supposedly authoritative architect Sandro. Rather than discuss architecture, they talk about the height of the tower, how far they can see, and whether or not they've ever been so high. Francesca then embarrasses Sandro by imitating an airplane pilot, making loud engine noises that cause people to turn and look. Francesca seems unaware of the disturbance she is causing, while Sandro seems uncomfortable and tries to calm her down. Her vocal excess borders on impropriety, and Pietrangeli demonstrates that Francesca's auditory strength is also a sign of impending gendered conflict.

In fact, Francesca's problem is not an increasing interiority throughout the film (which Silverman points out, is dangerously close to inferiority)¹²⁴ but rather that she continually externalizes in lying speech her desires. Yet her desires are precisely her stumbling block - Pietrangeli shows that she does not, in fact, know exactly what she wants. For example, after what we viewers assume to be a reasonable courtship period, we witness the couple's first kiss.

Set in the country, Francesca explains to Sandro that her ideal companion would be like a tree, constant, protective, but what she does not consider, is that the tree is also *silent*. Later in the film, Francesca will complain about Sandro's inability to speak with her, to confide in her. Yet this romantic idea about the tree as proxy for the "strong, silent type" leads to the inevitable first kiss, complete with the music swell, and followed by Francesca's retreat into fear. She manifests this fear by faking an illness, an excuse to avoid Sandro, but when her mother and grandmother question her about him, she feels compelled to come to his defense by saying that, in fact, he is such a gentleman that he had already proposed to her.

The theoretical interest that this episode provides is that while interiority, as Silverman explains, has been traditionally associated with the "inferior" status of woman, in this case, Francesca's self-confinement to the interior spaces of her home do, in fact, result in her diegetic potency. In other words, her lie and her seclusion, her "taking on" of these attributes of interiority mask the truth - that she is manipulating Sandro's, her mother's, and her grandmother's, view of her. The spectator, while in on the "game" that Francesca is playing, is left feeling uneasy, manipulated, like Sandro himself. The critical reviews of the film are evidence enough of this phenomenon within the spectator, who is "scared" of Francesca's type of woman, this type of woman who manipulates our gendered expectations for personal gain.

'Inside' comes to designate a recessed space within the story, while 'outside' refers to those elements of the story which seem in one way or another to frame the recessed space. Woman is confined to the former, and man to the latter. It is thus only through an endless series of *trompes l'oeil* that classic cinema's male viewing subject sustains what is a fundamentally impossible identification with authoritative vision, speech, and hearing.¹²⁵

What Silverman suggests is the male subject's external status signifies his authority, yet in this case, from within the domestic space, Francesca's lies create this authority because of her

inexplicable retreat “inside.” Francesca, a master at producing these *trompes l’oeil*, also ultimately undermines them, so that she controls both the diegesis of the film and the enunciation of truth within the film’s plot. In fact, when Sandro comes to check in on Francesca, he is essentially tricked into marrying her by her mother’s disclosure of her lie. He is not completely turned off by the idea, however, and agrees to go along with her lie. The proposal, rather than the male-generated act it is supposed to be, hence becomes the effect of a ploy, a trick initiated by Francesca herself. Essentially, her lie garners for her what she imagines to be her happy ending - marriage. This narratological duplicity makes Francesca a “problem,” a frightening prospect for male viewers. Yet the joke is ultimately on Francesca, whose later confinement in the domestic space post-matrimony becomes the source of her mystifying discontent.

WIVES SHOULD BE SEEN AND NOT HEARD

There are several other episodes in which Francesca plays to Sandro’s and the traditional male viewer’s gendered expectations, but as her story continues, Francesca becomes less and less satisfied with the outcome of her duplicity. During the preparations for her marriage, for example, we witness her and her family’s commodity fetishism - she carefully gathers all of the attributes that a bride needs, including a wedding dress, silver, candlesticks, a new suitcase for the honeymoon, and, most importantly, a nightgown for her wedding night. While the spectators are left to assume that the wedding itself goes smoothly, these final two items, the nightgown and the suitcase, are the cause of conflict between the two newlyweds as on the all-important night itself, Francesca is unable to open her suitcase and don her nightgown. Rather than simply explain the situation to Sandro, she flies into a frustrated rage, manufacturing excuses about

needing her toothpaste, unwilling to appear as less-than-perfectly prepared for this anxiety-provoking, all-important first night together as husband and wife. When she finally does explain, Sandro is understanding and the couple laughs it off, but the specter of “perfect wife” as gender role that will provoke anxiety and unhappiness has nonetheless reared its ugly head. The nightgown, like the corset, are female object-fetish stumbling blocks for Francesca.

The second half of the first flashback sequence shows the couple’s initial domestic bliss as married couple followed by the deterioration of their union. While Francesca initially finds satisfaction in her role as housewife / consumer, she becomes dissatisfied quickly when it becomes clear that regardless of the fact that she is doing the buying, Sandro is paying and is therefore the head of the household. There is an important scene during which Francesca is shown reveling in the new domestic space, lovingly caressing and naming off the appliances, the various pieces of furniture, their *two* radios, and Sandro insists that they go to sleep because it is almost two in the morning. She provokes him and the two playfully engage in a sort of wrestling match, with Sandro, the stronger of the two, establishing his physical prowess over her and saying, “*Chi comanda in casa?*” or “Who is in charge at home?” It is clear that while Francesca has been given a limited reign over the domestic space, it is Sandro, with his “power of the purse,” who ultimately makes the decisions. The first flashback sequence ends with Francesca’s blissful acceptance of her role as consumer, since she has yet to be chastised for her spending. Yet the second flashback sequence signals the beginning of the couple’s disaccord. Sandro soon acts the father and voices his problems over her spending habits, which he deems excessive. Yet Pietrangeli makes it clear that, confined within the home, Francesca has no other release for her libidinal energy. She is sublimating her unsatisfied desires by spending.

An example of this is the grass lawn, this little piece of the suburban, American dream, that Francesca has installed on their patio. While Sandro initially humors her and allows the lawn to remain, when ants start infesting the home he takes out his frustration with Francesca on the turf by pulling it up. Francesca's penchant for moving furniture, too, indicates a problem; in an almost obsessive manner, this housewife tries to find the perfect place for each piece of furniture. Her lack of peace within the domestic space and her movement within this space recalls that of the protagonist of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper," whose compulsive circulation around the room in which she was confined leaves a mark on the wallpaper itself. While Francesca's desperation never reaches this level (the film is, after all, a comedy), she is certainly distressed as Pietrangeli shows her waiting for Sandro's return home from work. As their marriage continues, it becomes clear that the domestic sphere does not offer Francesca the satisfaction it did initially.

In the second flashback sequence, as the bills start rolling in, financial tensions mount and Francesca begins to involve herself in Sandro's business, pushing him to accept jobs, like one for their neighbor, Bevilacqua, who wants to build a chain of *rosticcerie*, rotisserie restaurants. Sandro, an architect who considers himself above this sort of commercial project, resists his wife's involvement in his professional life. In fact, any incursion by Francesca into his work life outside of the house is depicted as an unwanted intrusion. He resents her organizing a night out with the Bevilacquas, a night that ends with a huge argument between the newlywed couple, and when Francesca appears at his office, she realizes that her husband is a different man at work - funny, laughing, and content - and this too troubles her. For Sandro, the traditional gendered roles of husband and wife carry with them designation to specific spheres. The wife

should be in the home and leave the professional career to the man. This troublesome gendered cross-pollination of the professional and the domestic is only antagonized by Francesca's awareness of a female colleague of Sandro's, Simona. A Swiss woman of independent means, Simona represents everything that Francesca's choice to marry young has precluded her from doing. When she becomes aware of Simona's professional involvement with her husband, Francesca tells the Swiss woman off on the phone, setting off the previously-mentioned argument in which she vows to take up her studies at university again. Yet this too is fated to end badly, since she finds little motivation to study among her fellow students and resigns herself again to the role of wife.

After their initial arguments, Sandro and Francesca seem to want to find a solution to the conflict between them. While Francesca offers potential remedies in the form of communicational strategies, Sandro does not seem to want or to be willing to discuss their marital problems. In fact, Maraldi notes that, "in the face of the pressing requests of Francesca, he [Sandro] always opposes or refuses. Nevertheless, Sandro is affectionate, good-natured, and understanding, but he also demonstrates himself to be superficial, desiring only to dismiss their problems."¹²⁶ This is yet another reason for Francesca's dissatisfaction. She insists on another sort of marriage, one based on reciprocity and dialogue. Pietrangeli himself points out this difference between Sandro and Francesca's expectations of marriage. Sandro "does his marital duty of deferring or burying an argument for good, while his wife wants to talk about it, understand it."¹²⁷ The second flashback sequence ends with a discussion of this sort. After their argumentative night out on the town with the Bevilacqua's, Sandro and Francesca return home and Francesca prepares herself for the impending fight. She remarks that "loving each other isn't

enough,” for a marriage to work and that a couple must “talk to each other, confide in one another, tell each other everything.” Sandro listens to what she says and rather than take seriously what she is saying, he instead uses this moment of emotional vulnerability to initiate make-up sex. This episode recreates the same dynamic of the scene with Carlo at the lake, when Francesca wants to talk and he just wants to see her naked. Here, Sandro has confused Francesca’s request for intercourse in the form of dialogue for sexual intercourse and the next morning, a frustrated Francesca separates their double bed into two single beds, the closing image of the second flashback sequence. Recalling an early scene in Antonioni’s *L’avventura* when the Anna (Lea Massari) and Sandro (Gabriele Ferzetti) make love, simply going through the motions of coupledness, it is also worth pointing out the similarities between the Sandros in both films. Not only do these characters, both played by Gabriele Ferzetti, share the same fictional name, but both are architects, and both are dismissive of their female companions’ complaints, resorting to sex rather than dialogue in order to resolve any problems that arise in their relationships.

Stymied in her verbal exigencies within the marriage context, Francesca instead, in the present-tense sequences with Carlo, gives free reign to her frustrations. In scenes with Carlo, she openly defies traditional gender roles and the rules of propriety of the time. For instance, she agrees to come up to Carlo’s apartment and have a drink. She also sits on, and breaks, an antique chair after Carlo warned her that it was fragile. A few of the comments that she and Carlo make during this scene are key to understanding her intransigent behavior. While discussing her intelligence (Carlo, putting the heavy moves on Francesca at this point, insists on how smart she is), Francesca remarks that the ideal wife is “la muta dei Portici,” “the mute of Portici.” This

opera by Daniel Auber was made into a 1952 film directed by Giorgio Ansoldi so that the reference would not be lost on the spectator. This work tells the story of Lucia (in the film version) / Fenella (in the original opera), the victim of Spanish political persecution in Naples during the Masaniello revolt of 1647, rendered mute by torture and imprisoned in a convent. When she escapes, Lucia / Fenella unites herself with Masaniello and his forces but he is ultimately defeated by Alfonso, the Spanish prince who successfully puts down the rebellion. In an act of desperation, Lucia / Fenella throws herself into a lava flow from Mount Vesuvius, which has, in the meantime, erupted. Clearly, Francesca's dramatic reference to this operatic/cinematographic work serves to enhance her claim that for most men, wives, like children, are to be seen and not heard. It also cues the spectator who knows the reference "la muta dei Portici," to the socio-political significance of this statement. The Marxist and feminist implications of this comparison should not be lost on us. Francesca's observation echoes that of Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, that will be discussed later and in greater depth in the chapter on *La visita* (1963), that man's oppression of woman was the origin of the class conflict. By having Francesca identify with the female, proletarian figure of Lucia / Fenella, Pietrangeli shows her increasing awareness of the larger ideological forces behind the institution of traditional marriage. Francesca is increasingly becoming a rebellious, potentially subversive figure as the film heads into its final flashback sequence, but she is simultaneously portrayed as a sympathetic young bride as well, crying as a song reminds her of her husband. This audio bridge leads us into the third and final flashback, the couple's separation and Sandro's tryst with the upstairs neighbor, Nella.

There are three important plot points to highlight in this final flashback. The first are Francesca's failed attempts to broaden her role as child bride. Not only does she fail to successfully take up her studies again, but her attempt to act the "good wife" by making her husband's favorite dish, *cotolette alla milanese*, backfires, since she is offended by her husband's criticisms as he thinks their servant made the dish and his insulting comments about her culinary abilities catalyze yet another argument between the two spouses. When Simona calls the house in the middle of their argument, Francesca answers the phone, tells off Simona, and earns herself a smack in the face from Sandro, who does not understand that it was she who prepared the dish and it was this the source of her anger and frustration. Francesca, shocked and hurt by this display of violence, lies about being pregnant. Before discussing this very significant lie, it is worth pointing out that it is precisely here where Friedan's feminine mystique and Pietrangeli's film intertwine. Francesca's frustration about not being able to successfully fill the role results from uneven and changing cultural expectations for femininity. This is the "strange discrepancy between the reality of our lives as woman and the image to which we were trying to conform, the image that I came to call the feminine mystique."¹²⁸ This "schizophrenic split" between expectation and reality are largely the cause of Francesca's failures, her inability to full realize any role to a satisfying degree. As she tries to be both a traditional wife and a modern woman, the cracks in her identity become all too apparent to both herself and to Sandro.

The lie she manufactures about her pregnancy is the final attempt of a desperate woman to find some sort of role which will satisfy both her and her husband. Yet Francesca's duplicity, her fake pregnancy, does give her some sort of control over her husband. Not only does he become doting and sweet, but he also agrees to build the *rosticceria* for Bevilacqua and, as if that

weren't enough, he also buys her a car, a *Seicento*. Yet this excessive kindness on Sandro's part makes Francesca feel guilty - her other lies, she seems to think, were somewhat innocent, but this is a whopper. Francesca explodes into tears and confesses that she lied about the pregnancy. During this confession, she calls herself "a liar" and admits to "inventing the whole thing." "I'm a good-for-nothing," Francesca states, ceding to the paternal impulse of defining women by their ability to produce offspring. Sandro's disillusion is palpable, but in the very next scene, Pietrangeli shows that Francesca's subordination to Sandro is only temporary, a guilt-reaction.

In the new *Seicento*, with Sandro at the wheel, Francesca is again up to her old tricks. In this scene, her misbehavior takes the form of backseat driving. Sandro, who is in the right place for control, that is the driver's seat, struggles to maintain his position of power as Francesca continually brow-beats him about his driving, nagging him about shifting, braking, turning, and all the while, Sandro is getting increasingly frustrated. He finally takes out his frustration on Francesca, suspiciously asking her where she learned to drive and Francesca, offended, replies that the question is disrespectful. She then goes for the gut when she proclaims that "a wife is only respected when she is pregnant, like a racehorse." On the heels of her own fake pregnancy, Francesca has experienced this phenomenon first-hand, but to rub Sandro's nose in it during an argument is too audacious for her wounded husband. She is, nonetheless, engaging in a critique of their and of traditional gender roles. This feminist statement offends Sandro and the couple's crisis, at this point, is shown to be beyond remedy. A final attempt at reconciliation, an Easter Sunday lunch between Sandro's and Francesca's families, is tellingly split along gender lines, and the lunch ends with Sandro's father arguing with Francesca's mother and grandmother, and Francesca definitively packing her bags. As she starts off on her own, living in a *pensione* and

looking for a job, our teenage bride proclaims that “for the first time in my life, I felt like an adult.” As she begins to look for jobs, Francesca’s excitement is short-lived when she realizes that she has few marketable skills, but she finds a job as a typist. Through her ingenuity (she is shown initially outsourcing her work to another typist) she manages to figure out the value of money and the self-respect that comes along with earning one’s own way in life. Her first paycheck marks the realization that she had, in fact, been frivolous with her spending, and she returns to her and Sandro’s former home to find a fur that she wants to sell.

Upon entering her old home, she realizes that Sandro is not only incapable of taking care of himself, but that he has, in fact, cheated on her with her upstairs neighbor, Nella. As she walks in, Francesca sees that the gas valve has been left open, the refrigerator is empty, and the house is a mess. In picking up, she comes across an address book amongst the couch cushions, and when Nella comes in and, in the course of their conversation, mentions that she has misplaced her address book, Francesca connects the dots. The two women argue and Nella chides Francesca, saying that she, Nella, will know how to be a wife because she isn’t too selfish to recognize how lucky she is, like Francesca was. “What did you ever do for him?” Nella asks, and Francesca as well as the viewer realizes that this is a moment of self-examination and reflection. While Nella is willingly taking on the role of traditional wife as caretaker / maternal surrogate, Francesca is looking for something else. The confrontation between these two women is the confrontation between two generations - Nella, the older woman, representing the generation in which women had few options other than marriage and Francesca acting as the representative of the younger generation in which women want to have careers and be equal partners. In fact, Nella not only says that Francesca doesn’t know how lucky she is to have been married so young, but that she,

Nella, “will know how to act like a wife,” the traditional wife, the domestic angel that Francesca tried and failed to be. Nella willingly submits to the Freudian idea of women as “childlike dolls, who existed only in terms of man’s love, to love man and serve his needs.” Francesca’s forceful libidinal drives, her uncontrollable id and her ego in formation, do not allow her satisfaction within this servile role, the traditional definition of wife. Her final challenge, her final lie to Sandro, tests his ability to overcome this traditional idea of the wife as domestic angel and marriage as patriarchal institution based on moral double standards for the male husband and female wife.

THE FALLEN DOMESTIC ANGEL

The third flashback ends with Sandro confronting Francesca outside of her new job, asking how they could start over. Francesca’s demands for equality in the marriage are met with resistance by Sandro and, in order to test him, she tells him that she knows about his affair with Nella. Yet she does not stop there - she invents a lover for herself, an imaginary lover to create an accurate mirror image of their sexual situations since the separation. Sandro leaves, downtrodden, unable to fathom his wife’s betrayal of him despite his betraying her. Francesca’s revelation of this double standard not only serves to get to the root of their marital crisis and Francesca’s need for equality in the marriage, but it also allows Pietrangeli to insert into his comedy an important cultural observation key to the sexual revolution that will come a decade after his film’s release. As Engels writes of the institution of marriage

... while women are more and more deprived of sexual freedom, men are not. Actually, for men group marriage exists to this day. What for a woman is a crime entailing dire legal and social consequences, is regarded in the case of a man as being honourable or, at most, as a slight moral stain that one bears with pleasure.

The more the old traditional heterism is changed in our day by capitalist commodity production and adapted to it, and the more it is transformed into unconcealed prostitution, the more demoralising are its effects.¹²⁹

Pietrangeli develops his cinematic, political critique of marriage more in *La visita* (1963) but already here, he is touching on the gender-based power structures in the historical institution. Traditional marriage, according to Engels' rationale, becomes only a segue into prostitution for both the man and woman, the man who is consumer and the woman who is consumed, whether in the role of wife or prostitute. As the film moves into the present tense and the flashback sequences end, the moral and ideological weight of Francesca's demand for sexual equality become the pressing issue that Sandro, and the viewers, must address. This virginal, child bride, whose first kiss scared her so that she ran away from Sandro, is now demanding to be considered an autonomous, sexual subject. To repeat the assertion of the critic Turrone, that is indeed a scary proposition for potential husbands.

Pietrangeli insists upon this connection between marriage and prostitution in the final sequence between Francesca and Sandro, yet his film is nonetheless a delicate balancing act between committed social commentary and comedy. While Francesca admits to Carlo that she could never have cheated on Sandro because she would have "felt like a whore," she nonetheless insists upon being seen this way in order to point out what she calls Sandro's "provincial hypocrisy." The final argument between the couple takes place in a piazza where prostitutes are working in the background. When Francesca accuses Sandro of hypocrisy and he admits that he just cannot forgive her, she points to the whores and remarks that Sandro considers her to be just like them. In a moment of comedic truth, the whore fires back that "*la mantenuta sei tu,*" or "you're the kept woman," not us. This Pietrangelian motif of the prostitute-entrepreneur which

he will later explore fully in *Adua e le compagne* (1960) is here offered as a foil to the child-bride model of the late Fifties, so that what Friedan would call the feminine mystique is shown to be really nothing but a domestic version of prostitution labelled differently. Francesca's feminist moment arrives when the police do; as the officers arrest the prostitutes, Francesca proclaims that she is "in solidarity" with the prostitutes by shouting "*siamo tutte delle mantenate*," "we are all kept women." Sandro's attempt to dismiss her observations by saying that she is drunk (this episode takes place after Francesca drinks the whiskey with Carlo) only underlines his need to disregard her reasoning, a reasoning that accurately arrives at the same conclusion as many Marxist and feminist theorists - that under patriarchy, "we are all kept women." Despite the film's prosaic conclusion, with Sandro turning back as he seems to abandon Francesca for good, complete with the music swell and tears of happiness, Francesca's realistic description of the female condition under patriarchy is the film's high point. As she tells Sandro the truth and admits that "it's not true," and "I didn't do anything," that is, rescinds on the psychological consequences her demand for sexual equality placed on her husband, the film takes on the tone of the compromise between Pietrangeli and his screenwriters and the producers that the numerous sources previously cited have reported it to be. Yet to quote Henry Clay, the Great Compromiser, "a good compromise is when both parties are dissatisfied." In a film about marriage, in which a precocious, young wife is dissatisfied with her role as domestic angel and winds up comparing herself to a prostitute, it seems fitting that, to make the film palpable to a Fifties audience, there would have to be some sort of reconciliation. In fact, the film did not fully satisfy either the critics on the Left or on the Right, as Maraldi and Pellizzari both report, but by re-examining the film in its historical context, it becomes clear that the compromise that the film

represents, between Marxist and feminist theory, the Freudian ideal of femininity, and the Oedipal, patriarchal ideology of the production of the couple through the “happy ending” are all timely questions with which the film was grappling.

Chapter Three

Legally Bound: Political Realism and Prostitution in *Adua e le compagne*

KEEPING ADUA AND HER FRIENDS DOWN

The premise of Pietrangeli's *Adua e le compagne* (1960) seems simple enough at first glance, a seeming departure from his examination of coupledness in his previous films. Four prostitutes, after the passing of the 1957 Merlin Law that closed Italy's state-regulated brothels, decide to open up a restaurant that will serve as a front for an independent bordello upstairs that will be run by the women themselves. Yet the difficulties that these women encounter, difficulties that run the gamut from the psychological to the physical to the legal and bureaucratic, all serve to illuminate the mechanisms of oppression still at work on these would-be former prostitutes. I will base my analysis of Pietrangeli's film on two thematic knots that tie the analyses of prostitution and male supremacy in the radical feminist writings of Dworkin, MacKinnon, and Pateman, to Pietrangeli's *Adua e le compagne*. The first theme is the issue of gender identity and prostitution. As Dworkin writes of the prostitute, "... who is she? She is no one. Not metaphorically no one. Literally, no one." Pietrangeli reveals the inner workings of this identity problem, this feeling of the prostitute that she is no one, and its effect on the women, their social lives, their professional lives, and their legal status. The second theme is related to identity but is rather the spatial-temporal consequences of the prostitute's lack of identity. Dworkin links prostitution to homelessness and the impossibility of a future. Not only is the prostitute denied a home, a spatial safe haven, but she cannot even hope for a better future. "No woman who is prostituted can afford to be that stupid, such that she would actually believe that tomorrow will come."¹³⁰ Thrust out of the *case chiuse*, Pietrangeli's four female protagonists, led by Adua, dare

to hope for a better future and try to make a home of their own, but as Pietrangeli shows us, dreaming of a different profession and a different kind of home cannot be when, as Dworkin writes, “every hierarchy needs a bottom.”¹³¹ Pietrangeli’s film unequivocally demonstrates the mechanisms of oppression at work in the post-Merlin law Italy and how, despite their best efforts, the prostitute-protagonists remain at the bottom of this society’s social hierarchy.

Maraldi explains that “the subject, simple in its formulation, immediately puts into play a series of tendencies and points of view within the foursome made up of Adua and her friends,”¹³² but not only exposes the tensions within the group, but above all the legal and social pressure exerted on the group by legal, social, and economic forces. The fate of Pietrangeli’s fictional protagonists mirrors that of Italian prostitutes at the time, who saw themselves shifted from societal dirty secret within the *case chiuse* to streetwalking criminal. Regarding the Merlin Law, Tambor argues that “original proposal kept prostitution legal, identified men as criminals who seduced and exploited women cast as victims, and offered prostitutes who wanted to stop a way out,” while the “final law targeted not just prostitutes, but potentially all women, as criminals who were the proper focus of police and state scrutiny.”¹³³ What had been framed as a law to help female sex workers and punish male clients and traffickers in the end became another law that marginalized and excluded prostitutes and suspect women from accessing their civil, constitutional rights. In Pietrangeli’s most overtly political film which deals with the legal aftermath of the Merlin Law, the director unmasks the hidden forces of male supremacy that, according to Andrea Dworkin, keep prostituted women on the bottom of society. “What prostitution does in a society of male dominance is that it establishes a social bottom beneath which there is no bottom. It is the bottom. Prostituted women are all on the bottom. And all men

are above it.”¹³⁴ While the Merlin Law may have done away with the institution of the state-regulated brothel, Pietrangeli’s film shows the spectator that the problem of prostitution remains and what is more, the means of executing power and control over these women have become increasingly insidious and oppressive.

Pietrangeli remarked in an interview with *Bianco e nero* that *Adua* was his least favorite film because his female protagonists, unlike in his other films, wound up defeated at the end. He states that “Maybe it is the most schematic of my films and this makes it so that I like it less today ... The only ones [i.e. women in Pietrangeli’s films] who are defeated without a doubt are the girls in *Adua e le compagne* (and maybe for this reason, too, I like it less than my other films.”¹³⁵ Yet this defeat of *Adua* and her friends illustrates Andrea Dworkin’s point about prostitution in general and specifically the prostitution shown on screen here: unlike in many films, it is not a metaphor for something else, but rather the phenomenon of prostitution treated directly and unapologetically. As Dworkin writes and as the viewer of Pietrangeli’s film witnesses, “prostitution, is not an idea.... Prostitution in and of itself is an abuse of a woman’s body.”¹³⁶ This becomes apparent throughout the course of the film, when the former prostitutes, once free from the sex trade, do not want to re-enter the profession. We as spectators must witness the toll that the mere idea of prostituting themselves takes on them. We are forced to face the damage that the years of sex work has exacted on them, particularly on their mental health . If the film itself did not seem important enough on its own, comparing its treatment of prostitution with other films from the same year (1960), an operation to follow later in this chapter, will reveal the film’s unique importance for feminism and discussions about prostitution itself. Pietrangeli’s film overturns

the presumption of most prostituted women that one knows nothing worth knowing.... What matters here is to try to learn what the prostituted woman knows, because it is of immense value. It is true and it has been hidden. It has been hidden for a political reason: to know it is to come closer to knowing how to undo the system of male dominance that is sitting on top of all of us.¹³⁷

Pietrangeli's film denounces and decries the injustice of a system that holds women in legal limbo as licensed prostitutes while offering no alternative professional possibilities. As Tambor explains, the final version of the Merlin Law "is no longer emancipatory nor even protective, but disciplinary... Prostitutes were recast from being victims of criminally exploitative men to being criminals themselves."¹³⁸ By doing away with the shameful societal "bottom" of the *case chiuse*, Pietrangeli shows that Italian society has simply created another bottom for itself and forced her to walk the streets.

Adua and her friends, in their struggle to free themselves of prostitution, undergo the same struggle that Italian prostitutes faced as evidenced by the letter from a prostitute found in Tambor's study. The letter, speaking of the Merlin Law and addressed to the Senator herself, reads, "I admire and am almost content about your project; but thinking of the perhaps short time that I have left to exploit my years in this abject work, and then I won't be able to feed my children, makes me feel almost bitter. Will the government give us jobs? Or will we be scorned and isolated then as we are today?"¹³⁹ Unfortunately, the Merlin Law did little to help and much to "scorn and isolate" these former sex workers and Pietrangeli's film exposes the impossible situation in which these women find themselves, denied "honest" work, the constitutional and civil rights of citizenship, and the ability to become anything else other than the "bottom" of the social hierarchy. In terms of his cinema, Pietrangeli takes feminine, melodramatic subject matter,

such as prostitution, motherhood, and economic and emotional hardship, and turns melodrama on its head, creating real drama that does not find release in the tears of the spectator.

SENATRICE MERLIN AT THE VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

The film was a difficult pill for critics to swallow. As with much of Pietrangeli's cinema, *Adua e le compagne* did not sit right with many male critics. Marco Massara's superficial analysis of *Adua e le compagne* exemplifies the sort of failure to recognize the importance of Pietrangeli's film. Focusing on the simplicity of the plot, Massara claims that the film is redeemed by its formal elements, stating that "the most revealing element of the film is Pietrangeli's ability to dominate all the film's material potential (screenplay, photography, editing, acting) in order to make them serve exclusively and completely the creation of meaning, the exposition of the subject's potential."¹⁴⁰ This myopic analysis of the film ignores the film's political and theoretical implications, the fact that the story is told from the perspective of the prostitutes themselves, who recount the Merlin Law first-hand. Massara's observations instead retreat into the filmic world, its language, its concerns, not worrying to comment on the film's larger message. Yet he was not the only critic to misunderstand or ignore the implications of the film's political content. Lino Micciché also wrote that Pietrangeli's film fell short of the social critique it sought after. He wrote that *Adua* was

A tough, ruthless film, willingly polemical against a society that officially fights immorality but then permits it with its own interior corruption. All things considered, Pietrangeli's film does not clearly state this and this is its ideological limit. The fact that this is not said by the film is, more than a defect, a limit. *Adua e le compagne* has moments of intense psychological penetration, and is of a polemical force that will bother many.¹⁴¹

Pietrangeli's film, while "tough" and "ruthless" according to Micciché, will "bother" many people, but simultaneously falls short with its message? A polemic that fails to be polemical enough? This critical tendency ignores the larger context in which the film was released, the political climate of the time, and the reaction it solicited at the Venice Film Festival upon its release. While Maraldi reports that the film received "affirmation" ("*una buona affermazione*"¹⁴²) at the Festival, certain press outlets did not consider the gravity of the film's message, choosing instead to mock and deride the actresses and, most notably, Senator Merlin herself, in attendance at the Festival to present Pietrangeli's film.

Pietrangeli and the film's production team, including Morris Ergas, invited Senator Merlin to the Venice Film Festival and the press about the press conference she held demonstrates the difficulties against which she was fighting.¹⁴³ In an article entitled "Senator Merlin's Most Recent Gaffes,"¹⁴⁴ the writer spends the whole article poking fun at the Senator, her "venerable age", reporting how much she ate and drank, and mocking the fact that she made literary references to the children's books *Pinocchio* and *Cuore*. He also reports that one journalist present asked the all-too-common question, "But if things are going so badly, why don't you reopen the brothels?" Clearly they missed the point, dismissing the struggle of these women to a simplistic joke. The next page contains a list of "five occasions Senator Merlin missed to avoid acting ridiculous." The list contains quotes, out of context, in which the reporter engages in collegiate humor, belittling the Senator, her work, as well as the film itself. For instance, he quotes the Senator saying "I've spent ten years in the environment of the bordellos, so I can say that Signoret, Milo, Emmanuele Riva, and Rovere play the part of prostitutes perfectly!" The point about the lack of civil rights, the fact that these women have been

essentially coerced into sex slavery, seems to be completely lost on him and he is more comfortable having a laugh about the entire thing. In fact, he reports that Senator Merlin also said, “They attacked me but I turned up my nose at them all.” (“Mi hanno attaccato ma gli ho snobbati tutti.”) Why would journalists feel the need to attack an elderly lady politician unless they were threatened by what she was doing? In fact, in the magazine *Il Borghese*, the “Diary of a Festival” portion from Sept. 8th, 1960, reports that the “antimerlin” message of the film was not understood, not even by the *Senatrice* herself. The journalist reports that the press conference “quickly turned into a *bolgia*, into a war between the audience and the senator, between those who maintain that prostitution is a ‘social service’ and those who believe it to be a ‘social illness.’”¹⁴⁵ One could see how the film could get lost in the polemic surrounding its subject matter. *Adua e le compagne*, as the following discussion of its formal elements will elaborate, is certainly not light viewing since Pietrangeli constructs a film that leaves the viewer, like the post-Merlin Law prostitute, without hope, without that cathartic release that the spectator has come to rely upon in melodrama.

BURNING THE LICENSES

In her discussion of the maternal melodrama, Doane cites several critics’ definitions of what makes a film melodramatic. She explains that

some of the characteristics of the melodramatic mode... are: the non-psychological conception of the characters...; the claustrophobia of the settings... a concentration on the rhythm of experience rather than its content... the “foreshortening of lived time in favor of intensity”... and the activation of the psychical mechanisms of condensation and displacement which underlie the frustrations emerging when desire is attached to an unattainable object.¹⁴⁶

Seen through such a lens, it would be easy to characterize Pietrangeli's film as a melodrama. The characters are prostitute-types as outlined by Russell Campbell in *Marked Women*,¹⁴⁷ a fact which could lead to their being seen as "non-psychological"; Adua is a businesswoman, Marilina is the alcoholic, "damaged" mother, Lolita is the good-time girl, and Milly is the "hooker with a heart of gold." The film itself does at times foreshorten the action, showing only key episodes during the period that the women are trying to build their business. The "activation of psychical mechanisms of condensation and displacement" can be located in the women's reactions to the obstacles that stymie their progress towards their goal of professional autonomy. Yet it is here where Pietrangeli surpasses the melodramatic form. Doane notes that in melodrama "the narrative conflict is located between characters rather than *within* a single mind."¹⁴⁸ In *Adua e le compagne*, the on-screen conflict is located both internally and externally, between the characters and within the characters themselves. This doubling of conflict, both on the social and psychological fronts, makes Pietrangeli's film *more* than a simple tearjerker. It is, rather, devastating for the spectator cued to this redoubled conflict.

Melodrama, Doane explains, relies on the pursuit of an unattainable object. The spectator is set up for the prostitutes' failing to meet their expectations for their post-Merlin lives in first sequence of the film, which takes place on the eve of the closing of the brothels, foreshadowing future difficulties despite the collective mood of optimism in the air. The prostitutes gather together and one has her palm read. "Good fortune and money on the horizon," the palm reader exclaims, and the owner of the palm seems hopeful that this positive sign for the future can now come true, now that she is free to go out into the world and work as a legitimate, legitimized woman. Unlike Dworkin's prostitute above, this woman actually *does* believe that tomorrow will

come. Pietrangeli goes on to show discussions among other prostitutes about opening businesses, going into partnerships, all plans contingent on the legal elimination of the women's past identities. This is the central plot conflict in Pietrangeli's film, the unattainable object of melodrama, and it revolves around the issue of the *schede*, the licenses that identify and register the women as prostitutes.

Adua and her friends Milly, Lolita, and Marilina pool their savings and buy an old farmhouse outside of Rome that they want to convert into a restaurant and later, a brothel, owned and operated by the women themselves. Adua expresses her desire for economic independence from men, declaring that she wants to invest her money in her business and not "give it away to men or to a boss that exploits us." This is the first occasion for the women to learn that, according to MacKinnon, "women in prostitution are denied every imaginable civil right in every imaginable and unimaginable way, such that it makes sense to understand prostitution as consisting in the denial of women's humanity, no matter how humanity is defined."¹⁴⁹ When they apply for a license to open a restaurant, they are denied, blocked from entering the legitimate work force because of their illicit past employment. Adua, the businesswoman, doesn't believe that their collective past will be a problem, exclaiming that "we're just like other women. They'll give us a license. They burned the *schede*." Yet the women's dehumanized past as *schedate* continues to seep into their present, polluting their possibilities for humanization, liberation, and independence. When the letter arrives denying their license to open a restaurant, the women admit that "they know who we are at the police station," and that they must not have burned the *schede* after all. These *schede* that identify the women and restrict their professional aspirations in the wake of the Merlin Law create a ghost segment of the female population that

cannot shake off the past. In Pietrangeli's film, the invisible *schede* are more real than the on-screen women themselves since they have more power in determining the direction the plot will take. In Adua's world, one sort of license precludes another, and past prostitution blocks the road to a future outside of sex work.

With no other option left, the women turn to a man, Dottor Ercoli, to provide a legitimate face for their enterprise. While presented as a business relationship, the reality is that Ercoli is nothing more than a pimp. Dottor Ercoli, signifier of male dominance and patriarchal oppression, demands a million lire a month from the women, a sum that no simple restaurant can earn, coercing them back into prostitution. Not only does Ercoli embody the violation of the women's right to own property and exercise a commercial profession outside of prostitution, but he is shown to be a sex trafficker as well. "Women in prostitution not only begin poor; they are systematically kept poor by pimps who take the lion's share of what they earn,"¹⁵⁰ MacKinnon writes, in this case, a million lire a month. "They are the property of the men who buy and sell and rent them - placing their civil right, once again, in the hands of their tormentors."¹⁵¹ Pietrangeli creates in Dottor Ercoli an impasse to the liberty the women seek, showing how prostitution, in this case, is no more than sexual slavery. "If they are there because they cannot leave, they are sexual slaves,"¹⁵² MacKinnon unequivocally states, doing away with the illusion that prostitutes in some way enjoy their work. Clearly, in Pietrangeli's film, when given an alternative, these women choose the non-sex work. Regarding liberty and gender roles, it is interesting that "liberty for men is often construed in sexual terms, and includes liberal access to women, including prostituted ones."¹⁵³ Pietrangeli shows this dynamic at work through the women's relationship with potential clients, who exercise free-market pressure on them to return

upstairs, return to prostitution. Since it takes the women a while to get the restaurant on its feet, a it is in this transitional period that they are able to question their identity along with their former profession. For each woman, Adua, Marilina, Lolita, and Milly, this search for identity brings up different issues based on gender conflict that allow Pietrangeli to explore fully the societal and psychological consequences of prostitution and how this institution violates the individual civil rights of these women. In cinematic terms, it is this exploration of gender identity that defies the formula of melodrama, since the conflict between the members of the group are only external signs of the internal conflict brewing within as each woman reassesses her identity, her sexuality, and how they relate to her professional and personal life.

Adua, the oldest and most experienced member of the group, not only bears the brunt of leadership and responsibility for the other women, but struggles throughout the film with the threat of impending old age. This insecurity of Adua's is revealed early on in the film during an argument with Marilina, when the latter screams that Adua is old and will wind up selling herself for two hundred lire. Throughout the film, Adua remarks that the restaurant business is something that the women can still do when they are advanced in years. She is clearly preoccupied with her viability as market commodity as she ages and she admits as much during a conversation with her boyfriend, Piero Salvagni (Marcello Mastroanni), to whom she turns for protection when Ercoli returns and threatens to evict the women if they don't begin prostituting themselves again. Piero, a scam artist, a used-car salesman, and a cheater, comes down to the street in order to speak with Adua when she arrives in the middle of the night; he has another woman in his bed. While she waits for him outside of his building, an old prostitute passes, muttering to herself, a harbinger of a possible future of which Adua is terrified. During her

following conversation with Piero, she asks him, “Did you see that one that just passed? I don’t want to end up like her.” Adua’s fear of having to prostitute herself in her old age, unfortunately, reveals itself to be a legitimate one, as the film ends with her streetwalking in the rain, drunk, derided by other prostitutes as she tells the tale of when she and her friends ran a restaurant together. Adua’s external conflict with the other women is ultimately subsumed by her internal conflict over prostituting herself, an internal conflict in which the viewer witnesses her ultimate defeat.

The issue of drinking brings us to another one of the *compagne*, Marilina, whose years of prostituting herself have clearly left their mark on her psyche. Pietrangeli does not just scratch the surface of her psychological issues but delves into an examination of the link between prostitution, alcoholism, and absentee motherhood. Marilina’s problems with drinking cause her to go on a binge on the women’s first night at the farmhouse. Frustrated with the hardships of their new life (Adua forgot to call the electricity company to turn the lights on so the women must pass the night in darkness), Marilina heads back into Rome, gets drunk, steals a vase, and begs to be let back into her former brothel. Fighting her way back into the *casa chiusa*, she stumbles back into her bedroom and lies on her back, staring at her ceiling. Marilina then begins counting the marks on the ceiling, calling them a hen with her chicks, but then she panics when she believes one of the chicks has gone missing. Her distress mirrors her anxiety about her son, Carlo, who lives with a nurse since Marilina was not previously capable of caring for him. As Doane points out, maternal conflict is one of the hallmarks of the melodramatic genre, since “maternal melodramas are scenarios of separation, of separation and return, or of threatened separation - dramas which play out all of the permutations of the mother/child relation.”¹⁵⁴ In

fact, once the restaurant has some success, Marilina is able to bring Carlo to the farmhouse to live with her. Despite a few moments of anger and fear on Marilina's part, the mother-son relationship is shown to gradually improve, with Carletto even working as a *parcheggiatore* for the restaurant later on. Pietrangeli shows that this unconventional family structure is viable, the boy integrating successfully into his new domestic environment. When Dottor Ercoli arrives and inspects the upstairs rooms in the restaurant, one of the things he most objects to, besides the sacks of potatoes in Adua's room, is Carletto's presence. This innocent child's gaze makes it impossible for Dottor Ercoli to see the women as mere sex objects and he insists that the boy be sent away. On the brink of saving her relationship with her son, Marilina is forced to return to lying on her back, drunk, counting the chicks on the ceiling, hoping that they are all there. Pietrangeli reveals the psychological toll that this mother's separation from her child takes on her. She must choose between being with her son or providing for him financially. No compromise is afforded her in her maternal role.

These women struggle to fit other traditional feminine roles as well as they seek satisfaction in their new lives, free from prostitution, at least for the time being. Yet the economic benefits of prostitution are hard to ignore and there are certainly no lack of men trying to profit off of the ladies. Lolita (Sandra Milo), the youngest and most naive of the women, embodies the struggle of a woman who knows her sexuality to be a viable commodity. When she begins working as a waitress, she oozes sensuality and the other women have to remind her to walk like a waitress and not to "wiggle her hips" as much. One of her boyfriends, a leech named Stefano who is in the musical theater business, tries to convince Lolita to ask Adua for a refund on her investment in the restaurant so that she can front the money for a show. She, of course, would be

the star, a profession worthy of her, unlike her current one where she has to be a “servant.” The idea that she would have to stoop so low as to be a servant sends her into tailspin and she demands her money back from Adua, who dismisses the proposal with a slap to Lolita’s face. Adua then dispatches Stefano, who refuses to pay his bill, with her saying that he has “earned a lunch,” and they saved themselves from being swindled, “so we both got something out of it.” Lolita, in many ways the innocent of the group and its youngest member, is she who risks the least for the time being. As such, she often serves as a comic foil to the older, more conflicted members of the group. By playing the bimbo (in the English sense of the word) as only Sandra Milo can, Lolita smoothes over the tension created by the demands that male sexual objectification places on the women, since she is portrayed as a woman confident with her own sexuality. Yet even sexual confidence, Pietrangeli shows, does not justify coercion into prostitution. Anticipating what feminists today would call “slut-shaming,” Lolita embodies a conflicting message about sex; just because she looks sexy does not mean she has to have sex with men. Again and in Lolita’s case, the external conflict between the women points to an internal conflict; in her case, how to feel beautiful, sexy, and desirable without necessarily inviting sexual advances.

Adua’s no-nonsense attitude is shown to be her best defense against male vultures like Lolita’s friend, Stefano, but she lets down her guard with Piero (Mastroianni) who reveals himself just as willing as the others to reduce her and her *compagne* to mere prostitutes. Adua’s past profession puts her present emotional life at risk when she gets involved with Piero. Having spent years building up an emotional wall when dealing with men, she is conflicted about lowering it with Piero. When Adua asks him for help regarding Ercoli’s demand that they begin

sleeping with clients again, Piero admits that he thought the brothel was already operational. When he witnesses Adua's dismay, he back peddles, saying he thought the others were bedding johns, but not Adua. Her genuine affection for Piero makes her vulnerable to feeling an emotional connection with him while he saw her as merely a means to an end, the end being money and sex. We previously see him using Adua to help him pull off a scam, Adua taking care of him while he is ill, and her going to the dog track with him. During one of their sexual encounters, Adua admits that he's not like the other men because she is embarrassed when she undresses in front of him. While she considered him her boyfriend, he considered her a whore or at best, a fellow petty criminal. Her external conflict with Piero when she discovers his cheating ways may be melodramatic (how could she trust a used car salesman, a small-time crook, the viewer wonders, perplexed) but the years of emotional damage that created Adua's trust issues are also an essential component to her character as created by Pietrangeli. Adua too longs for companionship, emotional support, and love despite her hardened exterior and her seasoned sentiments.

Adua is not the only *compagna* whose sentimental life is doomed to be haunted by her professional past. Milly, the innocent farm girl-type of the group whom we witness doing most of the cooking and serving in the restaurant, becomes emotionally involved with one of her customers, a young Sardinian *geometra* who becomes a fixed client. She prepares special dishes for him and their courtship proceeds along very traditional lines until he proposes to her. The scene takes place in one of the buildings he is helping to construct, a sign of their possible, but uncertain, future. He discusses his prospects, hopes, and dreams and asks Milly if she will become his wife. She lowers her face, ashamed, and confesses to him that she used to be a

prostitute. Her need to confess to her potential husband about her past reveals an interesting parallel between prostitution and marriage. The two institutions, according to Pateman, are both examples of the sexual contract that guarantees men sexual access to women's bodies, so that "men can buy sexual access to women's bodies in the capitalist market. Patriarchal right is explicitly embodied in 'freedom of contract.'"¹⁵⁵ Milly recognizes her role as the goods to be sold, to be contracted, and feels the moral obligation to tell the suitor the truth about her sexual past. She is the seller yet confesses against her own better interest, jeopardizing her romantic future and her way out of prostitution in her new role as wife. The veil of morality that clouds public perception regarding sex work, or in this case, sex slavery, is undermined by Milly, whose confession shows not only is she willing to play the martyr, but she is willing to do so unnecessarily, since she has been given no choice about the matter of her profession. Pietrangeli shows that "civil subordination is a political problem, not a question of morality, although moral issues are involved."¹⁵⁶ Milly throws herself on the sword of public morality and at least initially comes out on top. The Sardinian, after absorbing his initial shock, agrees to marry her, but when the women are arrested and their story is splashed across the front page of the newspaper, he renegotiates. Private knowledge is one thing but having Milly's profession go public is a deal-breaker for him. Milly becomes damaged goods and their sexual contract, despite her full disclosure, becomes null and void when he phones to break off their engagement.

Milly's moral martyrdom is only one of many examples throughout the film of the women's problematic relationship with men. At a certain point, a former john who is eating at the restaurant with his family, recognizes the women, and comes to the kitchen to speak with Adua. He calls Milly by her pseudonym, *Coscia d'oro*, Golden Thighs, and tries to ascertain whether or

not he will be able to sleep with the women or not. For him, these women are a fantasy and he has stumbled not into a restaurant, but into a world in which he is in charge. He calls the women by their false names and demands sexual satisfaction. “While she is on her twenty-fourth false name - dolly, baby, cutie, cherry tart... her namelessness says to the man, she’s nobody real, I don’t have to deal with her, she doesn’t have a last name at all.”¹⁵⁷ Regarding the importance of names, before confessing her past to the Sardinian, Milly also tells him her last name. She, like the other women, longs to be an individual, to be real and human, but the men in the film would rather not see them this way. The film is almost completely split down gendered lines, with the women as the sympathetic heroines and the men cast in the roles of villain, a fact that Pietrangeli regretted. The director confessed, as cited above, that *Adua e le compagne* “is more schematic than the others, so that today I may like it less than the others,”¹⁵⁸ an observation that also indicates the power relationship at play. Signifiers of patriarchal right and masculine power, the men in the film are also dehumanized, symbolic representatives of negative societal forces, while the women are the human victims of these male forces. The only exception to the gender split between positive and negative characters is the monk who comes by the restaurant to collect kitchen scraps to feed to his pig, although even he is profiting off of them in a certain, gentler sense. Pietrangeli’s film, so black and white regarding gender, demonstrates Dworkin’s assertion that men use prostitutes because of the feeling of power, the fetish of her powerlessness, that “she is literally nothing,” and “he can do anything he wants,” because “she has no where to go.”¹⁵⁹ “Who is he?” this man who needs prostitutes, Dworkin asks. “Everyone,” she responds. “This is the world that prostituted women live in. It is a world in which no matter what happens to you, there is another man who wants a piece of you. And if you need something from him, you

have to give him that piece.”¹⁶⁰ Adua and her friends learn that despite not being in the brothel any more, sexuality is their only bartering tool, sex the only currency in this man’s world. Legally, they have no recourse and socially, once they reveal themselves as former prostitutes, they are shunned and disgraced. Pietrangeli refuses to be satisfied by revealing the hypocrisy built into society’s patriarchal structure and as the film reaches its climax and the women are no longer able to avoid the question of returning to prostitution, Adua exacts revenge on Dottor Ercoli in the only way she is able.

SCUTTLING THE SHIP

Dottor Ercoli arrives at the restaurant to inspect it after threatening eviction the day before. He wants to ensure that the women, despite running a successful restaurant, have taken steps to return to prostitution. During this visit, Pietrangeli ensures that Ercoli admits to coercion and sex trafficking when the women protest against his demand that they engage in prostitution again, a protestation to which he responds, “*Siete schedate, siete mie!*” or “You’re all licensed, you’re mine!” They are his property, like the house and the restaurant, and have no recourse, no where to turn. “To be a prostitute is to be a legal nonperson in the ways that matter.... Anyone can do anything to her and nothing legal will be done about it.” Or, “in the words of The Three Prostitutes’ Collectives from Nice, ‘all prostitution is forced prostitution... we would not lead the ‘life’ if we were in a position to leave it.’”¹⁶¹ These women, theoretically in the position to leave prostitution since they have a profitable alternative in the restaurant, are shown, in practice, to be coerced back into it. The core conflict here is a psychological one, hence one that defies melodrama as a genre despite the film’s apparent melodramatic structure. The stage is set for a

smooth transition from restaurant to brothel but as a consequence of Ercoli's visit, the women are thrown into crisis; no one wants to go back to prostitution. They are all slowly but steadily making progress in acquiring new identities as businesswomen, cooks, waitresses, girlfriends, fiancées, and entering prostitution again would undermine all the "honest" work they had done up to this point. As Dottor Ercoli's car pulls in front of the farmhouse, Adua decides that if Ercoli was going to take them down, she is taking him down with them. She pulls a package out of her wardrobe and puts on the lingerie it contains. As Ercoli enters the restaurant, full of diners, Adua descends the staircase, proclaiming the upstairs "open for business, just like Dottor Ercoli wants." She invites the men upstairs, to leave their families, their meals, to come upstairs with one of the women. Adua reveals the greed, the moral and political degradation imposed on them by Ercoli, to a double audience, the patrons of the restaurant and the viewers of the film. It is not enough for them to run a successful restaurant; they must sell themselves to satisfy their *padrone*. Adua uses his name, unmasking the illegitimate face of this ostensibly legitimate businessman. Mortified, Dottor Ercoli runs out of the restaurant, but as Pietrangeli shows, this is not the end of the legal ramifications of Adua's actions.

The very next scene shows Adua and her *compagne* in a jail cell. While they have not actually engaged in prostitution, their proximity to the institution itself is enough for the authorities to arrest them. The film's silence regarding Ercoli can only mean that he, like so many men involved in prostitution as pimps or as clients, has gotten away with it. Like with the various versions of the Merlin law, the client and the pimp have been written right out of legal punishment. "Courts seem to think the women make the money when, in most instances, they are conduits from trick to pimp, and the money is never theirs."¹⁶² This is certainly the case, or

would have been the case, with Adua and Dottor Ercoli's arrangement had the women ceded to his demands. They did not prostitute themselves, however, and nonetheless Pietrangeli's film shows how, "criminal laws against prostitution make women into criminals for being victimized as women," and "when legal victimization is piled on top of social victimization, women are dug deeper and deeper into civil inferiority, their subordination and isolation legally ratified and legitimated."¹⁶³ Isolated, humiliated, jailed, Adua and her *compagne* are signs of the political injustice prostitutes suffer. What is truly tragic is that *they never actually prostitute themselves*. The irony ultimately lies in the fact that *they are arrested for resisting, for trying to avoid returning to prostitution*. Pietrangeli's film suggests that this is, in fact, their greatest crime.

Unable to escape their adverse destiny, once released from jail, Adua, Milly, Lolita, and Marilina return to the restaurant and take stock of their situation. Milly receives the phone call breaking off her engagement as the women read about their case in the newspaper. There is no mention of Ercoli in the paper, only the prostitutes who set up a brothel disguised as a restaurant outside of Rome. Adua and her friends are the criminals, the sensationalist story. Here, in the newspaper story, they have the agency they lack in their real lives. The truth is that they are no more than property, coerced, manipulated; thus they take their revenge on the only outlet afforded them, the restaurant that they have created with their own blood, sweat and tears. The women devastate the restaurant that had been a place of hope and liberation for them, destroying plates, bottles, jars, glasses, everything that had signified a new beginning but revealed itself to be, like them, merely property. No longer theirs, they rage against their lost ambitions, breaking them into millions of pieces in a whirlwind of destruction. With no future for which to hope, denied the basic human right to private property and to liberty, the women explode in justified

anger against the home that they had built for themselves. Like the brothel at the beginning of the film, the farmhouse restaurant proved itself to be simply another man's home in which they were only tenants. As Dworkin writes,

we are the homemakers; we make these homes but we have no right to them... women are dispossessed of a place to live that is safe, that belongs to the woman herself, a place in which she has not just sovereignty over her own body but sovereignty over her actual social life, whether it is life in a family or among friends. In prostitution, a woman remains homeless.¹⁶⁴

It is indeed Adua's fate, Pietrangeli shows his spectators, to remain homeless, marginalized, disenfranchised. While she had hoped for a future free of "giv[ing] it away to men or to a boss that exploits us," in this post-Merlin age, with the opening of the closed houses, women's oppression simply moved from within a literally closed system, hidden behind shutters in the *case chiuse*, to another system, still closed, only insidiously so. Legal discrimination, prostitutes' licenses, and economic pressures effectively close off the world outside of prostitution to these former prostitutes who find themselves coerced by the new system into surviving by prostituting themselves on the street.

To call the final scene of Pietrangeli's film tragic is a understatement. Adua, in the rain, drunk, is the object of scorn and derision of other prostitutes as she rambles on about the successful restaurant she and her friends once ran. She tries to approach a client in a car and is brushed off, dismissed, and as she stumbles away, she mutters over and over to herself that she will "not wind up like the rest of them." Her worst fear has come true precisely because she has wound up like the rest of them, poor, aging, and walking the street. The dynamics of power that the film reveals shows us that even an ambitious, capable, shrewd woman like Adua is broken by the patriarchal legal system surrounding post-Merlin prostitution in Italy. Emphasizing the Italian

legal system as protagonist in the film while ignoring the implications of gender, Maraldi explains that “the schematic nature of the film ... is determined above all by having to demonstrate how a sought-after change was rendered impossible by the unequal application of a law and how certain choices do not depend on the good or bad wills of people.”¹⁶⁵ Pietrangeli’s film is a call to a collective examination of conscience in how these women are treated, an attempt to give a voice to a silent sector of society, the bottom, upon which the patriarchal social and legal hierarchy is built. As Dworkin urges, Pietrangeli’s film dared to encourage viewers

to look at the role of men - really look at it, study it, understand it - in keeping women poor, in keeping women homeless, in keeping girls raped, which is to say, in creating prostitutes, a population of women who will be used in prostitution. We need to look at the role of men in romanticizing prostitution, in making its cost to women culturally invisible, in using the power of this society, the economic power, the cultural power, the social power, to create silence, to create silence among those who have been hurt, the silence of the women who have been used.¹⁶⁶

A political weapon against the silence imposed upon these women and despite a seemingly melodramatic package, when compared with other films of that same year, Pietrangeli’s film stands out for its realism, its uncompromising treatment of the legal system, and its implications for contemporary Italian cinema and Pietrangeli’s unique position among his contemporary directors.

PROSTITUTION IS NOT A METAPHOR

To demonstrate the uniquely feminist quality of Pietrangeli’s portrayal of prostitution, it is necessary to engage in a comparative study with the films of other directors. The prostitute is a ubiquitous figure in Italian postwar cinema, Danielle Hipkins writes, whether in “‘color-giving’ appearances that connote a certain underworld ambience or move the plot forward,” or as “the

prostitute as heroine.”¹⁶⁷ As Hipkins explains in her essay on prostitution in *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, “it is in this latter group where the redemption/punishment motif is strongest,” since “the initial sense of sympathy for the figure is both enhanced and cut short by the social condemnation of prostitution, making punishment the necessary alternative to satisfy, according to Mulvey’s theory, castration anxiety.” While Adua is ostensibly “punished” in Pietrangeli’s film, the legal exposé and her centrality to the plot make the film an important document and a comparative study reveals the important differences between Pietrangeli’s treatment of the prostitute and that of other directors. There are several films that for the year of their release and subject matter are particularly suited to this operation. Fellini’s *Le notti di Cabiria* (1957) and *La dolce vita* (1960) both deal with issues of prostitution and were released prior to and contemporarily to *Adua*; Visconti’s *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (1960) both deals with prostitution and was presented at the Venice Film Festival along with *Adua e le compagne*. Yet none of these films are as explicit and realistic in their examination of prostitution nor do they “try to learn what the prostituted woman knows, because it is of immense value.”¹⁶⁸ Instead, they tend to demonstrate the tendency of male directors to use female prostitution as a metaphor, a stylistic or narrative tool, rather than address the problem of prostitution directly. The difference between Pietrangeli’s treatment of prostitution and that of other directors is indicative of his commitment to telling the stories of these voiceless women, while the other directors listed tend instead to avoid the political issue of the female voice, focusing instead on the metaphor of prostitution and what it means within their male-centered cinema. This study will conclude with a comparison of Pietrangeli’s *Adua e le compagne* to Pasolini’s *Accattone* (1961) and *Mamma Roma* (1962) in

order to show how Pietrangeli's political realist tendency relates to Pasolini's stark "poetic" realism in his treatment of prostitution in these, the latter director's first two films.

Fellini's *Le notti di Cabiria* offers an interesting counterpoint to Pietrangeli's *Adua e le compagne*. Both centered on prostitute-protagonists, both films end in tragedy, one a political tragedy (*Adua*) and the other a sentimental one (*Cabiria*). As Bondanella notes, rather than center his film around a realistic examination of prostitution and the legal and political issues surrounding the Merlin Law debates, Fellini instead chose to represent "the inner resources of the sympathetic and resilient character he had created for his wife's sensitive performance."¹⁶⁹ While Fellini's film was famously based on an encounter with a real-life prostitute, *Cabiria*'s cinematic world is not political in nature. What is *realistic* in Fellini's film is existential and emotional in nature: questions about love, aging, trust, and other sentimental concerns. While both sets of prostitute-protagonists lose a home they have created for themselves, *Cabiria* is shown to be a sole proprietor, able to buy and build a house for herself, on her own, a point in the screenplay that perhaps undermines the difficulties involving property ownership for prostitutes as a class of women. In addition, Fellini's treatment of prostitution avoids dealing with the psycho-sexual realities of the sex trade, making *Cabiria* more of a symbol of lost innocence than a flesh and blood woman. It is not surprising that there are no sex scenes involving *Cabiria* in Fellini's film, and *Cabiria*, played by an impish Giulietta Masina, is completely unsexed, desexualized. Unlike *Adua*, *Lolita*, *Milly*, and *Marilina*, who wear lingerie and are shown encountering the dangerous territory of male desire, *Cabiria* wears odd clothing (the Mexican kimono and the feather jacket in particular) that not only make her look ridiculous for comic effect but also essentially hide her body, minimizing her sexuality and the problem it poses for

Fellini's depiction of prostitution. The closest she comes to a bedroom is when she is locked in the bathroom at Amadeo Nazzari's house, watching the glamorous *divo* fight with his girlfriend through the keyhole. While Fellini does depict the threat of violence that prostitutes face, his film both beginning and ending with Cabiria being robbed and nearly killed, in both cases, she comes up fighting, reassuring the viewer rather than encouraging an examination of the male role in creating a "bottom" with Cabiria and her fellow prostitutes.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the final scenes of the films, similar in their depiction of the two prostitute-protagonists in desperate moments. Whereas Adua is mocked, shamed, and humiliated by the prostitutes in her company, Cabiria, meeting the group of young musicians on the road, is greeted by them and invited into their fold. Her final smile into the camera seals the fable-like quality of the ending. Despite all of her hardship, Cabiria and her unflinching spirit will be fine. There will always be a band of innocents to console her, welcome her, accompany her along the road. The catharsis for the viewer comes when Cabiria's smile is directed into the camera as the spectator is invited to join in the merry band and made to feel like one of the innocents helping Cabiria along. Our sympathy for Cabiria and hence all prostitutes makes us feel good about ourselves. She smiles at us and we are released of asking ourselves the uncomfortable questions that Pietrangeli's film demands of us. Contrarily, in Pietrangeli's film there is no catharsis, only a sort of *mise en abyme* of Adua's identity, her hopes and dreams. As Masoni and Vecchi write of Pietrangeli's realist cinema, "the bitter episodes... move the spectator emotionally, but it is not a liberating emotion. Instead, it is more fitting to speak of a malaise that intensifies and expands around the *core of crisis*."¹⁷⁰ Cabiria too is in crisis; her dreams have also been shattered, yet she smiles through the aftermath, soothing us and absolving us of

responsibility. In the aftermath of personal tragedy, only Adua seems to live the consequences of that tragedy and we the viewers are witness to it.

The second Fellini film which illuminates Pietrangeli's uniquely feminist treatment of prostitution is *La dolce vita* (1960). Released the same year as *Adua e le compagne*, Fellini's autobiographical film uses prostitution as a foil for Marcello's moral degradation. One sequence in particular shows Marcello (Marcello Mastroanni) and Maddalena (Anouk Aimée) picking up a prostitute not to have sex with her, but to use her "dirtiness" to satisfy their own sexual desires. Rather than a simple gender issue, prostitution here becomes a class issue as well, since Maddalena is a bored, wealthy woman who commits the same sin against her fellow woman as a man, since she, as Dworkin writes of the thrill of visiting a prostitute, "rub[s] up against a woman who's dirty and live[s] to tell about it."¹⁷¹ Not only that, but Maddalena's name recalls another prostitute, and Fellini examines Maddalena's own status as bored, rich housewife, pointing at the malaise lurking beneath Maddalena's chic surface. Her black eye, her nocturnal wandering, and her apparent nymphomania are all signs of her deep unhappiness. Fellini's negative portrayals of both Marcello and Maddalena are confirmed by this sequence with the prostitute, in which we see them leave a glittery nightclub, pick up a prostitute, and use this woman, her flooded home, her humble bedroom, to make themselves feel *something different*, "needing to push a whole class of people down so that you can walk on top of them."¹⁷² Not content to engage in their usual nocturnal pursuits of drinking and sex, the couple engages in a power play, "rubbing up" against the lowest class of person, the bottom of society, in order to make themselves feel something different, or something at all. Like the wooden boards the prostitute lays down for them so that they don't wet their feet as they cross her flooded floor, this

encounter brings them close enough to her humiliation so that they can feel it while maintaining a safe distance, an escape route out of this woman's home, this "bottom" that they have visited as sexual tourists interested only in the kinky thrill the proximity to degradation provides for them. While the viewer gains this knowledge in watching the sequence, there is little interest paid to the prostitute's viewpoint, and she remains, on the whole, silent regarding the actions of the couple.

Like *Adua e le compagne*, Visconti's *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* was also presented at the Venice Film Festival in 1960. The similarities between the films are worth examining. As the titles of the films state, both tell the story of an economically disadvantaged, marginalized group of people trying to find work and familial stability in a new situation. The gendered division of the films is worth noting, since *Adua* has her *compagne* just like *Rocco* has his *fratelli*. Visconti's film focuses on a family of Lucanian immigrants who move to Milan in order to pull themselves out of poverty. The familial structure, made up of the four brothers and their mother, is threatened by the presence of Nadia, Rocco's prostitute-girlfriend. Here, Visconti wanted the Nadia character to function as what Wagstaff would call a "shorthand,"¹⁷³ a melodramatic cliché signifying the dangerous woman. Yet the ambivalence of Nadia's character has been examined by Hipkins, who reads the character's movement from the plot's center to periphery and back again, as well as the prostitute's murder, as evidence of the influence of female screenwriter Suso Cecchi D'Amico. Hipkins' study of how Nadia's character developed through the screenwriting process is exemplary of the emergence of an important and interesting female voice both on-screen in Nadia and off, thanks to Cecchi D'Amico's involvement with the film. Cecchi D'Amico admitted that "Luchino Visconti has a thoroughly patriarchal notion of family,"¹⁷⁴ She

attempted to bring some three-dimensionality to the character of Nadia, whom Visconti had initially intended to be a “femme fatale”, a ““symbol-girl,’ ‘this devil that goes from one brother to the next’... a chorus of stereotypical womanhood.”¹⁷⁵ While Cecchi D’Amico does ultimately humanize Nadia, especially in her “bedroom speech” where she discusses her past and how she began her sexual life at thirteen, when she was “seduced by a neighbor- a dentist - and continued to sleep with him just to escape the crowded conditions of her own home,”¹⁷⁶ bestowing an interiority on Nadia that echoes in Dworkin’s analysis of woman’s homelessness and man’s role in creating prostitutes. However, as Hipkins admits, in Visconti’s case, “eventually the narrative power of the punishment motif in the representation of the prostitute was clearly too strong to resist.”¹⁷⁷ In other words, since Nadia poses a problem to the patriarchal structure of the family and the bond between the brothers Rocco and Simone, Hipkins reports that despite acquiring exceptional qualities that go beyond her status as prostitute-symbol, she had to be dispatched in a way synonymous with traditional narrative structures in which the prostitute must either be punished by death or redeemed by marriage.

Nadia’s death, her murder at the hands of Simone, cross-cut with Rocco’s boxing match, makes her a catalyst for the destruction of a fraternal bond, so that “the sacrifice of the prostitute, such a common cinematic cipher, was revealed not to be a restoration of social order, but the product of male obstinacy.” As Spinazzola and Aristarco both point out, “with the melodramatic excess of making Rocco Nadia’s redeemer and, at one small remove, murderer, Visconti had unbalanced the spectator’s sympathies and questioned the necessity of her death” with “the brothers’ ‘shared responsibility for the crime.’”¹⁷⁸ Rocco, who loves Nadia but gives her up to Simone in order to maintain familial order and the fraternal bond after witnessing her rape, does

not emerge from the story with his conscience nor his hands entirely clean. Yet what is perhaps the most problematic moment of the film is Visconti's shooting of Nadia's death. It is not enough that she die; her death had to be captured on film, satisfying the spectator's desire for punishment by fetishizing, making a spectacle out of this broken female body, object of the male gaze as the camera lingering on Nadia's dying form. In so doing, Visconti could be said to give the impression, criticized by MacKinnon and Dworkin, that the death of the prostitute is a "righteous kill," since "he has just gotten rid of a piece of dirt, and society tells him he is right."¹⁷⁹ By making her dead body a cinematic trophy in a climactic moment of the film's plot, Visconti undermines his narrative purpose in telling the story of Rocco and his brothers, not Nadia, the prostitute. As Pio Baldelli suggests, "to justify the shot the camera should be focused on Simone: the body of the dying woman doesn't interest us in that moment but rather Simone's moral, furious reaction."¹⁸⁰ While one could argue that Nadia is one of the most beautiful, complex, and the least compromised characters in the film, her death poses a problem since it is both rife with Christ-like imagery but simultaneously brutal, violent, and realistic in its horror. She is the sacrificial lamb that holds the patriarchal structure of brotherhood together. Indulging in a moment of male gazing, Visconti reveals his misogynistic attitude towards "this protagonist who wasn't really supposed to be one,"¹⁸¹ this "symbol-girl" who wound up being more three-dimensional than the director had initially intended. There is also an interesting ontological link *manqué* between Nadia's death scene and a real prostitute's murder. As John Foot reports, the film met with censorship and the crew was prevented from shooting Nadia's death scene at the *idroscalo* in Milan, since "the idroscalo really had been the location of a murder of a prostitute in March 1959 and was regularly used by prostitutes and their clients."¹⁸² This failed attempt at

creating a setting that showed the reality of Milanese prostitutes, censored by the authorities, reveals that attempts to portray too closely the life of prostitutes will be undermined by the representatives of patriarchal authority. The murder of a prostitute on film is not a problem; actually, it is what we expect thanks to the redemption-punishment motif, but this death, this “righteous kill” cannot echo real life too closely.

Adua’s end as a streetwalker seems only a prelude to a possible violent death, but Pietrangeli does not indulge in violence against his protagonist. A violent death for Adua would have distracted from the legal and political concerns of the film which specifically focuses instead on the gendered power struggle of post-Merlin prostitutes to free themselves of their previous profession. Visconti’s film does not address the issue of gender when it comes to prostitution and instead muddies the waters of the debate, since Simone becomes a homosexual prostitute himself. For Visconti, what other way would as effectively show Simone’s descent into moral degradation? By aligning Simone with the hierarchical bottom that is prostitution, Visconti shows that these brothers too are victims of social injustice, their human rights violated. He just ignores the fact that the hierarchy, in general, is divided along gendered lines. This is perhaps a reason why Hipkins reports that, “a major, and accurate, criticism of the film has emphasized its failure to make the kind of sociopolitical commentary Visconti aspired to.”¹⁸³ The muddy waters of power, gender, oppression and prostitution are difficult to navigate for this director who created in collaboration with Cecchi D’Amico a surprise female protagonist whose own struggle risked to overshadow his own titular characters, Rocco and his brothers. Nadia, who had been framed as the antagonist to the brothers, proved to be perhaps the more interesting character, the more provocative case study, and the more pressing sociopolitical issue. Nadia, created as a pure

abstraction, a metaphor for female evil incarnate, pushed her way at least partially into reality, until her on-screen death relegated her to abstraction, to the realm of the symbolic. Satisfying the exigencies of the male gaze this way, No! the male gaze could have been satisfied without making her live we should not be surprised by film's success at the Venice Film Festival and the fact that it helped to establish Visconti's now all but irrefutable status as *auteur*.

In the case of *Accattone*, Pasolini's violence towards his prostitute-characters is often seen through the eyes of the violent party. In other words, Pasolini's camera focuses chiefly on and the director's point-of-view sympathy often lies primarily with the male titular character, Accattone (Sergio Citti) himself, or the group of male ne'er-do-wells. Exemplary of this tendency is the fact that, as per Pasolini's style of "poetic realism," all of his female characters have names that, in some way, typecast them. Maddalena, Stella, Amore, and Ascenza are all names Pasolini chooses to sum up the female personality embodied by the character. Maddalena is a whore, Stella a point of light in the sparse, harsh landscape of the *borgate*, and Ascenza, the mother of Accattone's son, wants to rise above the pimp and his criminal lifestyle. Yet the nickname "Accattone" itself also has linguistic significance, meaning beggar or someone who lives off of the charity of others. In fact, Accattone still today in Roman dialect is used to indicate someone who is hard up and depends upon others to pay. Returning to Dworkin's analysis of prostitution, Accattone represents the class that lives on the shoulders of prostitutes, and in fact, Pasolini's film centers on the tension between Accattone's pride and dignity and his self-awareness about the shameful way he makes his money, that is, by pimping. Pasolini's cinematic style, more metaphysical than Pietrangeli's, indicates from the beginning of the film that

Accattone's life is at risk and that the thin line that separates him from death is in the form of the viable commodity of a woman's body.

Pasolini's film opens with laughter in the face of death. The flower vendor passes Accattone and his posse, commenting about how they all look on the verge of death, like they've come "straight out of the morgue." This tendency to laugh in the face of fear and death becomes a major narrative technique throughout the film, as the group bets on Accattone's ability to eat and then swim across the Tiber, joking about Accattone's gold jewelry and to whom Maddalena will go if he dies. His epitaph ("*Provare per credere*") as well as his comment to the young boy who asks about why he is diving into the river with all of his gold on, to which he responds "I want to die with all of my gold on, like the Pharaohs," indicate to the viewer that Accattone's risky lifestyle depends upon his maintaining to himself these illusions of grandeur as well as engaging in dangerous activities to maintain the outlaw facade amongst his group of friends. This facade, this pea-cocking show of pride, is essential to Accattone's psychic health, since he must do whatever he can to avoid facing the truth that continues, throughout the film, to raise its threatening head. This truth, in the form of hunger, poverty, and lack of material wealth, often finds expression in the form of jokes as well, as the group of men throw around the term "*morto di fame*" and ask each other about what they ate and when. When Accattone is forced to start selling off his gold, one of his friend comments that he wants to make a prophecy, that "first you'll sell your ring, in a week, your necklace, and in seventy days, you won't even have your eyes to cry with." The pathetic situation in which Accattone finds himself is all due to the fact that Maddalena, his prostitute, has a broken leg and later, is brutally attacked by a group of rival pimps.

The news of Maddalena's broken leg reaches Accattone not long after his daredevil stunt of diving into the Tiber. She was hit by a scooter, and while Accattone is comparing himself to the Pharaohs, the bearer of the bad news about Maddalena comments that "she's got her leg all wrapped up, like a mummy." While Accattone tries and fails to satisfy his death wish, Maddalena is the one whose life is truly at stake, or at least, she is on the front lines of the battle for survival. In a certain sense, she is already dead, wrapped up like a mummy, a non-entity on whose back Accattone builds his wealth. In fact, after a pathetic scene in which a tearful Accattone blames Maddalena for bringing him into the pimping lifestyle, essentially absolving himself of any responsibility to the rival gang of *napoletani*, Accattone returns home and forces Maddalena out on the street to work that night, despite her broken leg. When she is picked up by the same group of Neapolitans, they satisfy both their appetites for sex, violence, and revenge on her body, leaving her used up, broken, and abandoned in a field outside of Rome. This scene is difficult for the spectator to watch, since we are cued to the clients' desire for revenge from their prior conversation with Accattone. They even drag her as she clings to the bumper of their car. Pasolini, however, undermines any extreme feelings of sympathy we may harbor for Maddalena when he has her wrongly identify her attackers (even though the young man she identifies had been shown in a previous scene bragging to Accattone's posse about beating up a prostitute the night before last), with both the police officer and the accused attacker emphasizing that with this accusation, she can "ruin" the man she accuses. This placing of legal power in the hands of this prostitute ignores the fact that she is, in fact, already ruined, broken, and without recourse. As further evidence of this fact, the next sequence outside the police station shows the accused young man set free, cursing at Accattone because of what Maddalena did to him. Maddalena, of

course, when given the opportunity to denounce Accattone at the police station, does not do so. Accattone's power, therefore, resides in his ability to produce sympathy, pathos even, in both the women he pimps as well as the spectator.

Yet Accattone's ability to solicit pathos, to be pathetic, is in constant conflict with his male pride. In the social hierarchy, he is on the bottom, but not the very bottom, since his whole pimping game depends on his ability to create a class of women upon whom he can rely for sustenance. The tragedy of Accattone is that he is somewhat self-aware of the predicament in which he finds himself. He even comments to Stella during a conversation about her wages that "Lincoln freed the slaves but instead they moved them to Italy." Yet his knowledge about being at the bottom of the social totem pole is constantly challenged by his own desire for upward mobility, for more goods, more food. An example of this is when he and his friends manage to procure a kilo of pasta from a food bank for needy families and take it to another acquaintance's house to use his kitchen. Accattone, not satisfied to divide the pasta evenly among the numerous group, conspires with the owner of the kitchen to get rid of the other members of the group so that there would be larger portions for the two of them. Accattone's acquaintance begins to insult the group of men, calling them poor, *morti di fame*, and responding that they still have a little pride left, Accattone encourages his friends to leave, despite the fact that the pasta was almost cooked. Afterwards, dreaming of the pasta, one of Accattone's friends states that they had done the right thing, given him "*uno schiaffo morale*," a moral slap in the face. This scene summarizes the central tension that organizes the film: does Accattone have pride or does he not? How far is he willing to compromise himself? Pasolini depicts this internal conflict as a fatal one. Accattone's death is only a more serious version of the same sort of accident that broke

Maddalena's leg at the beginning of the film. His death, his inability to successfully act as a pimp (there are numerous comments throughout the film about how he is not suited to act as a protector and that the job is not for him) make him a martyr for this lower, impoverished class of the Roman *borgate*. But in *Accattone*, the spectator's sympathy certainly lies with the titular character, a pimp, whose job relies on abusing women. Despite his own personal reservations about this profession, Accattone does it, even involving the innocent Stella in prostitution. Pasolini's point of view in his film is that of Accattone, someone caught in the middle of a desperate struggle for survival, a man at odds with his own scruples in a world that demands unscrupulousness.

Before concluding, a brief word about Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* (1962). In this film, as in *Accattone*, Pasolini depicts two individuals, a mother and son, struggling for survival in the *borgate*. It shares many of the same thematic knots as *Adua e le compagne*, especially regarding Marilina's story of her son. Yet *Mamma Roma*'s son, Ettore, is grown up and like Accattone, must face a world that demands an unscrupulous attitude, a gangster disposition, in order to survive. While *Mamma Roma* attempts to leave the life of prostitution by becoming a vegetable vendor, her professional past, like that of Adua and her *compagne*, comes back to haunt her, not directly, but through her son. Not only does Pasolini's choice of Anna Magnani as *Mamma Roma* indicate his choice for a strong, unwavering, maternal figure, but also one that represents the city itself in a sort of recasting of Magnani's pregnant partisan from *Roma, città aperta*. What makes Pasolini's ending problematic from a feminist standpoint is the emphasis on the sin of the mother that is responsible for the death of her son. While Ettore dies in a scene rife with Christ-like imagery, seemingly martyred by the life of crime into which he was born, *Mamma Roma*'s

suicide attempt that ends the film is cross-cut with the dome of a church. The close-up on her gaze seems to indicate a recognition of guilt on her part, as if Pasolini wants to point the finger at her, blame her and more specifically, her former profession as prostitute, for her son's death. Mamma Roma, despite her best attempts to pull herself and her son out of poverty and criminality, cannot do so, and thus she is punished with her son's death in a sort of perversion of the *Pieta* imagery. In this film, as in *Accattone*, Pasolini's sympathies seem to lie *more* with the male characters. That is not to say that he does not sympathize with the female characters; otherwise, he would not have told the stories. In the formal choices he makes as the film unfolds, however, it is possible to read the female characters as a foil to the male characters since the female characters help the spectator to see the male characters in a better, more sympathetic light.

This is not true in Pietrangeli's film. The female characters certainly do not serve as a foil to the male characters. If anything, it is the opposite. Pietrangeli's film attempts, as Dworkin insists we do, "to look at the role of men in creating political systems that subordinate women; and that means we have to look at the role of men in creating prostitution, in protecting prostitution - how law enforcement does it, how journalism does it, how lawyers do it, how artists do it."¹⁸⁴ The exposé in which the film engages, which Pietrangeli himself admits is "schematic," black and white, split down gendered lines, is political in nature. Because of its schematic nature, Pietrangeli says that he liked it less than his other films because the women at the end of the film are defeated and the men reduced to types, signifiers of power and corruption. What is important to note here is that politically, these women *were* defeated, both by the revised Merlin Law, its enforcement, and the legal system that refused to burn their licenses and let them

be free of their past. In postwar Italy “a political culture that was,” according to Tambor, “and is far from ready to relinquish control over women’s rights [and] their bodies,”¹⁸⁵ Pietrangeli’s film reveals the insidious as well as the obvious modes of male dominance and show how these modes of dominance dehumanize women and have the potential to destroy lives. The tragic end of Adua, out in the rain, drunk, prostituting herself, demands a political solution and as Dworkin writes, “the cure to this problem is political. That means taking power away from men... They have too much of it. They do not use it right. They are bullies.”¹⁸⁶ In Pietrangeli’s film, men are undeniably and admittedly depicted as bullies, just like Dottor Ercoli, and have too much power. Pietrangeli’s film, read in this light, becomes a call to arms, a call to action, since we now know “what the prostituted woman knows,” and have seen on the screen. By giving these women a voice, a place on-screen to exist as themselves, not as a metaphor or a foil to a male character, Pietrangeli’s film stands in stubborn opposition to the societal forces that would silence prostitutes, build a hierarchy on top of them, bury them alive in brothels, along the sides of roads, on the sidewalk, late at night, battered by the rain.

Chapter Four

Fantasma a Roma: Sur-realism and the Time-Image

MATERIAL GHOSTS AND METACINEMA

Piétrangeli's *Fantasma a Roma* (1961), like many of his other films, confounded critics. Maraldi writes that "in Piétrangeli's filmography — and even in the Italian productions of the time — *Fantasma a Roma* is a very particular moment."¹⁸⁷ Stepping away from his concern with the female universe, the director himself explains that

it was my intention to tell, in the most elegant way possible, by continually winking at a certain cultural world and at certain moments in Italian history, a sort of fable, drawing out the singular and Roman (I said "Roman" not "fictional," *romanesca non romanzesca*) idea of ghosts that give up winning lottery numbers and enter into people's homes to breathe in the smell of *pasta e fagioli*.¹⁸⁸

An attempt to tell about specifically Roman cultural phenomenon, the film is not only a development of Piétrangeli's realist commitment, what I will call sur-realism, but also a metacinematic commentary on the passing of time, a symphony of style that uses the past to comment, criticize, and mock the present. In other words, according to Pérez's statement about time and cinema, "we don't take a movie as the present, for the present is where we are, and a movie, even if it is a world [like Rome] animated into a now, is a world elsewhere."¹⁸⁹ Precisely what Piétrangeli presents to the spectator, this Rome is a world cohabited by modern and paranormal realities, creating on-screen a cross-generational dialogue that makes the film a comment not only on the past and the present, but on cinema itself.

The film's comedy, the "sur-" of the sur-realism, is created by the ghosts, who provide both humor and social commentary. The ghosts, spirits from across the generations of the royal Roviano family that linger on earth due to their violent deaths, are both surreal in their comedic

content, echoing the absurd contrasts between the past and the present, as well as critical of modern values, trends, and customs. Above all, this criticism from beyond the grave reaches a point of crisis in the plot when the push to modernize and to engage in real estate speculation risks to destroy the past, Rome's history as embodied by the ghosts themselves, in the name of financial gain. To briefly summarize the film's plot, Palazzo Roviano risks demolition at the hands of ruthless real-estate speculators and it is up to the family's ghostly ancestors to intervene and save their home from being destroyed which would result in their displacement. The group of ghostly inhabitants include Fra Bartolomeo (Tino Buazzelli), a Seventeenth-century monk, whose death is caused by his gluttony. He poisoned himself by eating meatballs prepared to kill off a rat infestation in the monastery's cellar. Throughout the film, he chastises Reginaldo (Marcello Mastroanni) for his Casanova-esque womanizing, Poldino (Carlo Catania), the Prince's older brother who died as a child, for his juvenile behavior, and Flora (Sandra Milo) for her sentimentality. Flora is a nineteenth-century *donzella*, steeped in the frilly femininity of the time. Formally, the film is an *avant le mot* interpretation of Gilberto Perez's theory of film as "the material ghost," since

the images on the screen carry in them something of the world itself, something material, and yet something transposed, transformed into another world: the material ghost. Hence both the peculiar closeness to reality and the no less peculiar suspension from reality, the juncture of world and otherworldliness distinctive of the film image.¹⁹⁰

Film in general, and as we shall see, Pietrangeli's *Fantasmii a Roma* in particular, allows the spectator to dreamily juxtapose multiple historical moments made realities on the screen.

The uniqueness of this constructed, on-screen Roman reality points to the metacinematic nature of Pietrangeli's film since his ghosts, according to Perez's definition of cinema "are things

from the past and are to be recognized as such, recognized as pieces that come from different places and different times, different wholes of which they were part, different worlds that no longer are,” yet Pietrangeli arranges the group of ghosts, as the title suggests and as Perez writes of cinema in general, “into a whole... seen as parts of that whole, things in the world the film constructs on the screen.”¹⁹¹ In summarizing Pietrangeli’s class allegiances within the film’s plot, Masoni and Vecchi reveal that these allegiances are bound up with temporal concerns. “In his coherence, all of Pietrangeli’s anti-*boom* sentiment, his disdain for a grasping bourgeoisie without a past, his affectionate respect for an aristocracy disintegrating with dignity, finds meaningful harmony only with the urban proletariat.”¹⁹² The aristocracy and the proletariat, for Pietrangeli, have interests in preserving certain elements of the past while the bourgeoisie, Americanized, seek to profit off of the past’s destruction. The sense of urgency about preserving this past, the rich and varied Roman one, comes from the sense of it falling apart, disappearing, vanishing, a trope later used by Fellini in his *Roma* (1970) in the sequence showing the digging of the metro. Fellini’s film team witnesses the air of the present blow away the frescoed faces of the past while Pietrangeli’s ghosts risk being cast out of their home by real estate speculation, the building of supermarkets and parking structures on the ruins of their historical, familial *palazzo*. Pietrangeli’s film calls into question the values of the present by juxtaposing them with fragments of the history in a composite, a rich amalgam of the past that stands in stark contrast to the superficial present. By piecing together the past, Pietrangeli’s film speaks to both historical and formal cinematic concerns. It should come as no surprise that the ghosts are saved by the discovery of a fresco on the ceiling of their palazzo; art transcends history while simultaneously becoming part of it, a remnant of the past in the present, Perez’s “material ghost.”

Before beginning the analysis of this film which relies so heavily on recognizable, historical types, there are a few concerns worth addressing in order to give us a clearer picture of how *Fantasma*, while a stylistic anomaly within Pietrangeli's opus, remains faithful to the director's larger theoretical concerns. While *Fantasma* is a sort of flight into the fantastical, it retains the same educative spirit of Pietrangeli's other films, the ghosts each representative of a historical period, a type that embodies the *esprit* of their specific *époque*. This push to create a "nationalistic-popular sentiment" that teaches the audience about Italian history while entertaining them can be identified as a Gramscian commitment, according to Masoni and Vecchi, who see Pietrangeli, like "the great Russian and French writers," "inspired by a non-paternalistic educative mission (the 'New Humanism')." ¹⁹³ The fact that the film is not ostensibly "realistic" because it involves supernatural elements does not detract from the film's *real* or historical concerns with the present. Thus the film becomes a sort of fable with a moral element, as Pietrangeli himself stated, a fable grounded in Roman reality. By aligning our gaze with that of the ghosts, Pietrangeli gives us a different, historical perspective on the present, on the real.

This shift in perspective brings us to the second concern, the film's metacinematic nature. Perhaps inspired by René Clair's *The Ghost Goes West* (1935) or Max Ophüls's *La tendre ennemie* (1936), both films that Pietrangeli knew and reviewed as a critic, the ghosts that the director and his screenwriting team bring to life are rendered visible by cinema itself. Their co-presence on a visual plane, the intermingling of time periods, past and present, is possible only through film. In fact, the successful combination of intermingling ghosts, metacinematic concerns such as acting, and the co-mingling of temporal planes was recently used by Fernan

Ozpetek in his film *Magnifica Presenza* (2012) in which a struggling actor discovers a troupe of ghosts in his new apartment. That is to say, not only does Pietrangeli's film have historical and stylistic precedents but continues to serve as a sort of cinematic template for works such as Fellini's and Ozpetek's. In Pietrangeli's film, the contrast between historical moments is enhanced by Giuseppe Rotunno's *chiaroscuro* photography, highlighting the drama as in a Caravaggio painting, an artist that Pietrangeli mimics stylistically and then references within the plot itself as we shall see.

The ghosts themselves and the manner in which Pietrangeli portrays them brings us to the third theoretical issue I would like to examine. The ghosts, representatives of history, are not dead in the traditional manner of conceiving death. They are not scary; on the contrary, they are libidinous, desiring, full of hopes and emotions. With their violent deaths and their libidinous drives which are continually frustrated in their supernatural state, the Roviano ghosts are shown literally living vicariously through the living, a conflict built into the film that allows Pietrangeli and his screenwriters to comment on and teach about the present as well as the past. Reginaldo (Marcello Mastroanni) for example, the 18th-century Casanova type (not literally Casanova himself, but certainly a womanizer) is still attempting to seduce women, sneaking around on rooftops and into windows, stealing kisses, caressing the napes of necks and brushing back locks of hair. This mode of portraying the past as alive but invisible encourages the spectator to think differently of the present and its relationship to the past. It suggests a different philosophy of conceiving of time-space relations, with the present mirrored in the past and vice-versa, creating of the film what Deleuze would call a crystal-image, "the point of indiscernibility of the two distinct images, the actual and the virtual, while what we see in the crystal is time itself, a bit of

time in the pure state, the very distinction between the two images which keeps on reconstituting itself.”¹⁹⁴ Inspired by Bergson’s theory of time, in which “at each moment time splits itself into present and past, present that passes and past which is preserved,”¹⁹⁵ Deleuze’s theory of the time-image not only describes the “ghostly” recording process of cinema itself, but the functioning of the ghosts within Pietrangeli’s film, moments of the past projected into the present, a present which is historicized in its fleeting nature and viewed in its process of *becoming* the past. Reginaldo keeps on desiring, womanizing, and each conquest becomes a moment in history, as Marcello Mastroanni reappears on-screen, playing three roles, including his own heir and offspring. By multiplying the images of the past and projecting them, like heirs, into the present, Pietrangeli’s film constitutes a crystalline time-image, a metacinematic commentary on Roman and Italian history.

GHOSTS AND DELEUZE’S CRYSTAL

In order to demonstrate the film’s preoccupation with history and time, as well as the film’s metacinematic nature, one need only look as far as the opening sequences. This section of the study will read closely the film’s first few scenes in which Pietrangeli introduces the main characters and sets the mood for the unfolding of the rest of the plot. These opening scenes, written by Pietrangeli in collaboration with Flaiano, Amidei, Maccari, and Scola, are thick with witty dialogue and humor as well as musings on time, aging, and death. The stylistic register, which shifts from high to low, comic to tragic, and back again, prepares the spectator for a viewing experience that is both pleasurable and bears philosophical weight. It is a structure that

Deleuze would describe as a “crystal” which “reveals a direct time image,” that “does not abstract time; it does better.”¹⁹⁶

What the crystal reveals or makes visible is the hidden ground of time, that is, its differentiation into two flows, that of presents which pass and that of pasts which are preserved. Time simultaneously makes the present pass and preserves the past in itself. There are, therefore, already, two possible time-images, one grounded in the past, the other in the present. Each is complex and is valid for time as a whole.¹⁹⁷

The opening titles and Principe Roviano’s first speech, a nocturnal monologue, are indicative of this contrast in styles, the binary flow of time, the present that passes and the past that endures.

The titles, in a slow pan of the Prince’s apartment, embody the temporal contrast that becomes the conflict, the central point of contention, within the storyline. Pietrangeli’s camera captures the dilapidated, antique furniture, the apartment decorated in deep reds, greens, yellows, a creaking door, a panel of mosaics, all of which stands in stark contrast to Nino Rota’s jazzy Sixties soundtrack that plays over the pan. This is not the only time when Rota’s soundtrack indicates a contrast or a shift. There are moments when the track switches from a melody played on a harpsichord to a modern jazz piano arrangement, particularly when Reginaldo (Mastroanni) begins thinking lustfully. The music seems to suggest that the old and the new are not incompatible, but rather that one breathes new life into the other through their contrasting styles. Not only does the range of styles contribute to the fable-like quality that Pietrangeli was seeking to create with *Fantasma*, it also creates a dialectic between past and present, antique and modern, that sets the stage for the ongoing temporal conflict and its resolution as it unfolds throughout the film, creating Deleuze’s crystalline “time-image.”

The pan ends with a slow zoom towards the sleeping Principe Roviano, played with equal parts of cantankerousness and aristocracy by Eduardo De Filippo. This character is essential to

our understanding of the film as he is the embodiment of a liminal state, first seen sleeping and later on his death bed, and is the only character who appears both alive and dead, as both man and ghost. He is also the closest living person to the ghosts, able to perceive their presence as they watch over him. Intuitively, the Prince is the only living person in the film who knows the ghosts to exist while the spectator confirms their existence by being able to see them on-screen. Thus the Prince is the only living character “wise” to the on-screen visual regime of the film, making him a sympathetic character for the viewer. Yet in order to accentuate the importance of the Prince to the film’s significance, one need look no further than his first speech, the nocturnal monologue that accompanies him as he goes to sleep.

The first lines of the film, spoken by the Prince as he wakes from dozing in his armchair, are musings on sleep, time, and death. “They say that sleep is time stolen from life,” he says, rising to make his way towards his bed. He is already, in some sense, “stealing” from life; that is to say, he has outstayed his welcome. Like the furniture in his apartment, he is already an antique. He goes on, pointing out “another broken tile” on the floor which he tries to cover by moving the furniture around. The force of entropy, of disintegration, is too much, however, for the Prince who tries to row against the tide of these inevitable drives; when he moves one piece of furniture, he uncovers yet another broken tile. Despite his best efforts, the Prince knows he is fighting a losing game against death and destruction. Yet Pietrangeli, despite the melancholic tone of the Prince’s monologue, does not allow the scene to be dominated by the tragic. The Prince then turns to an embalmed parrot, telling him that “his time has come” to be moved. The old aristocrat then makes fun of himself for talking to a dead bird, saying that “he didn’t talk when he was alive, *figuriamoci da morto*.” By accentuating the life / death binary and showing

an object, the parrot, that has similar characteristics both while alive and while dead, Pietrangeli and his screenwriters minimize the difference between the two states. By attempting to dialogue with the past, Pietrangeli shows the Prince to be wiser than the other, living characters who dismiss the past as dead and gone. The Prince's monologue goes on, with him saying that "one day, science will solve everything." There is little to indicate that he believes this to be true, however, as he lies down to read a story, one he "has already read," and has difficulty understanding the modern tone of the language. "What is Bobo doing in Malibu?" he reads out loud, the strange American sounds not making sense to him. He then asks, "there's someone named Bobo and he goes to Malibu too?" America, the land of the present, of capitalism, the model for the Italian Economic Miracle, is strange and incomprehensible to him. This is not the only moment where America represents a threat to the past. The film's *femme fatale* is also an American woman, Eileen, the girlfriend of Federico Roviano, the heir of the Prince (also played by Marcello Mastroanni). This woman's lack of respect for the Roviani is seconded only by her greed since as a type she embodies the tendency towards unilateral commodification of American-style capitalism. The Prince, who sees this Americanized language in his book as absurd, historicizes the present by casting an ironic gaze on Bobo, Malibu, and everything this fictional character in his book represents. At this point, as he drifts off to sleep, he is joined by the Roviano ghosts. Pietrangeli spends the next few scenes introducing them, contextualizing them, and explaining their violent deaths.

As the next few pages will show, the Principe is not the only character who contributes to the film's binary temporal regime. Returning to the opening scenes and Pietrangeli's introduction to the rest of the group of ghosts, we shall examine each ghost's specific contribution to creating

of the film Deleuze's crystal, the time-image, and how the filmmakers use the structure to didactic and critical ends. After the Principe falls asleep with the light on, Fra' Bartolomeo appears and the filmmakers do not waste an occasion for humor in order to show that these figures of the past are not malevolent beings, but maintain their life-like, libidinal qualities. The Seventeenth-Century monk, in an almost maternal manner, turns off the light next to the Prince's bed and says to the Prince, "you always leave the light on and then complain about the electricity bill." The humor derives from the contrast in time and technology. These ghosts have adapted to the present and are aware of our modern concerns, how things work. A later scene with Fra' Bartolomeo also demonstrates the metacinematic nature of the ghosts. When the Principe's morning paper arrives, the monk picks it up and peruses the articles, reading the titles out loud. After compiling a list of several violent crimes, Bartolomeo comments that "they call my time the century of poison (*secolo di veleni*) but compared with today it was sugar water." Whether true or not, this critique of our modern culture of violence is an opportunity for the filmmakers to make social commentary. Yet in the next instant, the tragic register takes a comic turn as the monk goes on saying that "I like this Khrushchev guy though," "*A me mi sta simpatico questo Khrushchev.*" Any Communist or Leftist political sympathy is poorly hidden beneath a veil of humor, and in this Christian Democratic climate of cinematic censorship, the filmmakers choose to build the censorship into the film itself. As this statement leaves Fra' Bartolomeo lips, he is warned about his dangerous sentiments by a crashing cymbal from above, the voice of God in a thunderclap of censure, an auditory Judeo-Christian superego that throughout the film functions to signal transgressions of popular or accepted religious, moral, or political opinion. In fact, Fra' Bartolomeo retracts his statement about liking Khrushchev and apologizes for his unorthodoxy.

This divine auditory presence is not only a signifier for the political forces that would censor the film, but also for the spectator's own inner superego, an opportunity for self and cultural criticism that the filmmakers disguise in humor.

The next ghost to appear in the sequence is Flora, the nineteenth-century *donzella* who committed suicide by throwing herself off of Ponte Sisto. The motive was, of course, a love story gone wrong. As she floats through the room, on her way to recreate her death as she does every night, Fra' Bartolomeo shakes his head and mutters that she's "going off to be crazy (*fare la matta.*)" The sympathetic presentation of this hysterical woman serves the filmmakers with the opportunity to comment on gender roles. Since Flora is the only female ghost-protagonist, she is an amalgam of female qualities, ultra-feminine according to traditional gender roles as only Sandra Milo can be. When she arrives on Ponte Sisto, she eavesdrops on a conversation between a young couple. The young man is trying to convince the young woman to kiss him, saying that he loves her and jostling her playfully. She tries to repel his advances, remarking that he always says that he loves her, "but he never brings up marriage." He responds with the standard misconception of young people, that "we have so much time," to which Flora interjects, "men, just like they were a hundred years ago!" before throwing herself off the bridge. By listening in on the couple, Flora is able to relive the emotions, the hope of marriage and romantic love, the only possibility for sublimation afforded women for so long. In this particular time-crystal, Flora's romantic drama is reflected back to her, and to the viewer, in the present as it was in the past. Not much has changed between men and women, Pietrangeli and his screenwriters suggest. What is more, as the filmmakers show, the fairytale often ends badly. Yet the shot of Flora in the Tiber, so reminiscent of Fellini's *Casanova* in its plasticity and high *Technicolor* artificiality,

shows a ghost who can only go through the motions, whose frustrations have been softened over time, and whose cold death in the Tiber is now more reminiscent of a warm swim in a pool. Flora gently accepts her feminine cage. She laughs off the other characters' ill treatment of her.

Indicative of this is her return to the attic and her subsequent interaction with Reginaldo. When she states that "love is like history; so few heroes and millions of villains," Reginaldo sarcastically asks her, "where did you read that? Inside a piece of chocolate?" His dismissal of her cloying observation is undermined by the filmmakers, who feel it necessary to include her as the feminine ghost without which the time-crystal would not be complete. While she is only the token woman and therefore must embody traditional femininity, her conflicts with the other ghosts show how the war of the sexes has worked throughout history and into the present. Her simplistic view, the filmmakers show, is also, for the most part, correct. It is not a coincidence that she is slapped around and insulted, even jokingly, by the painter, *Il Caparra* (Vittorio Gassman), when he uses her as a model for the fresco that ultimately saves the *palazzo*. Her mistreatment is the historical mistreatment of women and the filmmakers feel compelled to portray it as such - she is not the princess in this cinematic fable, but rather a tragic figure. Consequently, the spectator cannot help but sympathize with sentimental Flora since sentimentality is all she has been given.

If Flora is the typically feminine ghost, then Reginaldo, played by Marcello Mastroanni, represents a prominent masculine type as the Casanova character. This eighteenth-century ghost continues to lust after women despite his supernatural state, lurking around rooftops and peeping in through windows at women in various states of undress. While there is no mention of Pietrangeli's film in Jacqueline Reich's study of Mastroanni, his role as the Casanova-type ghost

fits perfectly into her analysis of the actor as exemplary of both the Latin Lover and the *inetto*. In his fictional life, Reginaldo was the ideal Latin Lover, potent and seductive (the iterations of his historical image in his heirs are evidence of this), but in death, he can only look on, castrated, unable to bring his sexual drives to any fruition. The most he can do is flick a lock of hair from behind a woman's ear. Yet this does not stop him from commenting on modern gender roles so that in the film, he represents an "image of Italian masculinity," that is, according to Reich's analysis of Mastroanni's roles in cinema, both "complex and contradictory," that "challenged those paradigms... by turning the lens on itself, self-consciously exposing the reality behind the myth and through humor laughing at it outright."¹⁹⁸ This is particularly true of Pietrangeli's film since, as we shall see later, Mastroanni plays three separate roles in the film, Reginaldo the ghost, Federico Roviano, who inherits the palazzo after the Principe dies, and the maid Carletta's fiancé, Gino, the genetic, almost grotesquely mutant result of one of Reginaldo's many trysts. Beyond using the actor's multifaceted roles in order to create a time-image, here Pietrangeli introduces Reginaldo and uses the ghost as a device to comment on modern gender relations.

In the first sequence in which we witness his nocturnal wanderings, we see Reginaldo peeking through a window at a woman unfastening her corset. She is having difficulty and asks her husband for help. He snaps at her angrily, too busy with trying to adjust the static on his television which he accuses her of breaking. During this argumentative interaction among the living couple, Reginaldo exclaims in poetic, romantic language typical of courtly love, "*sconosciuta, sei incantevole.*" As the argument between the couple goes on, Reginaldo expresses admiration for female beauty when he remarks that today, "women are just as beautiful as they were in my days, but the men, just look at what they've become!" The bald, angry little

man berating his wife mistakenly for messing with his television (it is Poldino who is interfering with the signal by swinging on the antennae!) stands in stark contrast to the seductive, charming, and handsome Reginaldo. This historical and historicized male gaze does not just objectify the woman, but more importantly judges this particular type of modern man, too busy with television to notice, to listen to, or to treat his beautiful wife with respect. As the later, more profound examination of Marcello Mastroanni's roles in the film will show, Pietrangeli carefully constructs this actor's characters, taking full advantage of Mastroanni's cinematic and off-screen persona, Latin-Lover or *inetto*, in order to comment on modern gender relations and the performativity of gender roles.

The final ghost to appear is Poldino, the Principe's older brother who died as a child, whose impish spirit rounds out the group of ghosts. As mentioned above, the spectator is introduced to him as he swings on a television antennae, interfering with the signal and irritating the television's owner. While the filmmakers show him to be a troublesome spirit, he also has a benevolent, boyish side; he is shown helping a little girl, his living sweetheart, with her schoolwork. Even dead, the boy retains his youthful interests in children, in joking around, and in playing tricks. Poldino also has the closest link to the Principe. The Prince even utters his younger brother's name, Poldino, on his deathbed. This death scene, in which we witness the Principe as he leaves the world of the living, is worth examining on its own, both as an extraordinary example of Deleuze's time-image and as a source of inspiration for Fellini's own exploration of the eternal city in *Roma*. By showing in a single moment multiple temporal dimensions and historical moments and their interaction with one another, this death scene both

in its style and its content, offer the viewer and the film critic fertile ground for contemplation and comparison.

TIME IN LIMINE

By playing with the visual and auditory regime of the film, the filmmakers represent the moment of the Prince's death as a transition, not an end. In order to understand how the Principe arrives at his death, it is necessary to catch the reader up with the plot of the film. The Prince is having problems with his water heater. The two plumbers who come to fix it, in typical Roman style, are more concerned with the disappearance of their Marilyn Monroe pin-up sticker that Reginaldo has stolen and with making fun of the Principe for believing in ghosts than with working, so after an argument in *romanesco* with their boss, Sor Augusto (played by a typically Roman Duilio D'Amore), the Prince decides to take the repair into his own hands. The elderly Prince, however, does not turn off the gas correctly and causes an explosion that precipitates a heart attack. As he lays on his death bed, the spectator is presented with a comprehensive temporal spectrum, beginning with the characters alive in the present, fading into the past, and back again. The living characters talk sorrowfully among themselves, remembering the Prince, with Carla, the maid, even remarking how the Prince used to say that if she brought him coffee, he'd "be resurrected like Lazarus." The camera then switches to the Prince's perspective, showing that he is unable to hear what the living are saying. This is the first indicator that the Prince, within the film, is not fully integrated within the world of the living. He has entered into a liminal state, indicator of the binary time register of Pietrangeli's film.

The next shift takes place when the Prince sees, with darkened faces, the bodies of the various ghosts, accompanied by the diaphanous cymbal roll and Reginaldo's harpsichord theme, this time played on the instrument by Reginaldo himself. He hears the spirits' conversations; Flora asks "why does everyone cry when someone dies?" Fra' Bartolomeo responds, "they only believe in life and think that they are better off than we are." At this point, the Prince's, and hence the spectator's, vision of the ghosts becomes clearer and their faces appear. We see Poldino sitting on his brother's bed, drawing close to him. The young ghost observes that "he died like me, him with the water heater and me with the chestnut pan. I'm glad. When I left him, he was only five." A look of recognition passes across the Prince's face and it does not go unnoticed by those attending the scene, both the living and the dead. "There he is, he sees you, he recognizes you," Fra' Bartolomeo says to Poldino, and the older brother caresses the dying face of his younger brother as the Prince mutters his final word, "Poldino." In this moving death sequence, the simultaneous presence of both the living and the dead in no way undermine, but rather enhance the moment of death and in so doing make it a sort of homecoming as the ghosts welcome the Prince among them. As his brother passes on from the world of the living, Poldino looks up and smiles, knowing that Annibale, his brother the Prince, will soon be a fellow ghost. Poldino's ghastly smile, endearing but also somewhat ghoulish, indicates the celebratory mood with which the ghosts approach death, a celebration that for the living is terrifying and unimaginable. It also brings to mind Fellini's devil from *Toby Dammit*, the pale little girl with the bouncing ball who lures the troubled movie star to his death. With the boy ghost's grin, Pietrangeli manages to capture the paradox of this view of death as "the end"; rather, it suggests that it is the beginning of another sort of existence. This is confirmed by Carla, the maid, who

hears the Prince's final words, testament to his shift in auditory and visual regimes within the film, and points out that "before dying, he said 'Poldino.'" The ghosts offer a vision of death that is not only frightening, but simultaneously as reassuring and welcoming as a return home among loved ones, our ancestors.

Giuseppe Rotunno's Caravaggesque lighting and colors create the high baroque visual style of the photography in this beautiful death sequence which brings to mind the time-image presented in another cinematic examination of Rome from various historical perspectives, Fellini's *Roma* (1971). Rotunno was also Fellini's director of photography and throughout Fellini's film, Rotunno's baroque, saturated colors enhance the contrasts in past and present that drives the film forward, but in particular, the Principessa Domitilla sequence shows signs of Pietrangeli's and Rotunno's influence. This scene shows the aging Princess as she passes through generations of her family, in this case represented in painted portraits. She daydreams of a better time, when the Roman nobility was powerful, connected to the Vatican, a true social body. The fantastical arrival of her dead relatives, the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony Fellini portrays, a ceremony that ends in the now-famous sequence of the ecclesiastical fashion show and the appearance of Pope Pius X, is cinematically a variation on the theme already present in Pietrangeli's film. Fellini simply extrapolates the ghostly familial chorus to the *n*th degree, making Rotunno's chiaroscuro photography and its baroque qualities the story itself, extracting the sentimental narrative of the plot and focusing on the formal elements, including the portraits, the clothing, and the lights. It should come as no surprise, then, that the sequence in Fellini's film ends with a fashion show. It is the logical conclusion of the costume element of a historical sequence fully realized so that the costumes and the set *are* the film. Ten years before Fellini's

film, however, Pietrangeli was exploring these temporal concerns and how to make an audience sensitive to them while not abandoning narrative, the idea of the fable, altogether.

HISTORY LESSONS

In his chapter on the film *History Lessons* by directors Straub and Huillet, Perez argues that the contrast between styles within the film, both documentary and highly formalized, points to the artifice of cinema and the nature of filmmaking itself. Both a record of modern Rome filmed from within a moving car as well as a series of dialogues between the young male driver and historical characters from the era of Julius Caesar, the film *History Lessons* “calls attention to art, its own art and the art of the past it enlists, as an activity taking place in history, a human activity performed under the existing circumstances of history... Its declaration of artifice is a way of inscribing itself in history.”¹⁹⁹ Pietrangeli’s film, beyond its use of ghosts as metacinematic trope, declares its artifice in another way; it reproduces its own leading man’s image within its own narrative. As mentioned above, Marcello Mastroanni plays a total of three different characters: Reginaldo, the Casanova-esque ghost, Federico Roviano, the heir to the palazzo who shows up to claim his inheritance after the Principe dies, and Carletta’s, the maid’s, fiancé, Gino, who makes a brief appearance which serves only as genetic proof of Reginaldo’s suspected trysts with the ancestors of the house staff (Reginaldo himself exclaims, upon seeing Gino, “*bizzarria della natura!*”) Pietrangeli seems to be playing not only with Mastroanni’s off-screen reputation as Latin Lover, but also with his on-screen ubiquitousness as the most famous leading man of the time. While certainly no stranger to tongue-in-cheek references to cinema, since Mastroanni famously based many of his performances on his directors, as with Fellini in *La*

dolce vita (1960) and Germi in *Divorzio all'italiana* (1961), in *Fantasma a Roma*, it is his on-screen image that is turned in on itself. If it seems that Mastroanni is in almost every Italian film shot from 1957-8 onward, here Pietrangeli will show him in a new and multiple facet, a metacinematic commentary on the actor's omnipresence, portraying a Mastroanni often at odds with himself as he plays different roles.

In fact, Reginaldo, like the other ghosts, is highly critical of Federico, the upstart heir, who pulls up in a Thunderbird convertible outside of the palazzo, accompanied by an American girlfriend, and begins right away making plans to sell off the family patrimony. There is no question that Federico, or "Freddy" as his girlfriend calls him, signifies the problems of the present and embodies the contemporary threat to Rome's, and Italy's, collective history. He soon decides to accept the *ingegnere's* offer on the family home, despite it being half what the businessman offered the deceased prince. New wealth, it seems, pales in comparison to the wealth of the past. Federico is eager to get his hands on the money, as is his girlfriend, Eileen Charm, who is nightclub performer and has been maintaining "Freddy" with her earnings. As a *mantenuto*, the ghosts have nothing but scorn for him. He is less than a man - no wonder he seems so willing to sell out. Unable to perceive Eileen's gold-digging while ignoring his familial duties as an aristocrat, Federico is a departure from the traditional nobleman as embodied by De Filippo's Prince Annibale. His speech, peppered with Anglicisms, is often incomprehensible or downright odious to the ghosts of his ancestors. Reich has argued that this weak sort of modern manhood, however, is just as consistent with Mastroanni's on-screen roles as the Casanova, Latin Lover persona is with his off-screen reputation. Pietrangeli's film is unique in the fact that it juxtaposes the two Marcellos simultaneously, showing that perhaps both are fictional

constructions based on gendered types. Mastroanni's dual (or triple) function on-screen furthers the historical dialectic at work in the film, the modern Marcello acting as the *inetto*, the historical Marcello acting as the Latin Lover, and Gino, the red-haired, freckled ancestor highlighting Mastroanni's ability with dialects and character acting (he speaks with a Northern, *veneto* accent). To return to Deleuze's time-image, one could say that Mastroanni himself forms a sort of self-reflexive crystal, in which his modern and historical roles all inform one another, "the point of indiscernibility of the two distinct images, the actual and the virtual, while what we see in the crystal is time itself, a bit of time in the pure state, the very distinction between the two images which keeps on reconstituting itself."²⁰⁰ Mastroanni's image, like in facing mirrors, keeps reproducing itself in itself throughout Pietrangeli's historical fable. In fact, the film ends with Federico's redemption, his rejection of Eileen when he finally sees her for the gold-digger she is. His scorn for her and his declaration that she is not fit to set foot in the noble Roviano home gains him a round of applause from the attending ghosts. The ghosts serve as proxy for the spectators, the audience, who applaud Federico for finally acting like the aristocrat he is when he aligns his noble image with those of the previous generations surrounding him.

Pietrangeli's playing with gender roles and types is particularly evident during the scene in the nightclub *City Song* during which the modern couple of Federico and Eileen sign the papers to sell Palazzo Roviano. The ghosts show up to try and foil the business deal but it is too late; the papers have been signed, but nonetheless the ghosts seize the opportunity to have a night out on the town. While Poldino sleeps inside a jacket at the coat check, Reginaldo bestows ghastly caresses upon the woman on-stage who sings in French. He gushes that, "you are so adorable that I want to make you the sort of declaration that is out of fashion nowadays."

Exclaiming that he wants to be the sun that kisses her face, the moon that wraps her in his silver cloak, Reginaldo even bows alongside the singer at the end of the performance, presumably proud of his amorous lyricism. He kisses the singer's gloved hands and neck, only to discover, as the singer removes his dress and his wig, that he, Reginaldo, has been wooing a man. His exclamation that he "has always trusted his eyes" and that today, one "must ask to see some id" indicates the heightened level of artifice, the increasingly constructed nature of modernity, as well as the breakdown of the traditional gender binary. While the spectator may have had some inkling that he or she was being set up for a joke, it is likely that the spectator, like Reginaldo, was also fooled by his or her eyes. as Bazin writes, "the screen is a mask whose function is no less to hide reality than it is to reveal it. The significance of what the camera discloses is relative to what it keeps hidden."²⁰¹ Pietrangeli's film as a whole, with its heightened level of artifice, multiple Mastroannis, and material ghosts, "fools" the spectator into seeing something that is not there outside of the artifice of cinema itself. Yet when Pietrangeli's film reveals so much to the spectator, one may ask, what is left for it to hide? What is the value, for the audience, of what remains hidden?

THE SPECTER OF ONE-DIMENSIONAL ROME

What is hidden, glimpsed by the spectators and known only to the ghosts within the film's narrative itself, is the secret that ultimately saves the Roviano home. The secret is this: that history, too, is a material ghost, artifice, an artificial, artistic lie told by an art historian, an old male academic who claims that a fresco discovered during the demolition process, painted by the ghost of *Il Caparra* (Vittorio Gassman at his most bombastic), is a work of Caravaggio.

Desperate to save the *palazzo*, the Roviano ghosts track down the painter's ghost living in a crumbling Ghibelline tower surrounded by new, high-rise apartment buildings on the outskirts of Rome. Reginaldo, through their shared love for cursing and women, convinces *Il Caparra* to paint the fresco in a last-ditch attempt to save their home from demolition. After the painting is completed, the ghosts poke a hole in the false ceiling, revealing the fresco to Federico and Eileen, who call in the experts. The demolition grinds to a halt as the art historian assesses the value of the painting. Initially, the academic decides that the painting is nothing of value and that demolition can proceed as planned. The ghosts, however, have learned a thing or two about modern business practices, the art of the bribe, by observing the *ingegnere* during his business transactions. Finding an envelope of cash in his jacket pocket, the art historian then changes his tune, stating that it is without a doubt a Caravaggio. *Il Caparra*, is, of course, furious that his work would be attributed to another, more prestigious, painter. However, the ghosts' plan to preserve their home functions because they financially manipulate the telling of classical history, the power of the artistic canon, and a name like Caravaggio, a name that spectators will witness in the final sequences of the film inscribed on a plaque outside of their home, bringing the Roviano family and their home officially into the historical narrative. And all it took was the little bribe.

The moral of Pietrangeli's self-described fable, since fables almost always have morals, is that the difference between what is saved and what is lost in modern capitalism is as arbitrary as a bribe, the false pronouncement of a famous name. History too is for sale. It worked out well for these ghosts but how many other architectural treasures and the ghosts they house, the filmmakers ask, are lost, pushed out into ruins in the countryside, the countryside that is quickly

being turned into *periferia, borgate*, where *Il Caparra* is forced to live in his crumbling, Ghibelline tower, cursing God and man. As a child watching the film, one might ask what happens to the ghosts when our cities are all new? As critics, the film is both an indictment of American-style consumer capitalism and a challenge to our ability to hold multiple visual realities, past and present, the real and the fantastical, in our eyes in one moment.

The film's investigation of what a "modern" Rome still remains a pressing issue, since city planners and politicians in the "Eternal City" today must still walk the tightrope between preservation and innovation, the beauty of the past and the demands for efficiency of the present. Along these lines, Pietrangeli's fable about real-estate speculation has much in common with the critique of post-industrial society found in Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*. Capitalism trumps the humanistic values of the individual in this work of theory, and in Pietrangeli's film about Rome, it makes financial sense to demolish a crumbling palazzo and turn it into a parking garage or a supermarket. Certainly, it would be more profitable. Marcuse extends the idea of ghosts into the realm of thought, philosophy itself being a remnant, a useless relic of the past, in post-industrial society. He explains that "the philosophic universe thus continues to contain 'ghosts,' 'fictions,' and 'illusions,' which may be more rational than their denial inasmuch as they are concepts that recognize the limits and deceptions of the prevailing rationality."²⁰² Pietrangeli's critique of modern society, Reginaldo's scorn for the man who ignores his wife in favor of the television or the Prince's bewilderment at the Americanized language of his novel that pollutes the Italian, seen through the lens of Marcuse can be read as philosophical commentary on the nonsensical, technological customs and behaviors of post-industrial society.

This sort of empiricism [of post-industrial, capitalistic society] substitutes for the hated world of metaphysical ghosts, myths, legends, and illusions a world of

conceptual or sensual scraps, of words and utterances which are then organized into a philosophy. And all this is not only legitimate, it is even correct, for it reveals the extent to which non-operational ideas, aspirations, memories, and images have become expendable, irrational, confusing, or meaningless.²⁰³

Beauty and history, Pietrangeli's fable suggests, still have value, even if no one profits from it.

While our modern culture teaches us to "hate" these "metaphysical ghosts, myths, legends, and illusions," *Fantasmia a Roma* is an attempt to recuperate, to teach us to love, to draw us closer to these illusions before they retreat into the past and we, the spectators, lose them forever. For this reason, we spectators identify more with the ghosts than with the living in this film. Next to the ghosts' beauty, their astute senses of humor, their plasticity, and their intelligence, the living seem frivolous, superficial, one-dimensional, concerned with unimportant, temporal concerns when art is the only thing that, at least for a few centuries, can transcend both the living and the dead.

Chapter Five

Too Much Woman: Marriage, Power, and Excess in *La visita*

EXCESSIVE CRITICISM AND THE CINEMA OF EXCESS

At a certain age, both men and women, but especially women, begin to feel the cultural pressure to settle down, get married, and have children. This is as true today in the age of online dating, matchmaking services, and in-vitro fertilization as it was in the Sixties, when Pietrangeli was making his film, *La visita* (1963). This film tells the story of a failed attempt at matchmaking after Pina (Sandra Milo), a woman whose “biological clock is ticking” as she approaches her late thirties, writes to a lonely hearts column looking for a suitor, a companion, someone with which to share her life. What she comes to discover, over the course of the film, is that her life is already full and that Adolfo’s (François Périer) intrusion into her world, her domestic space, is precisely that, an intrusion. The English translation of the title of Pietrangeli’s film *La visita* (*The Visitor*) betrays the film’s intent. Rather than a film about Adolfo (François Périer), the male visitor who arrives in San Benedetto Po on a sort of marital scouting mission from Rome, this chapter will argue that the film is instead about the unexpected power struggle that the potential couple, Adolfo and Pina, encounters during their first twenty-four hours together. The film is about a trial run, the visit that marks a failed amorous experiment for Pina, and is not a film primarily centered about Adolfo, the visitor.

Three years after his investigation into the world of prostitution with *Adua e le compagne* (1960), Pietrangeli again in *La visita* obliquely engages the issue of prostitution within the context of marriage. The two institutions, generally considered polar opposites in traditional Catholic culture, bear certain similarities of which Pietrangeli takes advantage to create moral

tensions. In this respect, Pietrangeli's critique of marriage reveals his neorealist roots as well as his political leanings, his cinema-critical activity in which he called for moral revisions and more truth in Italian film. Nonetheless, his sympathies for the difficult subject position of his numerous female characters find resonance in Engels' writing, specifically in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, in which Engels proposes an alternative view of the shared origins of monogamy, marriage, and prostitution compatible with Pietrangeli's proto-feminist critique of patriarchy. *La visita* is Pietrangeli's exposition of the conflict that Engels outlines with his statement that "the last remnants of male domination in the proletarian home have lost all foundation,"²⁰⁴ while the conflict between traditional gender roles and the newer ones remains.

Pina, the thirty-six year old female protagonist of the film, is portrayed as a character in conflict, but also a character marked by an excessive quality that is bestowed on her by Pietrangeli in order to show that the traditional narrative trope of marriage as happy ending is not a foregone conclusion for a modern woman. As stated by Kristin Thompson in her study of cinematic excess, viewing films with an attention to excessive structures "allow[s] us to look further into a film, renewing its ability to intrigue us by its strangeness; it also can help us to be aware of how the whole film - not just its narrative - works upon our perception."²⁰⁵ Pietrangeli's creation of an unconventional female character who does not simply "settle" when it comes to choosing a mate, indicates her excessive quality at the level of narrative, while her physical attributes and domestic life indicate her excessive quality on a visual and auditory level. In discussing Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, Thompson builds on previous studies by Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath when she defines cinematic excess as "those aspects of the work

which are not contained by its unifying forces - the 'excess.'"²⁰⁶ She goes on to offer numerous possibilities for how this excess can manifest itself: it can be a noticeable element with no narrative function, the "obtuse meaning" of the film's materiality, closely linked but different from the film's style, or a "symbolic" device added to a literary one within but simultaneously outside the narrative structure of the film. Thompson also specifies that sound "can have its excessive features as well."²⁰⁷ Pina's appearance, her voice, her home, all could be said to be "excessive" according to Thompson's definition of excess.

Pina's abundance, her high register of auditory and visual screen presence, her mask-like make-up to her prosthetic rear end to her menagerie of pets to her incessant chattering, is in stark contrast to Adolfo's portrayal as inept, miserly, and generally lacking in positive, attractive qualities that would make him a good mate. Pietrangeli's formal choice to pad Sandra Milo's posterior is clearly a significant detail, a mark of excess that almost all the reviewers of the film mention but fail to analyze as signifier. Of her costuming, Antonio Maraldi writes that, "her physical aspect... her bow mouth and her big behind (the costumes are by Umberto Tosi and Margherita Ferrone, the director's wife) emphasize the mingling of naiveté and provincial sensuality."²⁰⁸ The decision to pad her bottom, consequently, was a formal choice that included a female perspective, not a mere fetishistic or anatomical joke. This is not simply Pietrangeli making a clown out of Sandra Milo as one could argue Fellini does in *8 1/2*. Maraldi goes on to say that "Pietrangeli follows her [Pina] with a great tenderness and even when he underlines her most funny attributes, he never uses a derogatory tone."²⁰⁹ This formal choice, free from derogatory or fetishistic intent, must have served some purpose and it is precisely here that a view of Pina "in excess" fits the chapter's critical intentions. In fact, Sandra Milo discusses how

the transformation into Pina was so excessive it bled into the perception of her real-life persona as actress. In her interview *Recitare per Pietrangeli*, after discussing how the make-up and the padding was supposed to make her “look like an aging maiden aunt,” the interviewer asks the actress, “were you hesitant about making yourself ugly?” Milo’s response, although dated, is telling about how Pina as a character upset traditional expectations and, in turn, allowed Milo to do so as well. She states of “making herself ugly,” that

No, I was happy to. At the time it was difficult for a beautiful woman to be accepted as talented. And I received marvelous critical reviews for my part in *The Visitor*. The critic of *Corriere della Sera* wrote, “Sandra Milo is excellent, although it is a pity that with that physique she will only be able to play a limited number of roles.” I was delighted. I had managed to make him believe that I had turned into a monster. A great satisfaction at the time when women were either pretty and stupid or plain and intelligent.²¹⁰

Sandra Milo, the actress, in playing Pina, was able to overturn the idea that she was “only a pretty face” and to trick the critics into believing that her false rear end was real. She had “turned into a monster” and was “delighted” about it because it upset the scopical regime of what critics were used to seeing - a beautiful actress playing the role of an aging woman. *La bella culandrona*, Pina’s affectionate nickname among the townspeople in the film, not only upset expectations of critics, but of Adolfo within the film as well.

While it is true that, as Fullwood writes in her study of Pietrangeli’s feminization of space in the film, “Pina’s domestic space is thus a site of internal conflict, as she struggles but fails to reconcile her independence with her desire for companionship, society’s expectations, and the subordinated role companionship with a man like Adolfo would entail,”²¹¹ this and previous studies have not taken into consideration the structures of excess Pietrangeli builds into the film, cuing the spectator to where his or her sympathies should lie. Reading Pina as a mark of excess

within the conflictual narrative structures of the film serves a twofold purpose: one, it explains Pietrangeli's formal choices in manipulating Sandra Milo's appearance and Pina's on-screen persona, and two, it opens up a theoretical space that permits a political, socio-economic, and psychological exploration of the significance of Pina's character within Pietrangeli's cinematic regime. Not only does such a viewing strategy question the cinematic convention of marriage as "happy ending," it also reveals Pietrangeli's novel use of formal representational strategies that allow him to take the age-old battle of the sexes in a new, uncomfortable direction for the viewer.

The discomfort that the openness, the lack of the traditional narrative structure with marriage as happy ending, in Pietrangeli's film provokes in the spectator is evident not only in the contemporary critical reactions to the film, but in the disparate register of these critical reactions. Again, we have those critics who, in 1964, bemoan Pietrangeli's lack of moral clarity in "presenting a number of vulgar implications and morally negative situations (such as the sentimental pasts of the protagonists, some of their attitudes and their relationships) as normal, lend[ing] his work a decidedly negative stamp."²¹² Others contemporary critics, in this case from *Cinema Nuovo*, fail to understand the film's conflicting narrative structure and stylistic register, what we will, in this study, call the film's excessive quality. "*The Visitor* seems old-fashioned and too obviously naturalistic, blatantly underlining the limits of a director who has always been respectful of the commercial recipe of alternating grimaces with tears and coarse jokes with moments of pathos and then throwing in the odd lightly-disguised flash of satire for good measure."²¹³ Yet Pietrangeli was a notoriously picky and rigorous director, initially even intimidating Sandra Milo on set as she recounts in her aforementioned interview with Maria Pia Fusco, "Recitare per Pietrangeli."²¹⁴ How can we critics account for these formal choices in style

and narrative that are so off-putting to so many of his contemporaries? One possible solution is offered by Kristin Thompson's analysis in "The Concept of Cinematic Excess."²¹⁵

While above we have discussed the implications of excess on the film's visual and auditory style, how Pietrangeli created *Pina* as a mark of excess, on a narrative level, according to Thompson, excess tends to stand in opposition to the conventions of classical Hollywood cinema, such as marriage as happy ending, the love story, and other prosaic modes of storytelling. Thompson discusses classical film criticism's "outrage" towards unconventional forms of cinema as "the rejection of excess, the reluctance to consider the uneconomical or unjustified... Here style becomes foregrounded to an unusual degree, necessarily calling attention to the material of the film." In cinema marked by excess, a film's materiality, its style, thus becomes *more* important than its fulfilling of the spectator's narrative expectations. Pietrangeli, as a former film critic, is supremely aware of both the material conditions of the filmmaking process and the need to "foreground" them and make them more legible to the spectator (see the section on spectatorship in the introduction). To paraphrase Pietrangeli himself, he wants to give the spectator the tools to deconstruct the film he or she is watching. His writings are also highly critical of the conventionality of Hollywood cinema, its formulaic nature, its lack of realism and psychological penetration. Considering these theoretical similarities between Thompson's theory and Pietrangeli's own theory and praxis, *La visita* benefits from a reading of *Pina* as a signifier marked with excess because it allows, "an awareness of the structures (including conventions) at work in the film, since excess is precisely those elements which escape unifying impulses."²¹⁶ By bucking certain cinematic conventions, Pietrangeli's film offers the spectator an alternative to standard representations of gender including the institution of marriage as happy ending and the

portrayal of woman as lacking, incomplete without a husband or a family. Alone, Pina stands as signifier of abundance, excess, and the possibility of modern woman to act as head of her own household economy. As the next two sections will show, Pina's difficulty in navigating societal expectations for a single woman can be seen as a locus of resistance to convention, both culturally and cinematographically and has much in common with Freud and Engels' theories on marriage.

EROS AND ANANKE

Much like Celestina from *Il sole negli occhi* and Francesca from *Nata di marzo*, Pina finds herself in a conflictual position regarding her love life and her economic independence. While the former two protagonists, Celestina and Francesca, represented an earlier development of this theme with Celestina simultaneously encountering single motherhood and the role of childbearer and Francesca realizing that her ambition for independence was not satisfied by marriage, Pietrangeli sketches Pina from the opposing side of the desire / necessity conflict. While these earlier protagonists at some point in the films choose their love lives, in the form of men, over economic independence, Pina's career and economic independence come before her love life. Yet like Celestina who threw away a great job in Parioli to be with Fernando, breaking her boss' faucet in order to call her plumber-lover, and Francesca's fixation with moving furniture and interior decoration that risks to upset the order of her domestic space and the peace within her marriage, Pina is also willing to abandon her economic independence in order to take on the traditional, submissive role of wife. Her years of single life, however, have conditioned her and Pietrangeli shows that, for Adolfo, her potential suitor, she is perhaps all too capable of

looking after herself. She feels the societal pressure to settle down, evidenced by her flashbacks of lonely evenings spent alone and her colleagues asking her about her love life, but when push comes to shove and Adolfo shows up, she does not compromise her standards for love and affection by sacrificing her personal, economic autonomy and independence.

Work and love, labor and affection, these two foundational, psychological realms are defined by Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* as Eros and Ananke, or Love and Necessity, “the parents of human civilization.”

The communal life of human beings had, therefore, a two-fold foundation: the compulsion to work, which was created by external necessity, and the power of love, which made the man unwilling to be deprived of his sexual object - the woman -, and which made the woman unwilling to be deprived of the part of herself which had been separated off from her - her child.²¹⁷

According to Freud’s foundational schema upon which civilization was built, man’s libidinal desire for companionship and a sexual partner is what holds the monogamous couple together. According to Freud, there is a sort of trickle-down effect in the gender hierarchy when it comes to affection. Man wants woman as sexual object, object of his affection, but what about a woman’s love for man? It seems that woman’s love for a man has little to do with it. She instead is bound to the family by her love for her child, this “part of herself which had been separated off from her.” The problematic nature of Freud’s characterization of gender roles is very clear. Not only is the child exclusively “part” of the mother, but Freud completely discounts the woman’s active role in the monogamous couple, relegating her to position of “sexual object,” child-bearer and caretaker. Pina’s loneliness and her active solicitation of a marriage and a sexual partner both fly in the face of Freud’s gendered characterization of the monogamous couple as a foundational, patriarchal structure. Pietrangeli shows her as desiring not only a family, hence not

only a child, but also a husband, someone with whom to share the long, dark nights in the Emilian countryside. Pina's active solicitation of a partner, her role as consumer, she who is doing the choosing within the confines of the Lonely Hearts column, is incommensurate with the traditional gendered order demanded by Freud's monogamous couple. Unlike Freud's characterization of a woman who desires only a child, Pina is shown desiring a male partner, a sexual and affectionate object of her own.

Her desire for the love of a man is not the only problem Pina faces when it comes to the traditional institution of marriage as defined by Freud. Her desire for love proves difficult to attain, but her economic independence, her active participation in the life of the town, are a double-edged sword for Adolfo. While on the one hand, they make her more attractive because of her wealth and respected status, on the other hand, they threaten to belittle Adolfo, revealing him to be what Maraldi calls, "a concentration of all the possible *petit bourgeois* vices."²¹⁸ In contrast, Pina's abundance makes Adolfo seem even more *petit*, even more small, scraping, desperate, instilling him with that sort of detestable and transparent sycophancy. The real tragedy of the film is that a woman like Pina, simply because she is aging, although attractive and well-off, would have to settle for a man like Adolfo. Her excess is also present in the fact that she is portrayed as too capable of providing for herself as she trespasses on male territory of acting as provider. Freud writes that "women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life. The work of civilization has become increasingly the business of men, it confronts them with ever more difficult tasks and compels them to carry out instinctual sublimations of which women are little capable."²¹⁹ Pina, with her job at the farmer's co-op, her cushioned bank account, her home and land inherited from her parents, has not only entered into the position of ideal male heir, but

has somehow intruded into the male world of patriarchal relations for which she must *somehow* be punished. Adolfo, Pietrangeli shows, is that castigation in the form of suitor. The director inserts the Roman into Pina's domestic space, her home filled to the point of exploding with signs of her successful libidinal sublimations in the form of pets, wind chimes, the latest model television, and her stylish (if not garish) furniture. Here, Adolfo begins his assault on Pina's excess, the signifiers of her successful independence as a single woman. He mistreats her pets, threatens to get rid of her wind chimes, begins to move her furniture, and even breaks a lamp as he maneuvers himself to assume the position of head of the family unit, *padrone*, a position unequivocally held by Pina as Pietrangeli goes to great lengths to show. Despite her desire for love, monogamy, and marriage, Pina does not compromise her position of power within the film narrative. As a signifier of excess, she dominates the film's scopic and auditory regimes as well, a rare example of a woman whose voice and subjectivity determine the film's conflictual structures. Pina's desire for love, her lack of Eros, is shown to be further complicated by her economic independence, her ability to provide for herself, her Ananke. By straddling the traditional gender binary of marriage, Pietrangeli shows that this modern, career woman, despite her attractive, "excessive" qualities, has trouble finding a husband that fits her needs.

THE WORLD'S OLDEST PROFESSION: MARRIAGE

As mentioned above in the introduction to this chapter, Engels proposes a view of human society that has significant resonance within Pietrangeli's cinema. Not only does a matriarchal view of culture dominate both Engels' idea of the origins of the communistic family, but also, and more importantly, Engels also identifies the right of the father as the roots of class conflict

which he contests as inseparable from gender issues. In Pietrangeli's cinema, matriarchal familial structures are dominant and the intrusion of the father figure, whether as husband, lover, or pimp, creates the conflict within his films. As Engels writes, "the overthrow of mother right was the *world-historic defeat of the female sex,*"²²⁰ a defeat echoed throughout Pietrangeli's films and experienced by his female protagonists who nonetheless struggle against patriarchal domination each in her own way. Pina, in her autonomous economic and social status, perhaps represents the most successful of these attempts to reorganize gender roles while throughout the film, Pietrangeli's portrayal of marriage is haunted by the looming specter of prostitution, two institutions that Engels believes function together.

Pietrangeli represents Pina as unequivocal *padrona* of her situation. Only she knows how to close the door to her car when she picks Adolfo up from the train station, how to organize her household economy and her servants, how to use the *motozappa*, the small gas-powered plow, in the garden, and how to fix Adolfo's broken glasses. It is even Pina who rows the small rowboat during a trip out on the river while Adolfo relaxes, supine, passive, and drunk. Pina's household, like Celestina's and Francesca's households discussed in previous chapters, is dominated by maternal figures in the form of Angelina, the servant woman, and Chiaretta, the teenage daughter of a prostitute. The numerous references throughout the film to Northern women, Emilian women, and even Adolfo's own discussion of Swedish and Nordic women, all indicate Pina's economic and sexual autonomy. Yet despite these flattering discussions of more modern definitions of femininity, Pina feels somehow incomplete, lonely, and wants to be married, settled, resolved. The idea that marriage, for women, is the be-all-end-all still looms heavy over Pina, despite her *padronanza* of her own domestic world. Yet for the right man, Pina would give

it all up, it seems, despite the fact that both Engels and Pietrangeli show that marriage is seldom as simple as monogamous love, but instead a matter of economic convenience. If Adolfo's grasping attitude, his questions about Pina's bank accounts, her land, and her home do not cue the spectator to his true intentions, his losing his job in Rome before the trip to visit Pina might perhaps indicate that, as Engels writes, Adolfo sees the potential of marrying Pina primarily as an economic opportunity, not an equal partnership based on love and respect. As Engels explains,

this marriage of convenience often turns into the crassest prostitution - sometimes on both sides, but much more generally on the part of the wife, who differs from the ordinary courtesan only in that she does not hire out her body, like a wage-worker, on piecework, but sells it into slavery once and for all.²²¹

Societal expectations for female gender roles are thus limited to one form of prostitution - in the form of marriage - or another, hetaerism. Several cinematic moments indicate the strained relationship between the two ostensibly separate, institutions. Pina's want ad in which she outlines her ideal marriage partner, in this light, becomes merely another form of solicitation, *adescamento*. Once she has successfully solicited a potential partner with all of her attractive qualities, including her career, her house, and her savings, Adolfo, the husband-john, comes to examine the goods. Right away, he begins with plans to make changes in Pina's home, asks Pina about her savings, and begins to plan his seduction of Chiaretta, the nubile daughter of a prostitute, representative here of patriarchy's contradictory position towards monogamy. "By the side of the husband, whose life is embellished by hetaerism, stands the neglected wife."²²²

Engels' description of monogamy illuminates the scene in which Adolfo and Chiaretta dance together, leaving Pina to wonder about Adolfo's intentions towards the young girl. Adolfo would be both husband to Pina and lover to Chiaretta, fulfilling this double masculine role permitted him by the sort of marriage that Engels critiques. Adolfo's presence seeks to re-establish

traditional patriarchal gender roles in Pina's life, yet Pina does not submit as easily as one might expect despite the overwhelming societal pressure to wed.

Pietrangeli portrays this societal pressure to wed in numerous forms, from Angelina's coaxing Adolfo to "marry Pina, she's got a heart of gold," to Pina's lonely candlelight perusing of fashion magazines full of photos of brides. This culturally-imposed and self-imposed idea of lack, the idea that she is somehow incomplete because she is not married, requires Pina to also relinquish control and *padronanza* over her own house despite the fact that she is her own breadwinner. Certainly, Pina is bringing more to the negotiating table than Adolfo, whose desire to move to San Benedetto Po and to live off of Pina justifies the insult "Roman parasite" later hurled at him by Pina's fellow townspeople. In fact, there is a moment in the film, after Adolfo has drunkenly humiliated himself in front of the townspeople and when the couple has returned home to find Pina's ex-lover, Renato, in her bed sleeping, when the word *padrona*, previously uttered by Adolfo and others in reference to Pina becomes Adolfo's own claim over the house as *padrone*. He claims the right to deal with Renato as intruder into *his* domestic sphere, offering to show Renato to the gate as "a good master of the household should," "*come fa un vero padrone.*" This moment is a sort of reckoning for Pina, whose moment of self-examination is signaled by Pietrangeli with a shot of her looking at herself in the mirror. When Renato gives her key back to her, Pina seems to recognize what she risks losing with Adolfo as *padrone* of her life, her home. The following scenes unequivocally show that Pina is unwilling to compromise her position as *padrona* in her own household. The following section contains an in-depth analysis of these scenes which serve as testimony of Pina's autonomous status and the difficulty of both attaining and maintaining this status for an Italian woman in the Sixties. Yet this remains a psychological

hurdle for women still today: Our cultural fascination with women struggling to find a balance between emotional satisfaction in the form of love and professional or economic satisfaction in the form of work can be found in the plethora of television programs about housewives, weddings and marriage, and professional women that dominate our cultural landscape.

Pina, as Engels writes of the proletarian woman, “has regained... the right of separation.” Her status “apart” from Adolfo, her difference from him, is the central organizing tension of the film’s narrative. The couple throughout the film vies for cinematic and narrative space, for power of the domestic sphere and control over their sexual relationship. We shall see how Pietrangeli’s Pina overturns the expectations of classical cinema’s portrayal of femininity as dependent upon “woman’s lack, specularity, and diegetic containment, while associating man with potency, vision, and diegetic exteriority.”²²³ Pina’s separation from Adolfo serves also as Pina’s separation from our cinematic expectations for the femininity that she represents. Her qualities “in excess” are key to Pietrangeli’s portrayal of Pina.

LA BELLA CULANDRONA

From the beginning of the film, Pina and Adolfo are seen vying for cinematic space and control over the narrative. Their voice-over narration, in the form of letters exchanged, indicates a dual auditory register of gendered voice throughout the film, a dual auditory regime accompanied by a dual scopic regime that manifests itself in the form of flashbacks indicating the thoughts, memories, and the interior spaces of both Pina and Adolfo. “The flashback is the most explicit and frequent signifier of the process of narration in a cinema which is, in general, assumed to be narrator-less.”²²⁴ In this case, the process of narration is dual in origin, as the

flashbacks originate specifically with either Pina or Adolfo and belong exclusively to the memory of that individual. What is more, the flashbacks carve out autonomous psychological space for each member of the couple. The flashback, therefore, does not “effectively erase the subject of the enunciation,”²²⁵ in Pietrangeli’s use of the device, but instead creates a distinct psychological and narrative space for each within the film, a space that often, for the spectator, distinguishes truth from lie, reality from appearance. Both members of the couple control, to a certain extent, the narrative direction of the film, overturning the traditional gendered binary where Pina is reinserted into a pre-existing symbolic order, an order dominated by Adolfo’s “potency, vision, and (diegetic) exteriority,” an order dependent upon her definition as lack. In traditional, classical cinema, “the female voice is often shown to coexist with the female body only at the price of its own impoverishment and entrapment.”²²⁶ In Pina’s case, however, this trope is overturned in favor of Pietrangeli’s recuperation of Pina’s voice and Pina’s body as sites of pleasure and of excess. The spectator, like the townsfolk in the film, derive satisfaction from Pina’s ultimate treatment of Adolfo, as well as from her ample behind. In fact, *la bella culandrona*, Pina’s local nickname, acts as a signifier of the excess that she represents within the auditory and scopic cinematic regimes. She is not lacking, but *una donna in più*.

The key sequences to understanding how Pietrangeli portrays Pina “in excess” come in the wake of Adolfo’s drunken stupor. Since their lunch together, Adolfo has been swilling Lambrusco and is about to discover the truth (*in vino veritas*) about how the townspeople view Pina. While she dances with Cucaracha, the “village idiot” character who vigils over Pina the whole film as a sort of protective, diegetic spectator, and Adolfo dances with Chiaretta, he overhears someone referring to her as the “*culandrona*” and asks Chiaretta if that is what Pina is

called. Chiaretta remarks that actually, she is known as “*la bella culandrona*,” the beautiful big-ass. This precision, this attribution of aesthetic value on the part of another female character on behalf of the townspeople mirrors Margherita Ferrone’s, Pietrangeli’s wife’s, own contribution in the choice of costuming. This “*bella*” forces Adolfo and the spectator to re-evaluate this rear end that could be seen as bordering on the ridiculous. Seeing Pina not as absurd but rather as beautiful - this reconsideration of value anticipates Adolfo’s imminent reconsideration of his own subjectivity and identity in the following scenes. But first, Adolfo, drunk, causes a fight with the townspeople, who break his glasses hence his control of the visual regime and of his “potency, vision, and (diegetic) exteriority,” readying him for the reckoning of identity that is on the film’s horizon.

Pietrangeli’s portrayal of Adolfo in this filmic moment parodies the traditional male role of soldier invading a foreign territory. The game the townspeople play with him is called “the slap of the soldier” and involves the participants anonymously slapping the game’s protagonist when his back is turned. When they break his glasses in the course of the game, rather than take it in good fun, he turns hostile and aggressive. Pina takes over and the couple beats a hasty retreat home where Pina sets about fixing Adolfo’s glasses. This metaphor of Pina adjusting Adolfo’s ability to see will find resonance in a later scene. While Pina fixes his glasses, however, Adolfo, in an act of resentment, goes about attempting to set Pina against her friends in San Benedetto Po. He remarks that, “the population is hostile towards me,” implying that he had not done anything to merit their hostility, and furthermore reveals to Pina her local nickname, “*la bella culandrona*.” Rather than reacting angrily or with animus towards her fellow townspeople, Pina seems almost pleased as a faint smile of satisfaction flashes across her face. This positive

judgment on the behalf of her peers stands in stark opposition to the laughter that her backside solicited from two nuns while she waited for Adolfo at the train station at the beginning of the film.

During this early scene in the waiting room of the train station, Pina rehearses her lines in a mirror, evaluating her appearance and the weight of what she is planning on saying to Adolfo. She practices the line “certainly, traveling by train by night is like reading a great book blindfolded.” From the outset of the film, in the form of this simile about sight, Pina is shown to see more clearly, to assert more control over the visual regime of the film, than Adolfo, who arrives and cuts her off before she can finish her line. But she doesn’t seem to mind this initial intrusion into her narrative space as she sees herself, her own voice, as lacking. Of her observation that “traveling by train by night is like reading a great book blindfolded,” Pina tells herself that “it makes no sense, but I’m going to say it anyway.” She does not initially trust her own voice in its excessive quality despite the fact that her visual metaphor about traveling by train by night and reading blindfolded makes perfect sense since both imply impaired vision in contexts where vision is fundamental. It is not until she recognizes the beauty of her excessive quality reflected in the image of herself held up to her by the townspeople, an image Adolfo intended as an insult but that Pina takes as a compliment, that Pina trusts her voice and her ability to speak with authority.

Returning to the moment in the film after Pina fixes Adolfo’s glasses, the couple begins a sincere conversation about their sexual histories. A couple, Pina says, should share everything and always be honest. She then tells him about her relationship with Renato and Adolfo seems to be alright with this “indiscretion”; he even goes so far as to confess his own love affairs, such as

the one with the seamstress with the scar on her lip that we spectators witness towards the beginning of the film. Adolfo's professed liberal morality is tested, however, when the couple discovers a sleeping Renato, Pina's married truck-driver lover, in her bedroom. When his morality is put to the test, Adolfo's ethical principles are shown to be ambivalent at best. While Adolfo initially befriends Renato, Adolfo also uses Pina's embarrassment as an opportunity to assert himself as *padrone*, later prohibiting any physical contact between the two lovers and friends, screaming at Renato, "don't touch her! She's mine!" and claiming that, "this is my house." Adolfo's behavior offers Pina a final moment of reflection and of comparison of the two men, who, not coincidentally, happen to be wearing the same sweater that she had knitted for both of them, although Adolfo's version has two stripes whereas Renato's has only one. Pina's previous flashbacks have given the spectator insight into the nature of the relationship between Pina and Renato. Between the two, we have witnessed a bond of genuine affection, laughter, and shared moments of joy despite the extramarital nature of their relationship. The moment of farewell between Pina and Renato is full of deep emotion as he wishes her well and says that he will be glad to see her settled down, an exchange that smacks in contrast to Adolfo's superficial niceties and hypocritical treatment of Pina's hospitality. Yet Pina sees clearly now. Her awareness of the difference between the two men leads to the inevitable conclusion that Adolfo does not match up to her former lover. Pietrangeli stresses Adolfo's ineptness by showing that he is incapable even of re-entering Pina's home on his own. He is so drunk that Pina has to practically carry him inside after he accompanies Renato to the gate as the "master of the home." Adolfo, in his drunken state, realizes that the gender roles are in this case reversed and manages to slur out

the following, telling objection to Pina: “you’re the one who should be leaning on me. I’m the gentleman.” Adolfo has shown himself to be anything but.

Adolfo passes out before they reach the doorstep and Pina has to carry him inside and put him in bed, like a patient or a small child. He wakes up as she cares for him, applying a cold compress to his head and serving him tea. In his vulnerable state, Adolfo submits to a deconstruction of his identity carried out by Pina as proxy for Pietrangeli. This scene, a sort of climax where the spectator’s antipathy for Adolfo is satisfied in Pina’s reproach of him, also serves as the formal crux of the film, where Pietrangeli collapses classical cinema’s scopic system of gendered difference by reflecting both characters in the mirror and giving Pina’s voice primacy. In this “mirror stage” of the film’s narrative, Pina, as maternal figure or surrogate, reflects her view of Adolfo back to him, causing him to re-evaluate his own male subjective identity. By uncovering “the male subject’s own (necessary) narcissism...and thereby to collapse the scopic regime upon which sexual difference relies... it is crucial for feminism to confront the necessary place of the gaze within the organization of identity.”²²⁷ In this scene, Pietrangeli’s camera shows the origin of the gaze unequivocally as Pina’s, even partially reflecting a supine Adolfo in the mirror on her wardrobe. Pina, the speaking subject, gives her view of Adolfo, the object of her gaze, to the spectator’s great satisfaction. This feminist moment sees Pina’s “excess” as a locus of resistance to patriarchal structures of control and surveillance.

THE FEMALE VOICE (OVER)

Despite Pina’s strong visual and auditory presence within the film structure, Giulio Martini’s analysis of the film and of Pietrangeli’s work in general functions according to the

same narrative assumptions that the film itself sought to overturn. Not only does Martini, without offering any proof of his claim, state that Pietrangeli “does not take psychoanalysis into consideration,” but he goes so far as to say that with these “sentimental descriptions,” Pietrangeli is the “most subtle analyst of the unexpressed soul of Northern women because rather than have them speak (how could he?), he sketches them... essentially mute about themselves, unable to understand and explain themselves.”²²⁸ In spite of the sentimental register of Martini’s own critical writing, and basing his analysis on traditional narrative assumptions about filmmaking, Martini ignores Pina’s extraordinary, excessive qualities as filmic signifier. In this bedroom sequence in particular, Pina wants to speak - her voice “in excess” is beyond Adolfo’s control and even moves beyond the auto-censure of the socio-cultural superego that resulted in her own self-control: in other words, her good manners, her politeness, and her hospitality towards an undeserving Adolfo earlier in the film. She confesses that Renato is married and has two children which is why she did not marry him, and that she is thirty-six and lonely and sick of waiting for someone. Not only do these confessions externalize Pina’s desire, expressing her dissatisfaction rather than muting it, they also, to a certain extent, castrate Adolfo, who rather than the active, assertive male partner is instead a “love object,” someone to fill Pina’s needs. This sequence is pregnant with psychoanalytic and verbal significance, with Pietrangeli portraying a Pina who is not only self-aware but also highly intuitive and aware of the truth about Adolfo.

Pina continues, circling around her bed, changing her angle of attack and the angle at which Pietrangeli captures the exchange and the reflected image of Adolfo in the mirror. Pina remarks that Adolfo is “like all the others,” who “speak well of Northern women and then are overwhelmed by the paranoia of being cuckolded.” Pina’s self-awareness as castration threat is

confirmed when she remarks that Adolfo would “rather cut off [your] own leg,” than be cuckolded. She continues her assault on Adolfo even though he attempts to quell her outburst by claiming to understand her position and that he can “justify” certain behaviors on her part, namely her promiscuity and her adultery with Renato. Not only does the spectator recognize his hypocrisy as we have witnessed Adolfo’s own promiscuity with the Roman shirt-maker with a scarred lip (another sign of cinematic excess?), but Pina also takes the opportunity to throw his claims to liberal morality back in his face. “Is that why you wrote to the priest and to the sheriff asking for reports on my conduct?” she asks him. Adolfo, despite selling himself as a modern man comfortable with changing gender roles nonetheless turns to the representatives of the patriarchal superego - the figures of legal and moral authority in the sheriff and the priest - to legitimate Pina’s validity as a “good” woman worthy of marriage rather than a prostitute or other “bad” woman. Adolfo clearly feels betrayed by these patriarchal allies as he mumbles “they told you, did they? But they didn’t tell me anything about Renato.” Clearly, Adolfo feels that these patriarchal figures not only have the right, but also have the moral authority to survey and control Pina’s private life, her home, and her bedroom.

At this point in the sequence, Pina voices her true opinion of Adolfo and tells him exactly what she thinks of him. Not only does this align her with what Kaja Silverman considers the traditionally “masculine” qualities of “potency, vision, and (diegetic) exteriority,” but it also makes Pina the mirror in which Adolfo must re-evaluate his own subjectivity and identity. “Since no identity can be sustained in the absence of the Other... what is needed here is not so much a ‘masculinization’ of the female subject, but a ‘feminization’ of the male subject,”²²⁹ a ‘feminization’ that Adolfo experiences under the scrutinizing and castrating gaze of Pina. As he

lies supine in the bed, Pina hurls insulting adjectives at him that define him as lacking or egocentric, two “feminine” qualities in classical cinema according to feminist film criticism. “You’re selfish, petty, racist, presumptuous, you mistreat my animals... that’s why I wouldn’t even have you painted on the walls in my house.” In this vocal outburst, Pina not only re-establishes control over her domestic space and “voices her rejection [of Adolfo] in terms of protecting her domestic space,”²³⁰ but from a psychoanalytic point of view, Pina re-enacts the mirror stage, taking the place of the mother who reflects Adolfo’s cultural image back to him, forcing a revaluation and a re-cognition of self on his behalf. Rather than witness a situation in which Freud’s father figure takes a wife as sexual object according to the gendered roles of traditional narrative cinema, here Pietrangeli instead shows a Pina who treats Adolfo like a petulant child. What is more, she is the point of enunciation as the spectator’s gaze, our vision of Adolfo, is aligned with her mode of viewing.

In other words, what this means is that Pina here acts as Pietrangeli’s diegetic surrogate, molding and defining the spectator’s image of Adolfo and uncovering “the male subject’s own (necessary) narcissism and exhibitionism.” Pina shows herself to be aware of Adolfo’s posturing, his lying, and his attempts at gaining control over her domestic space. According to Silverman’s theories, this serves to collapse “the scopic regime upon which sexual difference relies,”²³¹ since Pietrangeli shows Pina to be the reliable narrator within the gendered couple, the one with whom our vision as spectator is aligned. What is more, Adolfo’s response to Pina’s outburst testifies to the depth of his reckoning and his reconsideration of self. He confesses that “you’ve taken me apart,” “*mi hai smontato*,” - Pina’s deconstruction of Adolfo’s ego-image was effective - and he admits that he is in fact alone, pathetic, that his boss does not value him as an employee, and that

he “recognizes his defects.” This mutual recognition of Adolfo’s true, fractured, lacking self below the layers of presumption leads to a temporary reconciliation between the couple in the form of a one-night stand, but does not, in the diegetic space of the film itself, lead to an alliance between the two individuals. As Maraldi writes,

in his previous works, the male characters are not certainly examples of virtue, but Pietrangeli never stepped in to turn the tides against them. Adolfo, however, is too full of defects to be able to leave him as is. This explains the ‘confession’ that throws a different light on his solitary existence: a moment of self-awareness destined nonetheless to have no consequences.²³²

This directorial need for “revenge” against a defective character is usually enacted at the peril of the female protagonist, re-establishing male domination so that “psychoanalysis is used very explicitly to reinforce the status quo of sexual difference.”²³³ In this case, however, Pietrangeli’s manipulation in this scene of the mirror stage causes the co-mingling of gendered characteristics of vision and control leading to a “masculinization” of Pina and a “feminization” of Adolfo, diminishing sexual difference and throwing the classical narrative structure into tilt. While Adolfo’s confession, solicited by Pina and reflecting his ego-image back to him, may not have consequences within the diegetic space of the film, it does have consequences for the formal register of the film. It issues into Pietrangeli’s structuring of Pina’s voice and image “in excess” of classical cinema’s visual and sound regime, and in particular, in Pina’s going beyond the traditional “happy ending” of marriage.²³⁴ Pina, in her “excessive” nature, surpasses traditional narrative and narratological structures, defying the expectations of both spectators and critics and resisting the relegation to silence.

The film ends with a voice over, Pina’s narration of her summer plans in the form of a letter to Adolfo which we hear as Adolfo sits in the train during his return to Rome. This rare

example of female voice over, rare in classical cinema but not in the cinema of Pietrangeli (as Chapter Four's examination of *Nata di marzo* has shown), attests to the difference of Pietrangeli's cinema and the difference in the way the director portrays gender within his films. According to Silverman, "to disembody the female voice... would be to challenge every conception by means of which we have previously known woman within Hollywood film, since it is precisely *as body* that she is constructed there."²³⁵ While Pietrangeli and Margherita Ferrone do emphasize Pina's presence as "body" through the use of her prosthetic rear, Pietrangeli carefully makes Pina a signifier of a double excess in that Pina's excessive visual nature as "*la bella culandrona*" has an auditory component as well. Throughout the film, her voice has been the primary organizing tension and besides temporary narrative intrusions of Adolfo in the form of flashback, Pina's voice is the auditory regime that closes the diegetic narrative space. As both return to their old lives, it is Pina's voice that somehow goes beyond the space of the film as she recounts her summer plans and the possibility of their correspondence being interrupted by her vacation to the Adriatic sea. Not only does Pietrangeli's film end with Pina's disembodied voice, but it ends with her controlling the extent of the couple's communication as well. While this ending cues the spectator to Pina's narrative difference and dominance, there are clues to this auditory control throughout the film.

While "*la bella culandrona*" is the visualization of Pina's "obtuse meaning" as woman, Kristin Thompson writes that sound "can have its excessive features as well,"²³⁶ especially in the form of repeated sounds, bells, music, and modes of dialogue. Pina's home, with its wind chimes over the door, the singing parrot, and the tape recorder that catches Adolfo using foul language, is a site of auditory excess, since none of these elements have any logical motive for being there

besides their strangeness and their difference. These excessive domestic elements, moreover, act as a sort of auditory trap for Adolfo, whose distaste for the chimes and the parrot are central to the conflict between the couple, and he interrupts the recording of Pina's voice as "master" on the tape by accidentally recording swear words and an altercation with the parrot. Adolfo is, therefore, unable to master the auditory regime of the film as a whole and it is Pina's voice that dominates, her voice that ultimately decides the narrative direction the film takes. In fact, from the beginning of the film, the spectator witnesses Pina speaking to herself, speaking "in excess" either when it is not necessary or when it makes no sense, and speaking with an extraordinary mastery about herself, her finances, her home, and her town. Pina's narrative ability to speak for herself can also be attested to by the letter she writes to the lonely hearts column in which she manipulates the version of herself she presents to potential suitors. This manipulation of the self that she portrays to others can also be found in the post-coital scene at the end of the film in which Pina makes her bed in order to fool her servant into thinking that she has slept alone. When Adolfo remarks that it is her house and she should be able to do what she wants, Pina replies that it is easy for him to say, "you're leaving and I'm staying here." While Natalie Fullwood writes that "Pina has to maintain an almost even more hypocritical position where she pretends not to be sexually active even in her own bedroom,"²³⁷ if recast grammatically when considering Pina as a signifier "in excess," this hypocrisy instead becomes a matter of visual and auditory control. Rather than flaunt her promiscuity, Pina carefully regulates the image she puts forth, both in the form of the gossip she solicits and in the form of her own writing about herself. Pietrangeli portrays Pina as capable of visual and auditory control over the cinematic space, a control identifiable in her control and regulation of her domestic and cultural space within the

town. As we have seen, the sheriff and the priest have nothing negative to say about her. Pina's capability, therefore, cannot but have adverse conclusions for the traditional narrative structure of the film.

Pina's vocal ability and her control over the visual regime of the film differ from classical Hollywood cinematic femininity in numerous ways and thus have structural consequences for the film. Here, there is no catharsis in the form of marriage, the happy ending *par excellence* of the studio system. The characters are left alone and unresolved, Pina's disembodied voice looming over Adolfo's return to Rome. Pina's excessive body, signifier of her excessive voice, flies in the face of the traditional "muteness" of women within classical cinematic structures, a muteness that Martini, cited above, mistakenly attributes to all of Pietrangeli's Northern women. As Mary Ann Doane explains

The phenomenon of the mute woman is... only an extreme instance of a more generalized strategy whereby the films simultaneously grant the woman access to narration and withhold it from her. The woman's narrative reticence, her amnesia, silence, or muteness - all act as justifications for the framing of her discourse within a masculine narration.²³⁸

In *Pina*, Pietrangeli creates a woman not bound, in the narrative diegesis, by masculine narration but able to tell her own story, and dominate the cinematic audio-visual regimes. The film is framed by her voice. Her autobiographical discourse in the form of her final letter to Adolfo does not completely sever the ties between voice and body, just as Pina's representation in excess depends upon the body's excessive quality to mirror that of the voice. Yet in her excess, Pina does gain a degree of freedom from domination in her physical disappearance from the screen that ends the film. The spectator is left with the feeling that she, in her pleasurable excess, is moving ever so further away, not fully recoverable for Adolfo nor for us. We are left with the

feeling that Adolfo has missed his chance and that Pina, for Adolfo, may be the “one that got away.” And for this, we should be thankful.

As spectators, we cannot recuperate the traditional happy ending nor do we want to. Instead, reading Pina “in excess,” according to Thompson’s definition of the phenomenon, “suggests a different way of watching and listening to a film. It offers a potential for avoiding the traditional, conventionalized views of what film structure and narrative should be - views which fit perfectly with the methods of filmmaking employed in the classical commercial narrative cinema.”²³⁹ As a sort of thought experiment, let us ask ourselves what sort of film would have resulted if the couple had stayed together? Could we consider the conclusion of this hypothetical film a happy ending, with Pina submitting herself to Adolfo’s control over her home, her finances, and her life in general? Of the two endings, the actual and the hypothetical, the latter seems more tragic than the former when considered from this perspective, but according to the tropes of classical cinema, *this is the happy ending*. *La visita*, the title poorly but significantly translated into *The Visitor*, offers an alternative to the spectator. “One of the great limitations for the viewer in our culture has been the attitude that film equals narrative, and that entertainment consists wholly of an ‘escapism’ inherent in the plot,”²⁴⁰ writes Thompson, urging a more careful examination of a film’s formal elements. Yet in *La visita*, there is no opportunity for escapism in the traditional sense, since Adolfo is hardly the active male hero who rescues Pina from her passive, solitary existence as classical narrative tropes would demand. If anything, Pina escapes from this so-called “happy ending.” The central plot conflict in Pietrangeli’s film is ultimately an existential one, a meditation on solitude and the difficult nature of human connection. For this reason, Sandra Milo claims the film contains “melancholy,” a “bitterness,”

“yet there is no desperation or pessimism.”²⁴¹ Surrounded by her pets, her friends, her community, Pina’s character demonstrates a richness that goes beyond the restricted sphere of the monogamous couple, and Pietrangeli, with *La visita*, demonstrates that Pina’s excess may not yet be compatible with our pre-established narrative assumptions. While the spectator may be used to happy endings meaning marriage, in Pina’s case the happy ending may just mean being alone.

Chapter Six

The Dora Problem: *La parmigiana*, Piatti, Pietrangeli and Freud

“The question whether a woman is ‘open’ or ‘shut’ can naturally not be a matter of indifference”
-Sigmund Freud, footnote from “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria (‘Dora’)”

THE SPECTATOR AND THE READER: DORA AND PORNOGRAPHY

In consulting Pellizzari’s study of the critical reception of *La parmigiana* (1963), one is instantly struck by the level of intellectual vitriol provoked by the film and its protagonist, Dora (Catherine Spaak). Critics from both right and left wing publications seem to agree on one thing: the film’s vulgar and pornographic nature. Recently, Natalie Fullwood’s article “Commedie al femminile: The Gendering of Space in Three Films by Antonio Pietrangeli,” discusses Pietrangeli’s use of space and how it goes against gendered tropes, a valuable contribution in combatting the film’s initial critical dismissal. This chapter will discuss not only Pietrangeli’s formal use of space but Dora’s sexuality and her ability to see beyond gendered, hypocritical, double standards regarding sexuality. This chapter will also pay particular attention to the film’s dialogue. As the following analysis will show, it is Dora’s “openness” in both speech and sexual action that defines her and makes her such a problematic figure for certain representatives of patriarchy. Borrowing the line of criticism from Hélène Clément and Catherine Cixous’s analysis of Freud’s Dora case in *La jeune nèce* as well as Gallop’s essay “Keys to Dora”, this chapter will show how Pietrangeli’s Dora’s openness, her willingness to access her sexuality and to censure with her speech, as well as her predilection for movement, entrances, and exits, all make her the subject, if not the heroine, of her own case history. Pietrangeli goes to great lengths to create with Dora an “open” woman whose characterization works against the cinematic tendency to “close” women in general into types.

Examining the contemporary critics' reactions to the film upon its release demonstrates how provocative and problematic the film was and allows us, in hindsight, a point of entry into our film critical operation. Let us first examine the right-wing criticism: Gian Maria Guglielmino of the *Gazzetta del Popolo* describes Dora as possessing an "obtuse and indifferent availability," and the film itself as full of "vulgar jokes and particular situations that recall pornography."²⁴² The writers at *Cineforum* unleash their anger towards Pietrangeli's portrayal of the young seminarist to whom Dora loses her virginity: "For the first time in the history of Italian cinema we have witnessed, wide-eyed, the desacralization of every last ethical value... it shocks the spectator to the point of remaining at first perplexed, and then breaking into loud laughter, a laughter intentionally moved and provoked with the intention of discrediting those who wear the cloth." This "anticlericalism" makes of Pietrangeli's film not "social criticism," but only "derivations [sic] of past attitudes, typical of Freemasons and liberal-radicals."²⁴³

As Lorenzo Pellizzari notes, "if the Center-Right cries, the Marxist Left is not laughing."²⁴⁴ Guido Cincotti of *Bianco e nero* fails to understand or help the spectator decipher the film as he writes that the film suffers from a fatalism, what he calls "the arc of a fall and the demonstration of its unavoidable nature." While admitting that some of the "moral paradoxes," contain "*in nuce* an undeniable grain of truth," "the film's weakness in the preparation phase affects the whole outcome, canceling out the tale's persuasive capacities... with gratuitous assertions, irrefutably stated and artificially sustained." *Cinema Nuovo* does not even bother to give the film a full-length review. Instead, the film is dismissed as "following the unedited adventures and misadventures, recorded on the spirit and body, of the protagonist... Not without decisively vulgar moments."²⁴⁵ While Left-wing critics tend to give a nod to Pietrangeli's

abilities as director, on the whole the film is yet another example of Pietrangeli being sorely misunderstood. Looking back on the film and the reactions it provoked gives us a sense of how scandalous Pietrangeli's portrayal of Dora as an "open" woman, open both sexually and experientially was. Perhaps one of the factors contributing to critics' scorn at the time of the film's release is the fact that the film is based on *La parmigiana*, a female-authored novel written by Bruna Piatti and published in 1962.²⁴⁶ The novel, written in the first person, tells the story of a prostitute. As Morelli notes, Piatti was also one of the film's screenwriters, a female voice that both inspired and contributed to the cinematic adaptation of her novel. "One can feel that Pietrangeli thought at length about that prostitute-character who recounts to us, in first person, her own story."²⁴⁷ The literary, female-authored protagonist is an extraordinary example of the female voice emerging in the sexual revolution of the Sixties, a rebel whose frank speech and new moral standards signify a threat to traditional, patriarchal ethical codes. Piatti goads the conservative reader on, naming her prostitute-protagonist Angelica and having her willingly take up prostitution as a profession as a means of achieving independence both financially and sexually. Complete with a marijuana-smoking, drug-dealing boyfriend, Angelica, the girl from Parma, is without a doubt a character who flies in the face of traditional Italian femininity. Angelica is, in fact, a foil to her Sicilian policeman fiancé, Michele, played by Lando Buzzanca in the cinematic adaptation. Michele is not only a representative of patriarchal authority as a police officer but also a collection of traditional "masculine" qualities, including the double sexual standard in which a woman with multiple sexual partners is considered a whore while a man with multiple sexual partners is considered virile. The novel ends when Michele's pregnant Sicilian girlfriend turns up at Michele's home where Angelica is preparing for her wedding. After

the initial humiliation of finding herself face to face with Angelica, the helpless Sicilian girl appeals to her for help and Angelica all but forces Michele into marrying his Sicilian girlfriend by blackmailing him and threatening to denounce him to the police for corrupting the youth if he does not do so. By offering up in sacrifice her own personal and financial security in the role of wife, Piatti's Angelica offers an alternative to the traditional binary of positive and negative gender roles. Angelica is simultaneously the hero who "saves" the helpless girl by arranging a marriage between Michele and the woman he impregnated but in so doing, Angelica also effectively chooses a life of prostitution for herself. As we have seen time and again in Pietrangeli's films, a woman's choice between marriage and independence is often reduced to the choice between submission or prostitution. While Piatti's Angelica does get the upper hand on Michele by insisting upon the marriage, she essentially sacrifices herself by choosing the road of prostitution over that of marriage. Pietrangeli extends Piatti's patriarchal critique, embodied by Angelica and the predicament she faces, the scarcity of choices for young women, into Dora.

Pietrangeli's protagonist, however, shares names with another literary Dora, that of Freud in "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria ('Dora')." Freud's "record of a failure"²⁴⁸ has been often analyzed from a feminist point of view, and in this chapter, Freud's eighteen year-old Dora will offer a model through which to read Pietrangeli's Dora. Certainly Pietrangeli knew this case; how else can we account for the name change from Angelica to Dora in the film adaptation? As mentioned in my introduction, Pietrangeli was a trained doctor and made a documentary on psychoanalysis early in his film career. *La parmigiana* is certainly a "psychological study, as surprising as it is unconventional."²⁴⁹ Both "case studies" are set in provincial towns, and both Doras are "in the first bloom of youth - [a] girl of intelligent and

engaging looks.”²⁵⁰ Moreover, Freud’s warning to his readers echoes all too well the sentiments of the film’s critics recorded above so that the response of the readers and spectators of both Doras run the risk of misinterpreting psychology for pornography. In his Prefatory Remarks, Freud discusses the difficulties in reporting the “the intimacies of the patients’ psychosexual life” and the danger of his medical examination being read by his colleagues as a “*roman à clef*” designed for their private delectation.”²⁵¹ The psychoanalyst warns that without the proper training in interpreting dreams, the “reader will find only bewilderment in these pages instead of the enlightenment he is in search of, and he will certainly be inclined to project the cause of his bewilderment on the author and to pronounce his views fantastic.”²⁵² No where is this bewilderment more evident than in the comments of the film’s critics, who show themselves unable to interpret or understand Pietrangeli’s Dora as she day-dreams through the film, structured as it is around Dora’s flashbacks and her mental meandering from present to past and back again.

Guglielmina Morelli, in writing about Pietrangeli’s *La parmigiana* in 1998, describes the psychoanalytic structure of the film, stating that “we know the past by Dora’s way of recuperating memories... the camera moves laterally very slowly and little by little the soundtrack of the past overlaps the soundtrack of the present. Then the memory ends with another slight camera movement similar, and often symmetrical, to the first one.”²⁵³ Not only is the film’s structure a psychological mirror held up to Dora’s thought process, but the film seeks formally, in its shots, camera angles, and the social commentary therein, to bring the spectator into Dora’s psychological makeup, her “psychosexual life,” and her observations about the Italian society of the so-called “Economic Miracle.” Thus it should come as no surprise that this

new sort of exploration of the female psyche angered and upset so many critics since as Freud notes of the Dora case, “what is new has always aroused bewilderment and resistance.”²⁵⁴ Dora embodies this new sort of ‘open’ woman, capable of inducing bewilderment but also excitement as she embraces her sexuality as a weapon to use against hypocrites. The critics’ reactions to Dora can be explained as follows: they were either too distracted by the content of or too guilt-ridden by their own interest in Dora’s powers of attraction and the exploration of her sexual development to consider the film’s critique of gender roles as legitimate. The double standard lies in the fact that a large segment of the population sees Dora / Angelica as a sexual object, yet when Pietrangeli seeks to explore her subjectivity, her awareness of how she is seen by men as a sexual object, the film, like Freud’s study, borders, for many, on pornography.

In other words, Piatti and Pietrangeli’s Dora is “open,” not just sexually speaking, but open with her criticism of patriarchal sexual standards as well. According to Morelli, “the discomfort regarding Dora indicates the difficulty in ‘boxing in’ the character in preconceived and unequivocal schema (a good girl, a prostitute, a foreign, tormented intellect and so on with the stereotypes.)”²⁵⁵ Pietrangeli’s Dora, therefore, is a sort of distillate of Bruna Piatti’s Angelica and Freud’s “fragments” of Dora as well as an attempt by the director to identify with, to get to know, the mental processes of this new, “open” woman. The film, fragmented like Freud’s case study, shows the viewer how moments in Dora’s present recall episodes from her past. Pietrangeli, therefore, is only the technical eye that looks, making his film, by Morelli’s account, “a cold, calculated, studied work... a iron-clad narrative structure”²⁵⁶ that relies as much as possible on the female protagonist, the female-authored voice that wrote the original novel. In

this sense, *La parmigiana* is a sort of feminist antidote to Freud's Dora case, in which the male director's (or analyst's) interpretive act takes back seat to the telling of the story itself.

The "openness" discussed in Hélène Clément and Catherine Cixous's analysis of the Dora case in *La jeune née* as well as Gallop's essay "Keys to Dora", Pietrangeli's Dora's awareness of her power as sexual object as well as the limitations that her status as "object" bring with it imbue the film with an ambivalence, a heroic bitterness shared with Piatti's novel in which Angelica sacrifices her own marriage for another woman, giving her the "happy ending" that would have resolved the problem that her openness poses. Pietrangeli, on Piatti's model, gives "the woman [the] agency to open, allows her to do more than patiently wait for a determination of what can 'naturally' not be a matter of indifference."²⁵⁷ Stated differently, if Freud's Dora was shut, a hysterical signifier repressed by patriarchal pressures, specifically a father who exchanged her as sexual chattel to the husband of his lover, an exchange of which the young girl was painfully aware but could do or say nothing about it, Pietrangeli's, or Piatti's, Dora is open, irrepressible, and defiant of hypocritical patriarchal pressures that would close her down, shut her up. Dora, as an object of male desire, is the subject, the agent, of her own narrative in Pietrangeli's film. The following section will show how Pietrangeli constructs Dora as a modern, "open" woman, and how Pietrangeli borrows from Freud in order to turn the analyst's case study on its head.

A SYMPTOMATIC ACT

Clément and Cixous's *La jeune née* includes a lengthy debate between the two feminists regarding the value of Freud's Dora case and the subversive potential of the figure of the

hysteric, centered on the citation from Freud that begins this chapter regarding whether a woman is open or closed. While the two critics agree that repressed Dora, for Freud, is clearly closed, passive, waiting for a man as the active sex or an analyst to “open her up,” they disagree about the value of the hysteric within the family. This disagreement, “located in a published dialogue,” indicates the value of openness to these feminists. “The choice to publish a ‘dissension,’ to bring it into ‘symbolic inscription,’ is the choice to leave it open, not to try and re-assimilate it, to shut it up, or to keep it within the family.”²⁵⁸ Pietrangeli’s Dora, too, is a sort of dissension from the Dora of a century ago. The film is an attempt to get to know this new, modern Dora, what she is thinking, why she does what she does. What Morelli calls the film’s “ironclad” structure serves as testimony to Dora’s openness since the film begins with her arrival at the train station in Parma and ends with her leaving Rome on a bus. “Cixous’s section (in *La jeune née*) entitled ‘Sorties,’ ... can be translated as ‘exits, outlets, escapes, holidays, outings, sallies, sorties,’ also ‘outbursts, attacks, tirades,’²⁵⁹ could be said to describe, in its various translations, the entire plot of the film as Dora arrives, leaves, runs away, flirts, and rebuffs her way through the narrative. At the end of the film, she is not re-assimilated into the familial, patriarchal structure, but escapes, leaving once again. Dora eschews the traditional happy ending of marriage and social re-assimilation and in so doing rejects not only cinematic formulae for films centered around women but also patriarchal standards for what women want, namely to be happily married, to live, in the language of the film “a tranquil life.” It is no wonder that this open protagonist solicits bewilderment from both the characters within the film itself and the critics reviewing it.

A brief plot summary may be useful at this point in the study. In the case of this film, *La parmigiana*, it is particularly important since it is unlikely that the reader of this study has seen

the film. It is out of print, perhaps a result of so many critics deeming it pornographic. The film begins, as stated above, with Dora arriving at the train station in Parma. While she is ostensibly visiting friends of her late mother, Scipio and Amneris, we later discover that she is instead looking for a new start, a way out of prostitution and into what she calls “*una vita tranquilla*,” a tranquil life. After lunch with the older couple, Dora’s flashbacks begin and show how she arrived at this point. The film then vacillates between past and present, Dora’s stay in Parma and her sexual adventures in Riccione and Rome, as well as the various men she has met along the way. It is a sort of *bildungsroman* in which Dora learns to use her sexuality as a means of making a living but also acquires the bitter knowledge that comes with being seen as sexual object. This is particularly true in the case of Nino (Nino Manfredi), the only man she truly loves during the film, a photographer who uses her in his ad campaigns and then, Dora discovers, marries the owner of a restaurant instead. The film, like Piatti’s novel, also includes how Dora meets, rejects, accepts, and then refuses once and for all, Michele, the Sicilian policeman. Her past experiences, centered on places and men whom she identifies with those places, offer the spectator insight into her thought processes, how a comment made in the film’s present tense might provoke in Dora laughter or pain.

As with Freud’s Dora case, we, the spectators / listeners / readers come to know Dora’s past little by little. Freud’s Dora, whose mother was absent, too distracted to notice or afraid to address Dora’s father’s extramarital affair with Frau K, reveals that her “hysterical” behavior is in fact explicable. The Austrian patient tells the psychoanalyst that Herr K, Frau K’s husband, made sexual advances towards her, abused or molested her in today’s language, and it is this that provoked her symptoms. What is more, her father, her protective figure, did nothing to stop it

once he was made aware of the situation. Instead, he continued to put Dora in harm's way by frequenting these family friends for his own sexual satisfaction, so that he could continue his love affair with Frau K. Dora, whom Freud describes as "sharp-sighted," was acutely aware of the whole dynamic and as the case study unfolds, Freud shows himself unable to navigate the young girl's psychic conflict. Freud's inability to relate to Dora's dilemma as she is confronted with her status as sexual object-to-be-traded resonates throughout Pietrangeli's film in the male characters on-screen.

Dora's memories within the film's narrative begin with the incomprehension of the other characters, specifically Giacomo and Don Colombo, her uncle. Unlike Freud's Dora who is besieged with daddy issues, Pietrangeli's Dora is an orphan, yet her closest relative is without a doubt a patriarchal signifier, a priest, representative of "divine law." Her fiancé, a police officer, is representative of the "earthly law"; in fact, late in the film, Don Colombo, the priest, states that Dora will be safest if controlled by the two of them. This is due to the fact that, like Freud's Dora, Pietrangeli's Dora is also a "source of heavy trials"²⁶⁰ for her adult guardians. As the first scene with Don Colombo and Dora seated at the dinner table reveals, the cinematic Dora does not help with domestic duties nor does she appear in church when she is supposed to. Despite the patriarchal pressures on her superego, Dora maintains an openness in her attitudes towards sex and morality. Like Freud's Dora, Pietrangeli's Dora is perhaps too "sharp-sighted" for her own good, certainly for the good of those surrounding her. While Freud's Dora is particularly critical of her father, who is engaged in an extra-marital affair in which he levies his daughter to his mistress's husband, Herr K, in trade for sexual access to the man's wife, Frau K, Pietrangeli's Dora engages in criticism from a feminine standpoint, expanding her observations to patriarchal

institutions. She exposes the gendered sexual dynamics within the structure of the church, represented by Giacomo, the seminarist to whom she loses her virginity, within market and economic relationships, represented by Nino, the advertising photographer, and within the social and legal institution of marriage and law, represented by Michele, her policeman fiancé. By examining these male “cases” one by one, we will see how Pietrangeli sets Dora up to be this modern, open woman who questions what others say about sex and shame.

Beginning with Dora’s initiation into sexual life as she loses her virginity to Giacomo, Pietrangeli explores the effects of sex on the young woman’s psyche. This post-coital sequence is illuminated by identifying a link between a “symptomatic act” therein, one in which Dora places a rock in her pocket after sex, and the act examined in Freud’s Dora Case. In the section of the study entitled “The First Dream,” in which Freud examines Dora’s dream about the “jewel case”, “*Schmuckkastchen*”, which Freud quickly points out to be “a favourite expression for the same thing that you alluded to not long ago by means of the reticule you were wearing - for the female genitals, I mean.”²⁶¹ Freud concludes that Dora is preoccupied with her jewel case, her reticule, i.e.. her genitals, since during a session with the doctor, his patient insisted on “playing” with her reticule, her purse-pocket, “opening it, putting a finger into it, shutting it again, and so on.” This “symptomatic act” of masturbation signaled to Freud that while she was threatened by Herr K and his encroaching on her “jewel case”, she is also sexually excited by the prospect. While Freud’s observation is problematic for a number of reasons, what is important to remember is his definition of “symptomatic act.” In a much-commented passage, Freud writes that

there is a great deal of symbolism of this kind in life, but as a rule, we pass it by without heeding it. When I set myself the task of bringing to light what human

beings keep hidden within them... by observing what they say and what they show... if his lips are silent, he chatters with his finger-tips... And thus the task of making conscious the most hidden recesses of the mind is one which is quite possible to accomplish.²⁶²

Hertz explains how Freud is overcompensating with this passage because of its “fierce boasting,” or “gloating” since it instead glosses over the “epistemological promiscuity in which the lines would blur between what Dora knew and what Freud knew and, consequently, in which the status of Freud’s knowledge, and of his professional discourse, would be impugned.”²⁶³ In short, Freud forces his interpretive hand, here, claiming full knowledge of the motivation behind Dora’s nervous tic, a masturbatory impulse. Pietrangeli, however, presents Dora’s symptomatic act without explanation, offering no definitive, direct motive behind it. It is just there, on the screen, for the spectator to witness. So, we are led to ask, why include this small gesture at all? By showing Dora putting a rock into her pocket, a rock that had been under her back during sex, hurting her, Pietrangeli indicates that this young woman will not fear sex nor will she allow herself to be victimized by the traditional sexual dynamic of male dominance and female passivity. Like Freud’s Dora and most teenagers, Pietrangeli’s Dora is preoccupied with sex, curious about the pleasure and pain it can provoke, and Pietrangeli includes the gesture in order to show that his protagonist will carry this curiosity with her, whether it be a prize or a burden, a souvenir or a weight. The rock can be read as all these things.

This scene with Giacomo the seminarist is located in first flashback sequence after Dora’s arrival in Parma. As a sort of sexual initiation as well as an initiation into Dora’s memory, the scene is key to understanding Pietrangeli’s exploration of Dora’s psyche. Formally, Pietrangeli cues the spectator to the psychological scope of his film by foreshortening frames, overlapping and using tight close-ups of actors’ faces, and shooting at odd angles in order to emphasize a

character's particular quality or attribute. This sequence in particular begins with a composition that indicates the gendered conflict on the horizon. Lying on her back at the edge of a river, looking at the clouds, the spectator witnesses Dora's lack of attention towards Giacomo, who is in the foreground of the shot, sulking. She looks up at the clouds as he broods, his face at a downward angle. He angrily asks her, "you're thinking about clouds at a time like this? What about me?" Right away, there is a lack of understanding of Dora's mental process, a theme that continues throughout the film as numerous characters express dismay at her withdrawn day-dreaming. Dora fires back at Giacomo right away, noting that "it is always easier for a man." When he remarks that he isn't a man, but a man of the cloth, she says that "you remember that you're a priest when it suits you." When he engages in an all-too-common argument, that it was Dora who seduced him, she objects vociferously, saying that she had only been looking for her uncle and it had been he, Giacomo, who had dragged her down to the river. The spectator is already cued into Dora's combative nature when she pulls the rock out from under her back, complaining to her lover that "you hurt me. I had a rock under my back." For the first time, Giacomo smiles tenderly, content with the idea of inflicting pain on her, since the traditional view of sex for women should not be pleasurable. Dora's relationship to sexual pleasure, throughout the film, is comparable to the delight she takes in her own physicality. She is shown to be libidinous, always eating, smoking, drinking, full of vital force and drives. After Dora's comments regarding the rock, Giacomo decides to take his leave of her in the least chivalrous way possible. Rather than accompany her back to town on his Vespa, he goes on first, leaving her behind on the river bank, so that they do not arouse suspicion. Pietrangeli ridicules the seminarist as he walks towards his scooter in his robe, shooting him alongside a group of geese, while Dora

shoos him off, more than able to fend for herself. She examines the rock, this sexual souvenir of her first experience with intercourse. What could be interpreted as a burden is instead, for Dora, an object of fascination, but it is a detached fascination bordering on indifference. What is more is that Dora seems mildly amused by the unfolding of events, her abandonment by Giacomo, and his ridiculous escape amongst the geese on his Vespa. Catherine Spaak's expressions that Pietrangeli captures on film reveal a gamut of emotion, but not the emotion one would expect after losing one's virginity. It all seems rather boring, quotidian, a joke where Dora is in on the laughter.

Rocks, used to stone women to death, placed in pockets to facilitate drowning and suicide, represent weight, the burden of shameful memories or acts. In this case, Dora considers trying to forget about the loss of her virginity, to dismiss her entry into sexuality, by almost throwing the rock away, but she then thinks twice about it before placing the rock into her pocket. In so doing, not only is she assuming the burden of her sexuality but she is also actively mimicking the sex act itself, the rock acting as phallic signifier under Dora's control, much like Freud's Dora as she plays with her reticule, her jewel box. In her responses to Giacomo as well as in this "symptomatic act" Dora appears willing to engage with and challenge sexual norms as well as active and passive roles. By keeping the rock for herself, she does not allow herself to be victimized nor does she give excessive weight to the sex act itself, the act that she seems to react to with such apparent nonchalance. Her assumption of sexual responsibility prohibits Giacomo from casting her in the role of the *femme fatale*, the seductress, since she immediately opposes his accusations along these lines, but Pietrangeli shows that she is also a willing participant, newly aware of the potential for dissatisfaction, for sex to be a simple act and nothing else. Her

true thoughts on the sexual encounter remain unknown to us and we can only guess at what she is thinking and feeling through glimpses at her psyche through her words, her actions, her symptomatic acts. Because it is unreadable, difficult to determine like the significance of the rock itself, Dora's sexuality is more nuanced, more complicated, and hence more of a challenge to the patriarchal forces in the film.

DORA'S *SORTIES*

“Sharp-sighted Dora” does not limit her criticism to Giacomo but points out the paradoxes, sexual undercurrents, and gendered tensions upon which power dynamics are structured. During her introduction to Nino (Nino Manfredi), she is particularly brutal, exposing his efforts to pimp her out to the businessman with whom Nino hopes to collaborate by creating an advertising campaign for a line of air conditioners. Before delving into Dora's relationship with Nino, we should bring the reader up to speed regarding the plot by beginning where we left off, with Dora and Giacomo's sexual encounter. After Giacomo leaves Dora on the riverbank, someone in the town reports to have seen the two lovebirds and later that night, Giacomo shows up in a panic at Don Colombo's house and the two teenagers make a plan to run away together. After a sequence back in the present of the film's action in Parma showing Dora out on the town with Amneris and Scipio, during which Dora, smirking, identifies the prostitute in the room, Pietrangeli flashes back in Dora's memory to continue the story of her sexual life, in particular how Dora learns how to leverage her sexuality for survival, like a prostitute. In fact, as Fullwood has noted, “as each flashback adds more layers to Dora's past, the ‘city’ space of Parma appears increasingly more tame and provincial.”²⁶⁴ The flashback begins with a sort of musical pan with

the song “Caterina” playing over the crowd, an interesting choice that points to the metacinematic vein in Pietrangeli’s films since “Caterina” is also a reference to Catherine Spaak, the actress’ real name. Pietrangeli shows the couple as they make their way down the *lungomare* in Riccione, a popular beach town, and Giacomo awkwardly gawks at the girls in bikinis.

Afraid to ask for a hotel room, Giacomo becomes increasingly hostile towards and resentful of Dora, saying “sometimes I’m jealous of you” (“*a volte ti invidio*”). Dora, in turn, takes on the responsibility for finding them a room. The room does not prove to be the love nest she’d hoped for, however, as Giacomo continues to mistreat her, complaining that she is always hungry and wistfully recalling what he would be doing in seminary at that hour. As with the example of Saint Augustine, whom Giacomo brings up and calls “a man like me,” Pietrangeli makes it clear that within the church, forgiveness and redemption exists for men who stray sexually and Giacomo will take full advantage of this fact. When Dora awakes late the next morning, roused by a chamber maid who is eager to clean her room, the maid informs Dora that Giacomo left early that morning. All he has left her is a small amount of money and a pack of cigarettes. She smiles through her tears as she lights a cigarette, looking at herself in the mirror contentedly. These are Dora’s first tears we spectators witness falling during the film; they will not be the last, but in this scene, she seems to understand that tears are useless to her. Looking at herself in the mirror, a smile creeps through the fear and disappointment on her face, and Pietrangeli hints that something within Dora is determined to rise above this personal, emotional tragedy. At this point in the plot, she becomes more combative, more outspoken, and more defiant in her struggle for survival as a woman alone. This, her first cigarette, cues a segue to the present, back to the table at the nightclub with Amneris and Scipio, as she imitates the pose of

the prostitute smoking a cigarette. When Amneris scolds her for staring, Dora asks if Amneris knows the woman, to which she replies absolutely not. Playing the innocent, Dora then asks the loaded question, “What about you, Scipio?” This is typical of Dora’s relationship to the older husband of her mother’s friend, Amneris. By asking this sort of loaded question, amusing herself by watching others squirm, Dora implies knowledge without completely showing her hand. Throughout the film, this is a technique she uses to retain the upper hand in gendered power dynamics. From her lie (albeit a lie of omission) to Amneris and Scipio about her past to her taking full advantage of the restaurant manager’s offer to dismiss her hotel bill in exchange for sex, but only after she orders everything on the restaurant menu, Dora is manipulating the situations in which she finds herself to her advantage, gaining power through appearance, dissimilitude, and narrative control. For example, later in the film, after Michele proposes to her, Scipio returns home drunk and propositions her, even suggesting that the two of them kill Amneris and flee to “*bassa Italia*.” The next morning when Michele shows up to announce their engagement, Dora asks “what do you think about it, Scipio?” with a smirk on her face. She knows his secrets but only reveals her knowledge of them, not the secrets themselves. This is one way in which Dora works against cultural repression of female sexual knowledge, by addressing the sexual tensions in her relationships, either directly or obliquely. Dora calculates and controls how much of her sexual knowledge she reveals in any given situation in order to benefit from it the most, a scandalous sort of behavior for an Italian girl in the Sixties.

Dora’s relationships with Amneris and Scipio also offer another point of comparison between Freud and Pietrangeli’s case studies since Freud’s study also contains a married couple, friends of the family, Herr and Frau K. Frau K is Dora’s father’s mistress and Herr K is the man

whose seduction of Dora sets off her hysterical episodes. Frau K, like Amneris, is a nurse, and in the film, as in Freud's case study, Amneris and Frau K blur the lines between personal and professional in their relationships with their patients. Dora hears Amneris fighting off her patient's advances and the nurse later confesses to accepting the gift of a watch from an admirer. Frau K's patient is Freud's Dora's father. Pietrangeli's Dora seeks out a confidant in Amneris, with whom she discusses marriage, adultery, and even sex to a limited extent (and to Amneris' dismay). As a sort of surrogate set of parents to Dora, the titular *parmigiana* seeks out Scipio and Amneris for the possibilities of shelter, rest, and protection that they offer her; Pietrangeli makes this clear by showing Dora's contentment as she lies down for a nap after her first lunch with the middle-aged couple at the beginning of the film, shortly after her arrival in Parma. Yet despite herself, Dora introduces a destabilizing sexual force into the household. Scipio, goaded on by his wife's description of Dora's physique, which she describes to him in detail, begins sneaking glimpses at Dora as she sleeps. The temptation that she represents to him is too great, so that ultimately no matter how much cold water he splashes on his face, he winds up propositioning her in the episode mentioned above. Dora, however, actively resists being drawn into this Oedipal scenario, rebuffing Scipio and later holding his actions over his head in front of Amneris. Pietrangeli shows how Dora upsets (and not necessarily in a negative way) the erotic economy of the couple. Earlier in the film, Scipio makes love to Amneris while thinking of Dora. When Amneris warns Scipio that Dora will be able to hear them and Scipio mutters back, "la Dora..." His iteration of "la Dora," soon becomes indistinguishable from "*l'adora*" suggesting that perhaps the young woman's presence has injected some much-needed eroticism back into the couple's sexual life. In this sense, Freud's perception of homosexual love between Dora and

Frau K can be read into Pietrangeli's filmic adaptation in the friendship between the older and younger woman since throughout the film, Amneris constantly references her love for Dora's deceased mother, discusses Dora's youth and beauty, and serves as a sort of catalyst for Dora's sexual reflecting upon her past. This is particularly true in the sequence that takes place when Dora accompanies Amneris on her night watch.

Rather than return home alone with Scipio after her night out with the couple, Dora agrees to keep Amneris company during her night shift as a private nurse. Not only does this lead to a frank discussion between the two women about marital infidelity, but also offers Pietrangeli the opportunity to show the knowledge Dora has gained from her experience with Nino. While watching television, Dora discusses advertising and how "the psychology of the consumer" interests her. She then adds that in order to star in an ad campaign, "you have to sleep with one of them," "them" of course meaning the businessmen in charge of the campaign itself. This shocks Amneris, whom the spectator overhears in the next sequence fighting off the sexual advances of her patient. Pietrangeli seems to imply that women, regardless of their profession, are seen by men as sexual objects and Dora will unabashedly capitalize on this dynamic in order to survive. The next flashback sequence, signaled by Amneris' line that "no matter what you wear at this age, you wear it well," shows Dora experimenting with sexual bartering, first for a bathing suit and later for her hotel and restaurant bill as mentioned above. These potentially humiliating situations for Dora are framed for comic effect since Dora first fights off the roving hands of the man who buys her the bikini (she told him he could only watch her try it on and when he reaches for her, she says "I knew it!") and when the restaurant manager proposes sex in exchange for a hot meal, she orders everything on the menu, including a double portion of tripe for a cat. There

is plenty of “*trippa per gatti*” regarding Dora’s powers of attraction. Here again, Dora defies the gendered cultural assumption that she should be ashamed of selling sex and does so in a comedic fashion. It is an instance where “rather than equating sexual independence with the state of ‘fallen’ woman, the film exposes the way in which such categories are imposed on Dora from outside, charting the impositions placed on her freedom which prevent her from maintaining this carefree, independent movement.”²⁶⁵ As Pietrangeli goes on to show, it is the male characters in the film who serve as roadblocks to Dora’s freedom of movement.

At this point in the film, Amneris decides to introduce Dora out on the social scene in Parma. She alters an old dress to fit the young woman and the two attend a dance where Scipio’s band is playing. In one of the most typically Pietrangelian moments of the film, the dance is filmed giving precedence to the choral nature of the scene and the dancing itself serves as background to small town gossip, courtship, and other social rituals. As Fullwood writes, “the potential to escape constricting norms of female behavior in the city is undermined by the small-mindedness of the people (and especially the men).”²⁶⁶ For instance, Amneris is delighted by the stir her beautiful houseguest is causing among the attendees, the male contingent in particular, reveling in the jealousy Dora provokes in a mother-daughter pair sitting next to them. When a young Sicilian police officer asks Dora to dance, she expresses a total lack of interest, even guessing that he is a policeman before he approaches her. Her disdain for this figure of authority is made even more comprehensible by Pietrangeli and his screenwriters who create with Michele Pantanò a grotesque parody of patriarchal dominance. Southern, traditionalist, and a police officer, Pantanò becomes Dora’s *via crucis*, a sort of trial for her independent idea about female sexuality, the butt of her jokes, the flesh into which her sarcastic sense of humor tears. Yet before

examining Pantanò in depth, it is important to analyze Dora's experience with Nino, the relationship that Pietrangeli shows to fulfill her the most as the most modern, collaborative, and creative relationship in the film.

While dancing with Pantanò, Dora recalls her first encounter with Nino. Again, it is an auditory cue which signals this flashback, Pantanò's statement "*polizia disarmata, papaglia incorraggiata,*" that evokes the formulaic slogans written by Nino, the struggling ad man. On the beach at Riccione, Nino is attempting to sell the tag line "*Con il condizionatore, aria fresca a tutte le ore,*" to a manufacturer of air conditioners who is decidedly uninterested in what the sycophantic Nino is saying. Rather, the portly *ingegnere* is distracted by Dora, who, clad in her newly-won bikini, stands on a swing in the shallow water, swinging back and forth. Noting his client's roving eye, Nino decides to change tactics by involving Dora, whom he calls Stefania, in his plan. He calls out to her and, while initially skeptical, Dora goes along with Nino half-heartedly until it becomes clear that he intends to leave her alone in the *ingegnere*'s room as a sexual bargaining chip to ensure that Nino is awarded the advertising contract. At that point, she calls the two men "*un porco e un ruffiano,*" "a pig and a pimp," and then walks out, leaving Nino bewildered and desperate and the *ingegnere* incredulous. Here we have yet another example of Dora's "sharp-sightedness," how she chooses to reveal her knowledge of how she is being used as an object of sexual and economic exchange. Dora works against this cultural tendency by speaking out and by throwing the unseemly practice in the two men's faces.

Nino chases after her, pleading with her and making excuses, "is it my fault if he likes you?" Pietrangeli does not miss the occasion for social commentary and satire as Nino observes, "the Boom, the Italian Miracle... maybe it's because I don't go to church but I've never seen a

miracle.”²⁶⁷ These two characters, Dora and Nino, down on their luck, share sandwiches and a relationship of reciprocity is born. Nino, unlike the other men in the film, recognizes her powers of attraction and even values them, albeit with hopes of profiting from them. Later, Nino anticipates critics of the film as he photographs her for a water advertisement, urging her to lean forward, smile, lower her shoulder strap, but then asking himself if the pose isn’t a little “too porno.” Pietrangeli’s choice to keep Nino Manfredi’s name within the film as “Nino” indicates yet another moment of self-referential critique on the director’s part. Nino, whose name bridges the world on and off screen, is a photographer and hence a proxy for Pietrangeli himself, the director. In the scenes where Nino is shown doing photo shoots with Dora, Pietrangeli is able to indulge in formal, metacinematic discourse, such as where is the line between titillating and pornographic. There are also several sequences, when Nino has gone out to get them a bite to eat, of Dora dancing alone in a hula skirt, playing with the props in the studio, and examining a large head of a knight, what could be a large-scale Sicilian *pupo*, perhaps *Orlando Furioso*. These moments that lie outside the narrative show Dora “at play,” enjoying her physicality, her profession, and even, to a certain extent, being watched. While Nino is out, she is diegetically alone, but outside the diegesis, she is still being watched, filmed by Pietrangeli and his crew. What Pietrangeli seems to suggest with these scenes is that Catherine Spaak, like all actresses, need to “play” in order to play the part. There is a sort of tenderness with which Pietrangeli shoots her during these scenes, as if to remind us that she, both Dora and Catherine, are ultimately young women, and that they too have a right to enjoy themselves. After all, we spectators certainly enjoy watching them, do we not?

Nino the photographer ultimately decides that the shot is not too pornographic. Both he and Dora are hopeful that together, they can take advantage of Nino's "artist's eye" (he holds up a magnifying glass to his eye to accentuate his ability to look acutely) and Dora's beauty to reap some of the benefits of the Boom. Nino promises Dora, playing on the Ford Motors ad, that, rather than the American import, "there is a Fiat in her future." As we shall see, Dora's main problem with Pantanò, the police officer, is his denial of her sexuality and she goes to great lengths to prove to him that she is not the virginal creature he considers her to be. Her love for Nino, therefore, can be explained by his valorization of her sexuality and of the power of her image. As he attempts to take her picture during a photo shoot, he is continually distracted by her beauty, saying "it's impossible to work with you, you know?" Since Dora mentions her interest in the psychology of the consumer while watching ads on television, the spectator understands that it is her experience with Nino that both personally and professionally fulfills her, interests her, and challenges her. His non-stop production of slogans as well as his cultural commentary, including calling the church-bells "the church's advertising," reveal that "he is victim of one of the most ambiguous careers that the Economic Boom created, but his smallness is not innocuous or ridiculous and leaves wounds behind."²⁶⁸ While Morelli describes Nino as a "weak and ambiguous"²⁶⁹ man, within the narrative arc of the film, he also represents the only moment of collaboration and understanding between Dora and a man. This unconventional "marriage" of photographer and model predates in Dora's history the outmoded, traditional marriage proposal Pantanò insists upon and to which Nino himself ultimately cedes.

When Dora returns to Rome to track him down at the end of the film, she finds him comfortably ensconced in a restaurant, working behind a deli counter, married to the owner.

Using his own advertising slogan against him, Dora now ridicules him, saying that instead “there was a *mamma*” in his future. Incapable of providing for himself, Nino has retreated into a child-like role, “betting his liberty and his affections against the security of food.”²⁷⁰ The theme of hunger, sign of vitality and desperation (Dora’s incessant eating is mentioned above and it is sharing a sandwich that brings the couple together originally), reveals itself decisive. Still hungry, desirous for something better, Dora “leaves once again... with an absolute openness to amorous experiences,”²⁷¹ as she reapplies her lipstick and climbs aboard a bus. The tragedy of losing the one man, Nino, with whom she felt a reciprocity leaves the film’s narrative open-ended. While some critics insist that Dora, in putting on her lipstick and climbing aboard a bus, is resigning herself to life as a *puttana*, others see the ending as simply Dora exiting the film, her amorous disappointment yet another stop along the road to knowledge. In the former vein, Armando Nannuzzi states in an interview with Barbara Perversi that

In the beautiful final scene, Dora, in front of a mirror, shoots herself a smile as a challenge: she has decided to become a prostitute, the only way that the film could end. How could one believe that a character who had lived so freely, a lover of numerous men, could then at the end be protected by Manfredi’s free-wheeling character? ‘Anto - I said to him - why does she need protection? She only needs to become a whore.’²⁷²

Examples of the latter tendency to read the ending as open and indeterminate, with emphasis on Dora’s further acquisition of knowledge, can be found in Maraldi’s discussion of the film in *Antonio Pietrangeli*, where he states that, “many of the reviewers misinterpreted the final scene, reading it as the beginning of a life of prostitution (and this error has remained in all of the successive synopses of the film).”²⁷³ Dora, according to Maraldi’s mode of viewing the ending, can only be seen for what she is doing on-screen. After finding Nino in the *rosticceria*, she leaves, and then she stops in front of a window in which she examines her reflection. As

mentioned beforehand during the discussion of the few tears that Dora sheds during the film, this final scene “recalls the scene in the hotel in Riccione when Dora discovers that she has been left alone,” and here, as there, “she fixes her make-up and her lipstick and goes on smiling. Hers is a smile of awareness (*consapevolezza*), not of perdition.”²⁷⁴

In the case of Nino, it is Dora who suffers a romantic delusion, but she also knows how to make others suffer and seems to relish it. This is in fact the case with Michele Pantanò (Lando Buzzanca) who Morelli describes as

a concentrate of hypocrisy, misogyny, pomposity, vanity, horniness, and stupidity... he’s a prince of double standards: he wants to negotiate the possession of a beautiful woman with the life he can give her and thus winds up keeping her constantly under his control. In this figure, one can identify echoes of certain misogynistic behaviors prevalent in Southern men, common in the social comedies of the Fifties and Sixties... for example, marveling at the liberty of Northern women while contemporarily his sisters, in his hometown, are segregated. But most of all, it is worth noting Michele’s incapacity in sight and judgment: while excited by Dora’s presence, he rows blindly across the lake, pronouncing two falsities: the purity of the girl and the dignity of the old man (whom we then discover feeds the pigeons only to be able to capture them more easily).²⁷⁵

Dora, from her introduction to the policeman at the dance in Parma, cannot stomach him. She wipes her hand on her dress, eager to be rid of his palm sweat, and she ridicules him when he stands outside her bedroom window in a courtship posture. While Amneris deems him sweet and noble as he stands vigilantly outside her window, Dora says that he looks like “*il tre di bastoni*,” the *scopa* card. Both his and her comments regarding his profession as a police officer do little to elevate him in Dora’s eyes. During their courtship, Pantanò brags about his name appearing in the newspaper. As it turns out, he is reported being injured while putting down a demonstration; he takes a rock to the head and then urges Dora to “feel the lump.” As they walk together, Dora complains that he holds her arm like he’s arresting her. She proclaims, “I don’t

like policemen. You barge into people's homes, declare them under arrest." When the couple is formally engaged, Dora intimates the double standard under which the police operates. Michele tells Dora as they walk together that, "you're respected. See how they greet you?" to which Dora responds, "If only you knew how they greeted me before!" When he finds out that she is promiscuous, Michele believes that he can redeem Dora, that it is his prerogative to forgive her for her sinful past. Dora, on the other hand, is interested in neither forgiveness nor redemption. Prior to their engagement, she tries to convince Michele that she is not the pure, chaste creature that he thinks she is. Inviting him over to Scipio and Amneris' home one night while the couple is out, she forcibly insists that she is "not honest, not pure, not chaste" but rather "dishonest, corrupt, lost" before listing that she has slept with a large number of men. In tears, Michele refuses to believe her and she convinces him the only way she can, by sleeping with him. His pillow talk, over the course of their sexual encounter, transforms from "you'll be my little wife, my lady," to sobbing "bad, evil" at her afterwards. He even calls her a whore, *puttana*, and insists "*ti devo pagare, squaldrina*." He insists on paying her, an act that symbolically restores him to the position of power, when it is clear that he is the one who has been dominated in this situation. Despite his blindness in insisting that Dora is a "pure" woman, she forces him to see her for what she is, a woman who does not see sex as shameful and who is fully aware of her sexual power. In fact, it is Dora who turns the tables of shame on him as evidenced by his post-coital tears and his desire to pay her. Ultimately, her efforts to shame him into leaving her alone fail as Pantanò shows up the next morning with flowers and declares that he is "*un uomo finito*," an man undone, and that he wants to marry her anyway. Her response: "*Vattene, cretino*," before

resigning herself to the engagement and the prospect it represents for a calm, happy life, “*una vita tranquilla.*”

This happy marital life, however, is not to be, since throughout the film, any man “who desires to buy her with force is defeated,”²⁷⁶ including Michele, whose happy life is nothing but a compromise to which she refuses to resort. The final straw arrives when she runs away from Michele, who flies into a jealous rage when they encounter Giacomo, the ex-seminarist, and the policeman threatens to accuse Giacomo of corrupting the youth. She can no longer contain her frustration and flees to Rome in search of Nino, whom she finds married to the owner of the restaurant. Once again, she is shown on the move, and the film’s ending mirrors the way it began, with Dora in movement. Fullwood notes the unconventional nature of Dora’s movement as a female character, citing Pidduck and de Lauretis in her discussion of how Pietrangeli’s female characters’ “mobility is symbolic of the changing nature of their roles in society and their attempts to navigate these changes.”²⁷⁷ It should not be surprising, then, that the opening sequence of the film shows Dora descending from the train in the Parma station and the film closes with her climbing aboard and sitting down on a bus. These means of transportation, signifiers of modernity, indicate to the spectator Dora’s openness, the difficulty in pinning her down, both physically and psychologically. Pietrangeli’s Dora, therefore, is a sort of antithesis to Freud’s Dora, whose hysteria resulted from her Victorian “closedness” as a woman. The girl from Parma works against the cinematic and psychological tendency to portray women as types.

Pietrangeli is not only important because he described women (he wasn’t the first or only one to do so) but because he presented them by giving them autonomous personalities, never forcing them into ideological schemas: not one of them is first and foremost “good” or “innocent” or “depraved” but each woman is herself, with an authentic passion for existence and an openness to life that sometimes causes mistakes to be made, but that no male character possesses. These women have

true and profound behaviors, even if they are unexpected, so that they sometimes go against the judgment (the prejudice) that we had made about them. This is their strength and their greatness.²⁷⁸

La parmigiana proves that she is unwilling to compromise herself, her morals and standards, connected as they are to gender roles, for an easy life. By taking the road less travelled, whether or not it is the road of prostitution (again, this is debatable - while it is not confirmed by yet another Pietrangeli open ending, Angelica in Piatti's novel is a prostitute and certainly it is implied that Dora in the film has prostituted herself, especially after Nino's arrest), Dora is a modern, female character, questioning the modes patriarchy has instilled in the culture of her day. When she finds herself "between divine and earthly law" in the forms of Don Colombo and Michele, redeemed and newly sanctified by the promise of marriage, she escapes, rejecting the yoke of salvation that these laws offer her in the role of wife. Pietrangeli's film is not the typical movie about a whore; Dora is not "punished" nor is she "redeemed" according to Russell Campbell's analysis of the treatment of prostitutes in film.²⁷⁹ She simply moves on. For this reason, as well as the psychoanalytic structure of the film itself, Pietrangeli's *La parmigiana* stands out as a cinematic opus that critiques male roles in creating the female "types" that Dora continually must fight against becoming. In comparison, Dora's openness is an act of resistance to the men that would box her in, whether as a whore or a wife.

Dora's destiny is open-ended and Pietrangeli does not attempt to shut her up nor resolve the problem that she represents. Her modernity and exceptionality as a character should not be ignored since she overturns not only spectatorial expectation for female protagonists, but 'bad' female protagonists, prostitutes in particular. Rather than see her as the sexual object, Pietrangeli gives his audience a female subject whose sexuality is constantly in evolution. Still today as in

the Sixties, a female capitalizing on her sexuality, whether as a whore, a model, or an actress, all professions indirectly or directly addressed in this film, faces a double-edged sword. Our psychological investment in Dora's subjectivity, our questions about what it must be like to be so young, beautiful, witty, intelligent, and to feel so desired by the eyes watching her, is in conflict with our desire to see her as sexual object, to have her, touch her, consume her. This certainly explains the debate over the film's ending: even the screenwriters, the critics themselves cannot decide whether Dora's destiny is open or shut. What this chapter has sought to show is why, for Pietrangeli as for Freud, Dora's openness "can not naturally be a matter of indifference." Her openness is an act of rebellion tempered by the solitude, the bitterness, and the sadness that such a rebellion brings to those who carry it out. For the spectator, it is difficult to remain indifferent to Dora's smiling through her tears - perhaps now, we too understand why she must continue smiling.

Chapter Seven

Breaking Faith: *Il magnifico cornuto*, Envy, and the Crisis of Vision

Le doute me tue, ou je le tue! On ne peut avoir, sur la fidélité d'une femme, que des présomptions, mais on ne peut posséder la preuve absolue de son inconstance.²⁸⁰
- Fernand Crommelynck, *Le cocu magnifique: farce en trois actes*

ENVY, ANXIETY, GENDER

The Belgian playwright Fernand Crommelynck, whose play, *Le cocu magnifique* (1921), in English *The Magnanimous Cuckold*, was the source of inspiration for Pietrangeli's *Il magnifico cornuto* (1964), is upheld as belonging to the inter-World War school of drama known as the *teatro dell'inespresso*. Alongside members such as Pirandello and later, in film, Antonioni this school would come to characterize twentieth-century artistic production by representing the anxiety of communication, or rather man's inability to fully communicate with his fellow man. This *incommunicabilità*, incommunicability, functions as a fulcrum for psychological battles between characters as well as representational strategies by Crommelynck, the playwright, and later Pietrangeli as director. The plot of both the theatrical work and the film hinge on the doubt instilled by a couple's inability to communicate, which causes the husband unwittingly to create, like a sort of perverse Pygmalion, an adulterous wife out of one who was loving and faithful. In the play, *Le cocu magnifique*, Bruno, the husband, becomes convinced of his wife's, Stella's, infidelity, and despite her numerous protests, he demands visual proof; the problem is that since no proof can be had of her fidelity, only presumptions, he instead becomes obsessed with acquiring proof of her infidelity. In both the play and the film, the husband's paranoia creates a situation in which the wife is pushed into infidelity; after all, she might as well since he is convinced she is cheating anyways. The husband's jealous rages force the wife into the arms of

another, despite the fact that the jealousy was, at least initially, unfounded. In Pietrangeli's cinematic adaptation of the play, Bruno becomes Andrea Artusi (Ugo Tognazzi) and Stella becomes Maria Grazia (Claudia Cardinale), and the director takes Crommelynck's empirical preoccupation a step further - the whole film is the exposition of a male visual / auditory crisis resulting from jealousy, or perhaps, more correctly, envy, of his wife. This chapter will explore the gendered psychological ramifications of Crommelynck's and Pietrangeli's explorations of envy before delving into a formal analysis of the film itself, a film that neurotically references itself through its self-conscious display of its compositional visual and auditory regimes.

Let us begin this exploration of envy with a question: when or why does doubt become an obsession? Like Iago pouring poison into Othello's ears, what is the psychological mechanism that unhinges jealous mania? The answer to this question is not straight-forward but we will attempt to piece together a response here. One hypothesis, offered by Paul Bargetto, the director of a 2008 East River Commedia production of *Le cocu magnifique*, can be found in the "psychosis of the time," "when the world was just coming out of the greatest apocalypse [World War I] anyone had ever seen. There'd also been the worldwide flu pandemic of 1918. And, with the coming of women's suffrage to the United States, an extra current: terror of women."²⁸¹ Bruno's obsessional jealousy towards his wife is a result of his fear of her, a cultural phenomenon widespread with the movement towards equal rights for women and the potential of a degree of female emancipation. While Bargetto's socio-political explanation for male anxiety does shed some light on Bruno's jealous behavior, the psycho-sexual tensions in the play itself, which Pietrangeli translates onto the screen, offer yet another explanation - that Bruno, by indulging in his envious fantasies, confuses the traditional gender binary of male-subject and

female-object and, in fact, borders on the homoerotic. In other words, Bruno derives a masochistic sort of pleasure from imagining other men's sexual desire for his wife. Bargetto recognizes *Le cocu magnifique* as a "very carnal play, an overwhelming geyser of sexuality that violates the rules...[and is] incredibly homoerotic."²⁸² As Bruno pushes various men onto his wife, he becomes increasingly aligned with the impotence of the voyeur and his jealousy moves increasingly towards fantasy, something which the film takes to a whole new level as we shall see. Yet homoeroticism, and even more so, the sexual tension in the form of the taboo of adultery that serves as a boiler engine for the plot, is very much wed to the visual, scopic regime in the play and even more so, the film.

The importance of looking in the operating of jealousy cannot be ignored. With this film, Pietrangeli exposes how gender roles and the specific and gendered nature of looking provokes and even promotes the creation of jealousy, envy, and possessiveness. Bruno's / Andrea's disordered seeing, as both an obsessive looking at his wife as well as positioning himself as the voyeur to her potential sexual encounters, makes a farce of envy and of Bruno's / Andrea's obsession with finding proof of Stella / Maria Grazia's infidelity as it is Bruno himself who is creating the proof out of his own imagination. As this study hopes to show, Andrea, the filmic protagonist, indulges in his hysterical fantasies as a way of escaping into a realm that establishes his wife as a "bad" woman a sort of *femme fatale* whose sexual proclivity justifies Andrea's own infidelities. Yet in so doing, Andrea worsens his own envious condition by exposing himself to the double threat of fetishism and castration that this image of the feminine represents.

THE FARCE OF PROOF

“... the look, pleasurable in form, can be threatening in content, and it is woman as representation /image that crystallizes this paradox.”²⁸³

The socio-political concerns that formed the atmosphere of anxiety of Crommelynck's *Le cocu magnifique* seem not to have dissipated with the passing of forty years. Pietrangeli transforms Crommelynck's small Belgian village to contemporary Brescia and Bruno, a scribe, becomes Andrea Artusi, a businessman who runs a millinery. He makes hats - and from the outset of the film, his industry is portrayed as in crisis. Times they are a-changing and hats are no longer the signifier of masculinity that they once were. Unlike in his grandfather's time, when a hat was a social imperative, these days, “in Italy, no one wears hats anymore.” Not only a sign of his patrilinear economic success but also of his manhood, this “roof of a man” as Andrea himself calls it is threatened by new definitions of gender and morality. Traditional masculinity as represented by the hat is under siege and Andrea will find himself searching for another sign, another visual signifier, that can mirror his secure masculine status back to him. His search for proof of her infidelity comes to replace his doubt of her fidelity - he prefers empirical proof to the lingering state of psychological uncertainty. In the film, as Doane explains, the more Andrea looks, the less he finds since “the organization of vision... pivots around the representation of the woman - she is always aligned with the quality of to-be-looked-at-ness - it is also the case that in her attraction to the male subject she confounds the relation between the visible and the knowable.”²⁸⁴ His wife, Maria Grazia, reflects this contradiction between the visible and the knowable back to him, a contradiction to which he ultimately resigns himself. For this reason, the film provides an interesting example of gender(ed) construction despite critics almost universally acknowledged opinion that Maria Grazia's subjectivity is not as carefully explored as

Pietrangeli's other female protagonists. Andrea's crisis of vision in fact revolves around how he sees his wife-as-fetish object and the potential for castration that she comes to represent for him.

This crisis of vision is apparent from the beginning of the film in the form of the rock-n-roll soundtrack. Composed by Armando Trovajoli, the soundtrack throughout the film provides an important auditory element that accentuates and counterbalances the film's obsession with the visual. Not only does the track that accompanies the opening titles set the mood for the swinging Sixties Brescia that provides the setting for the film, but the lyrics to the song deal with, as often is the case with rock-n-roll, the fetishes where did you define this? of vision, fidelity, and lost love. The chorus, repeated over and over, is translated thus:

*The night that I left I didn't sleep, thinking of you./
I had an bad feeling, a great torment, thinking of you./
I felt like I wouldn't find you./
I feared (later, it becomes "understood") that I wouldn't see you./
Now that you have left me it is over for me.*

In five lines, this song manages to boil down the primary issues at work in Andrea's neurosis. He doesn't trust what he sees - that is, the fidelity of his wife - and what results is a loss of confidence in his vision accompanied by an over-investment in the importance of vision. In short, he doesn't trust what he sees but needs to know that what he sees is true. At the root of this insecurity, as the song states, is Andrea's fear, unfounded at the beginning of the film, of his wife's power of attraction, her potential to be seen as fetish object by other men, and, most importantly, her ability to wield this fetish power, overturning the active/passive binary of voyeurism.

Pietrangeli's choice of actress could not have been better. In the role of Maria Grazia, a name that underlines her traditional female virtues of purity, fidelity, and grace, Claudia

Cardinale portrays to perfection the potential for one woman to be seen as both a “good” and “bad” woman. Pietrangeli’s camera work self-consciously accentuates the work of looking, Maria Grazia’s and Claudia Cardinale’s fetish status working on a double register for the spectator: while Maria is the object of the diegetic, fetishizing look within the film, Cardinale is the object of the spectator’s gaze as he or she consumes the image. For instance, the spectator is introduced to Maria Grazia as she is hanging a lamp at the villa that she and Andrea are building. She is up on a ladder and all we can see are her legs. This parcelling up of her body, discussed by Laura Mulvey as a foremost mechanism in the functioning of scopophilia, allows the distanced, comfortable consumption of the image of Cardinale’s legs initially. Yet this comfortable consumption is qualified by the presence of our voyeuristic surrogate, Gabriele, Maria Grazia’s friend and interior designer who later becomes one of her potential lovers in Andrea’s betrayal fantasies. His looking upwards at the legs of Maria Grazia when Andrea arrives at the house, in the first scene where we see them interact as a couple, would seem to suggest the pride that he feels in her as he asks Gabriele “not so bad, are they, my wife’s legs?” Yet the discomfort of this love triangle is immediately off-set by Andrea’s declaration that “he trusts her completely” - even though he was speaking of about her aesthetic judgment in decorating the new house, the implication to the spectator is clear. Maria Grazia is a chaste, domestic goddess beyond reproof. Her conscience, like all of her clothing when she is represented as “good” woman, is pure white.

The issue of Maria Grazia’s appearance becomes a topic of discussion in the following scene. Before going out to a club meeting where Andrea is to give a speech about his profession, Maria Grazia asks him about a dress that she is wearing. It, like all of the other dresses that she wears outside of Andrea’s betrayal fantasies, is white, but low-cut, revealing her décolletage.

Rather than insisting on wearing this dress, she essentially asks Andrea for permission to reveal this swath of her bosom to his friends and business colleagues. To her inquiry, Andrea responds that “there’s no need to be selfish.” He does not feel the need to keep the male gaze off of Maria Grazia’s ample bosom. In fact, he is turned on by the idea of other men looking at his wife. Reflected in a mirror, Andrea embraces Maria Grazia and muses, “what a beautiful wife I have,” proceeding to kiss her. The mirror, the reflection as “second screen” in cinematic language, shows the spectator a partial image of the amorous couple as Andrea considers making love to his wife rather than going to his speaking engagement. The attractions of desire subsume his ego ideal - Andrea’s consumption of this ideal image of his wife, envisioned through the eyes of other men as well as *our eyes*, the eyes of the spectator, embodies the paradoxical situation of the screen image itself. Doane explains the dual function of the female image on-screen as both the object-to-be-desired within the narrative but also the keystone to creating desire within the spectator; the theorist writes that “the woman is revealed as no longer simply the privileged object of the gaze in the cinema but the support of the cinematic image.”²⁸⁵ Wrapped up in the glamorous image of his wife, Andrea seems to forget that, for the traditional male ego, this image is one to be guarded from the gaze of others. Moreover, with the mirror as proxy for the screen, Pietrangeli demonstrates an awareness of the triangular structure of the male, desiring gaze in cinema. In the post-war, post-industrial society of the mid-Sixties, it is Andrea’s idea of objectifying his wife that turns him on. Pietrangeli portrays Andrea’s libido as sparked by temporarily forgetting about himself as husband and lover and thinking about Maria Grazia’s image, fetish of the male gaze of other men.

The presence of the mirror is not a casual choice on Pietrangeli's behalf. While Pietrangeli's use of mirrors throughout his *oeuvre* is noteworthy (it will be examined specifically in the context of *Io la conosco bene* in the following chapter) it plays a specific role here; namely, the mirror functions to reflect Andrea's own infidelity back to him, an infidelity which he then projects onto his wife. Maraldi explains that, "the protagonist looks into mirrors in an increasingly insistent manner, almost as if to control his own identity as his doubt grows."²⁸⁶

Two points arise from this observation. The first point has to do with Andrea's hypocrisy. Unlike in Crommelynck's play, Pietrangeli's interpretation sees Andrea's crisis as resulting from his own infidelity. Moreover, Pietrangeli's portrays Andrea's infidelity almost as a "given" for the swinging atmosphere of Sixties Brescia. During Andrea's initiation into cheating on his wife, a rite of passage ministered by another woman, Cristina, a friend's wife who teaches him how not to be caught, Andrea in fact comes across as the passive partner, clumsily inept in the male art of *dongiovannismo*. During her education of Andrea, Cristina insists upon the importance of the visual, or rather, dissimulation, for a successful extramarital relationship. The spectator observes the couples, Andrea and Maria Grazia and Christina and her husband, leaving the club where Andrea gave his successful speech about the importance of hats²⁸⁷, and watches the couples as they decided to switch partners so that Cristina and Andrea find themselves in the car alone. She immediately begins to provoke him with innuendos about his car and how fast he drives before suggesting that Andrea let her husband and Maria Grazia pass them, since it is "better to see than to be seen." By controlling the visual regime of the affair, Cristina shows Andrea the importance of, but simultaneously, the "uncertainty and instability of vision."²⁸⁸ In this role as *femme fatale*,

not only does Cristina destabilize Andrea's faith in vision as empirical truth, but she also reduces his male identity to that of passive onlooker, of pupil, of apprentice rather than that of master.

When later in the same evening, Cristina and Andrea fix an appointment to see each other, Andrea learns how easy it is to manipulate the visual to avoid recognition. Cristina advises him that he must hide his license plate by parking his car backwards, request a room not on the first floor to avoid prying eyes, and above all, convey the number of the room to Cristina, who is in the hotel salon, on an anonymous piece of paper. He is learning the art of incognito, but when it comes down to the adulterous sexual interaction itself, he is unpracticed, awkward. When Cristina enters the room, Andrea is already undressed, supine, in bed, looking vulnerable and decidedly unmanly. It is Cristina who leans over him, seduces him, and initiates sexual contact. Afterwards, Andrea enters into his crisis despite Cristina's reassurance that her husband has no idea that she has lovers and that "men are suspicious only when we are innocent." In fact, Cristina even telephones her husband to tell him when to come pick her up "from the salon." She calls her husband *tesoro* — Andrea, when waking from a post-coital snooze, called Cristina "Maria Grazia" — and Cristina advises him to never call women by their proper names as the chances for confusion are too great. After this enlightening lesson in betrayal, Andrea spends his drive home trying to divest himself of the smell of Cristina's perfume, justify the love bite on his neck (luckily it looks like simple razor burn) and cover up his soiled conscience with a chinchilla stole that he buys from Mariotti, *Corna d'oro*, a notorious cuckold. When he gives the fur to Maria Grazia, she teases him by saying "are you hiding something with this stole?" The fetish object, the fur, procured to cover up Andrea's guilt instead becomes a visual representation of that guilt, a literal projection of Andrea's guilty conscience onto the shoulders of Maria Grazia.

When Andrea replies that he simply felt lucky to have such a “beautiful, young, faithful wife,” Maria Grazia replies by needling him, responding “how do you know that I’m faithful to you?” Andrea’s guilty conscience makes more of this comment than he should, an exaggeration compounded by the fact that, shortly afterwards, Maria Grazia calls him “tesoro,” the very word that signified betrayal in Cristina’s relationship with her husband.

Andrea’s hypocrisy - his obsession with his wife’s faithfulness when it is he, in fact, who is unfaithful, merits the observation in that the etymology of the word *hypocrite* comes from the Greek *ipocritos*, meaning “actor.” The only difference between a hypocrite and an actor according to Nietzsche is “falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation exploding as a power that pushes aside one’s so-called ‘character.’” It is in fact Andrea’s bad conscience that makes him, in this case, a hypocrite rather than an actor. Yet Nietzsche goes on to say that women are especially gifted in acting, that the power of dissimulation is above all a female trait. “Reflect on the whole history of women: do they not *have* to be first of all and above all else actresses?... That they ‘put on something’ even when they take off everything.”²⁸⁹ While this citation will acquire special relevance in the later examination of the Maria Grazia’s striptease, the most significant of Andrea’s betrayal fantasies, in general, the power of dissimulation threatens the gendered hierarchy of vision. Andrea’s need for dissimulation as moral imperative in order to maintain the balance of power within the gendered power structure of the couple results in his playing the role all too well: the role being that of authoritarian male figure. Since he has, by cheating on his wife, lost credibility in his role as faithful husband, he must show psychological investment in another role, that of suspicious and controlling tyrant obsessed with empirical proof, who calls and hangs up just to make sure his wife is at home, who controls the

mileage of her car, and who even goes so far as to have her followed by his clerk, Belisario (Salvo Randone). Once again, in this situation where control of the visual regime seems to be securely in male hands, the woman subverts the power dynamic and assumes visual control. When Belisario calls Andrea to say that he has followed Maria into a book store and that she hasn't come out yet, Maria Grazia simultaneously turns the key and enters into the scene on Andrea's end of the phone call. Clearly, she cannot be in two places at once, showing that Belisario's stalking of her has been fallible. But Pietrangeli takes the farce one step further when Maria Grazia remarks that she saw Belisario seven or eight times while she was out and that at a certain point, she started following him. She adopts the active role in the observation that was going on while Belisario, in losing visual control, becomes the object under surveillance. Maria Grazia's continually destabilizes Andrea's attempts for visual control in her actions and in her declarations about how to love someone. She declares that she trusts him "blindly" and "doesn't want to know anything" because "if you love someone, there is always a reason to be jealous." Andrea's hypocrisy, the projecting of his guilt onto Maria Grazia, causes him to over-compensate and attribute too much importance to the visual, which, as Maria Grazia herself states, is not what matters in love.

The second point regarding Andrea's identity and mirrors is that his identity, too, is bound up in the visual, in appearance, in how it is reflected back to him by others. Andrea confirms this in a conversation with Mariotti (Bernard Blier), *Corna d'oro*, a character who serves as a foil to Andrea since his wife is widely known in the Artusi's social circle to be unfaithful. After Andrea loses his temper at the housewarming party, soliciting suspicions about Maria Grazia's fidelity among their guests, Andrea passes by Mariotti's atelier to hear what people are saying. In this

scene, he is surrounded by a semi-circle of mirrors. Of the mirror stage of psychological development, Mulvey writes that the reflection of self “is the birth of a long love affair/despair between image and self-image which has found such intensity of expression in film and such joyous recognition in the cinema audience.”²⁹⁰ Andrea is an observing subject, a self-spectator, as he gazes at himself in the mirror. The gaze functions as both a diegetic (Andrea observing and considering his subjective state) and extra-diegetic (Tognazzi, the actor, observing himself in the role of Andrea, Tognazzi as surrogate for spectator) formal moment. This formal slippage of the signifier Andrea-Tognazzi further underlines the epistemological doubt of vision that runs throughout the film. Within the plot, not only does Andrea see himself reflected in Mariotti, but he is using Mariotti himself as a mirror, asking him about the gossip. “You need to be able to handle the gossip,” Mariotti tells him, confirming Andrea’s suspicions that people are indeed speaking ill of Maria Grazia, but, more importantly for Andrea, of Andrea himself. Mariotti continues — “the doubt is always there. But one can be sure about the infidelity of one’s wife.” From a position of epistemological incertitude, where no knowledge is capable of confirming his wife’s fidelity, Andrea finds himself obsessively attracted to the reassurance that empirical proof can offer him, even if it is the inexistent proof of his wife’s unfaithful behavior. In this way, he is better able to “fix” the image of himself in the mirror and be secure in his dominant male role of “bearer of knowledge.”

IN(VIDERE)

Psychoanalysts and theorists have long been aware of this connection between the look and feelings of envy. Feminists such as Doane and Irigaray have shown the privileged place that

the male look holds in the functioning of envy, while Freud and Lacan have constructed envy in confused gendered terms. Doane writes that “as Lacan himself points out, the Latin *invidia* — envy — is derived from *videre*, to see. What we witness here is the displacement of vision’s truth to the realm of theoretical vision.”²⁹¹ The woman, as absence in male psychoanalytic theory, is object of envy precisely because she cannot be visualized by said theory. “The psychoanalyst sees immediately that to see the woman is to envy her, to recognize that what she represents is desirable. The ‘seeing’ is often on the side of the theory which hopes to disengage itself from the visible, from the seeing/seen nexus.”²⁹² The precariousness of vision of that the female image represents the antithesis of his theoretical truth to the male viewer, and the fact that she is wholly outside of his concept of truth. This “desirable object” or in Lacanian terms, *petit objet a*, that the female image represents is within the male look, but outside male control. Envy then becomes a compensation-reaction in the male attempt to regain dominance over this source of pleasure; in Pietrangeli’s film this image takes the happy form of Claudia Cardinale so that we as spectators also take part in the looking that fuels Andrea’s (Tognazzi) jealousy.

Lacan offers another example in which he ignores the fundamental role of the female, or in this case, the maternal, image, and the male viewer / consumer. The example speaks of St. Augustine’s envy when he sees his brother at his mother’s breast, “looking at him *amare conspectu*, with a bitter look, which seems to tear him to pieces and has on himself the effect of a poison.”²⁹³ Here, rather than recognize the mother as the object of envy, Lacan instead focuses his analysis on the brother, the “image of completeness” since he has that “possession [the breast] which gives satisfaction.”²⁹⁴ Yet the fundamental object of Augustine’s jealousy is his mother, the desired object, whom Lacan excludes from his analysis of the scene completely, if

not simply reducing her to a *objet a*. In both Crommelynck's play and Pietrangeli's film, the triangular structure of the gaze — Bruno / Andrea observing another man looking at his wife — serves as a catalyst for jealousy. These husbands see their wives, Stella and Maria Grazia, as complicit in encouraging this renegade looking.

Freud deals with male and female jealousy on different terms. Hysteria, in Freudian psychoanalysis, is traditionally seen as a female illness, a sexual disfunction attached to anatomy, the uterus, and the poor functioning of this reproductive system. Yet as Mark C. Micale points out in a November 22, 2008 interview in the Chicago Tribune about his book *Hysterical Men: The Hidden History of Male Nervous Illness*, "Widespread medical recognition of rampant neurotic weakness in the male sex obviously would have undermined the image of a strong, mature, self-possessed species that in turn was entitled to master the rest of the world." Psychologists did not see the functioning of gender repression in males since males were the "first" sex. "As a result, the homogeneously male medical community leaned toward restricting their diagnoses of nervous disabilities almost exclusively to female patients."²⁹⁵ In short, men were reticent regarding the disorders in their own sex, preferring instead to locate this disorder in the female anatomy, the *hystera*, the womb. In "The Aetiology of Hysteria," Freud describes female patients particularly prone to hysteria "in whom a shrinking from sexuality ... is raised to a pathological pitch and is permanently retained; that they are, as it were, people who are psychically inadequate to meeting the demands of sexuality"²⁹⁶ but as the *Magnifico cornuto* demonstrates, shrinking from sexuality and representing sexuality for women are equally problematic. Moreover, there is no word, by Freud's on admission, on male hysteria; "This view, of course, leaves hysteria in men out of account."²⁹⁷ These works stand in opposition to the

gender binary traditional that Freudian psychology has diagnosed in the cases of both hysteria and jealousy.

Before moving on to the formal examination of the film itself, one last essay from Freud sheds light on Bruno's / Andrea's obsession with his wife's infidelity, "A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men." In this 1910 essay, Freud discusses two "neurotic" sexual choices that men make: they either assume the position of the lover, the "injured third party," or they fall in love repeatedly with women of "bad repute sexually."²⁹⁸ In the latter case, the functioning of jealousy is in fact what gives the woman her value since "the experiencing of *jealousy* ... appears to be a necessity for lovers of this type." "It is only when they are able to be jealous that their passion reaches its height and the woman acquires her full value."²⁹⁹ For a woman of ill repute to appear desirable to a man, it is necessary for the lover to feel jealousy, to be aware of other male lovers in her life. It is this threatening presence of other men, therefore, that in this case render the woman of ill repute desirable. In explaining the neurosis that would cause the man to make such a object choice (object here being synonymous with woman), Freud reminds the reader that "in normal love the woman's value is measured by her sexual integrity, and is reduced by any approach to the characteristic of being like a prostitute."³⁰⁰ Bruno and Andrea, therefore, along these lines of reasoning, are trying to devalue, degrade their wives by acquiring proof of their "loose habits." Beautiful, faithful, young wives, such as Stella and Maria Grazia, although they are perfectly aligned with the role of love object, in this role have suddenly, because of the visual power of their beauty, become a threat, an object to be "knocked off its pedestal." Only by bringing other men into the sexual life of the couple, once this mental devaluation has taken place, can these women provoke desire, according to Freud. The threat that these "unsullied"

women represent proves too much for their husbands, who seek refuge in neurotic fantasies that justify their fear of their wives' beauty, their visual prowess. Whether "good" woman or "bad" woman, there seems to be no way for women to escape being the object of male jealousy. With their protagonists, these husbands who essentially coerce their wives into cuckolding them, Crommelynck and Pietrangeli expose the "doomed power of the fetish," since Stella and Maria Grazia represent "the duplicity of the oedipal scenario itself and the specific contradiction of the female subject in it,"³⁰¹ whether as virginal fetish object to be "knocked off the pedestal" or sexual subject, a *femme fatale*, in her own right. Whether devoted wives or wives whose husbands seek to prostitute them, they are "damned if they do, damned if they don't." The follow sections will examine how Pietrangeli represents this contradiction in the visual and auditory regimes of his film.

THE MALE "HYSTERIA" OF BETRAYAL

Andrea's insecurity about his control over vision causes a retreat into fantasy. He imagines his wife's betrayal of him, in scenarios that become increasingly absurd and unlikely. Andrea's hysterical reaction to his own guilty feelings have the formal consequences of creating a sort of "film within a film," his fantasies becoming an alternative to the reality in which his wife is faithful to him, a world in which Maria Grazia is a "bad" woman, justifying his paranoid behavior. Of female hysteria, Irigaray writes in *Speculum* that it is perceived as "artifice, lie, false, trap: this is the social judgment that the picture, the scenes, the dramas, the pantomimes of hysteria deserve,"³⁰² but here Pietrangeli is exposing the fact that male subjectivity is as vulnerable to the farcical force of hysteria as female subjectivity, especially when threatened by

the destabilizing psychological force of envy. What is more, the film industry could be seen as encouraging this sort of male hysteria if hysteria is nothing other than, as Irigaray writes, “fake exhibitions,”³⁰³ wild fantasies played out on the screen.

On a commercial level, these “bad woman” fantasies offer the spectator with an opportunity for fetishistic gazing at Claudia Cardinale in the trappings of *femme fatale*. At first glance, this may seem to be no more than the scopophilia of traditional, Hollywood cinema, where “woman displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease... she holds the look, and plays to and signifies male desire.”³⁰⁴ In fact, previous studies on Pietrangeli have also tended to ignore the psychological implications of Andrea’s hysterical fantasy in envisioning his wife as “bad woman” — Natalie Fullwood explains that Pietrangeli’s films embody an ambiguity between objectifying and understanding women, but that Cardinale’s character Maria Grazia is entirely within the realm of the sex object. “Claudia Cardinale’s character in *Il magnifico cornuto* (1964), for example ... is given no interiority, is completely subordinated to Tognazzi’s character and is filmed performing a five minute-long strip-tease to a room full of men.”³⁰⁵ While we will return to this strip-tease shortly, it is true that Maria Grazia’s “interiority” may not be explored to the extent of Pietrangeli’s other female characters; however, she is still portrayed as a psychological foil to Andrea, both threatening his masculinity and reacting to his irrational jealousy. Maria Grazia is certainly not a simple shell of a woman, nor is she simply an object-to-be-looked-at. While it is true that Pietrangeli chooses to study Andrea’s interiority, the husband’s envious betrayal fantasies offer another opportunity for exploring the male condition of fear that results from the threat of the feminine. What is unique in Pietrangeli’s film is the ironic narrative twist in which Andrea creates his own wife’s infidelity.

Andrea's "not wishing to be" cuckolded, his denial of this lack, this castration threat that his wife's infidelity represents is projected onto, made spectacle of, through his fantasies about Maria Grazia's betrayal of him. When Andrea objectifies Maria Grazia in his fantasies by creating a mental image of her infidelity, the visual regime of the film is redoubled by Pietrangeli's camera and the director's ability to see, to project into Andrea's imagination. Pietrangeli too objectifies Claudia Cardinale but in so doing reveals the objectifying mechanism of male looking and classical cinema's narratological dependence on this sort of looking for soliciting spectatorial interest. As Luca Barattoni writes,

the female body presided over the triumph of Italy's national cinema through 'pre-existing' divas anointed by Neorealism like Anna Magnani and Silvana Mangano or new actresses - such as Claudia Cardinale... whose versatile dynamism could easily harmonize with the new lifestyles generated by new freedoms.³⁰⁶

Pietrangeli shows Claudia Cardinale as embodying these "new lifestyles" and "new freedoms" of the Postwar, but the director is also attuned to how these new freedoms affect Maria Grazia's marriage and her husband, namely, that they become a point of insecurity for Andrea. Taking Barattoni's observation a step further, Pietrangeli also demonstrates that we spectators, in this case, are fascinated by Claudia Cardinale when she plays the role of the bad woman precisely because of our awareness of the fact that she is "playing"; in other words, in *Il magnifico cornuto*, she is the "good" wife pretending to be a "bad" woman. For this, our fascination with her ability to play both roles further destabilizes our, and Andrea's, image of her. Moreover, Pietrangeli admits his own dependence, as a director, on his need to manipulate the spectator's perception of the female body as "good" or "bad" image. He does so through Andrea's own imagination, through the husband's fantasies of betrayal.

There are several instances where Andrea fantasizes about his wife cuckolding him. The first occurs when he returns home from an encounter with Cristina and finds a brochure for the Hotel Impero, the same hotel where his first tryst with Cristina took place. This illicit space also represents for Andrea the crisis of vision that had its origin there, a crisis that has now entered into his domestic space which he had considered inviolable. Considering the implications of this intrusion, Andrea looks into a mirror (mirrors are always important for moments of self-reflection, moments of reckoning in Pietrangeli's cinema) and in this surrogate lens, the first of many reflections / projections takes place. He sees Maria Grazia, clothed provocatively in black, as she enters the Hotel Impero. In his fantasy, this is clearly not her first time at the hotel and she seems to be quite at ease, aware of what she is doing, unlike Andrea, whose first stay at the hotel was marked by his awkwardness and passivity. Maria Grazia, on the other hand, is dynamic, heading to the beauty parlor where she will be primed, will change into a short dressing gown, and will be whisked off to her lover's room among outstretched female hands awaiting slips of paper with their lovers' room numbers. Not only is Andrea fetishizing his own wife, imagining not only her, but the male staff surrounding her as they stare longingly at her scantily-clad form, but he is projecting her into a scenario known to him, but presumable foreign to her.

As we spectators have already seen Maria Grazia refuse the advances of her friend Gabriele, an episode that she recounts in full to Andrea, the logical choice for her lover would be Gabriele. But in his second fantasy, which picks up where the first left off, with Maria entering the hotel room of her lover, Andrea visualizes his rival as someone more intimidating, someone with psychological sway over him - the alderman (Gian Maria Volonté) who in an early scene reiterated his position against giving Andrea the necessary permit to build a wall around Andrea

and Maria Grazia's new villa. Andrea's paranoia is worsened by a later narrative sequence, when he has already begun to indulge his suspicions, in which Maria Grazia appears at home after a long absence, permit in hand, and remarks that "beautiful women manage to obtain what they want." This situation sees both the alderman and Maria Grazia representing a castration threat to Andrea, who is relegated to the position of voyeur / creator of this fantasy of his male lack.

Andrea's response confirms his change in perspective - rather than earlier in the film, when he was happy to share his wife's physical appearance with his business associates, he answers back that this ability to "get what they want" is the reason why "the husbands of beautiful women get angry." By projecting his guilt onto his wife, he has created a situation in which his anger is justified. In fact, the fantasy soundtrack picks up as his wife's ability to acquire what was denied him creates the catalyst for this second betrayal fantasy between the alderman and Maria Grazia.

In his third and most infamous betrayal fantasy which takes place at the housewarming party for his and Stella's new villa, his domestic sphere has been completely contaminated by his envious fantasy. This fantasy is introduced by Andrea's obsession for control of the gaze of his male party guests as well as Maria Grazia's appearance. As he observes Maria Grazia among their guests, he insists to himself in voice-over "she could at least cover her legs," this part of her anatomy which he had been so eager to admire in front of Gabriele at the beginning of the film. Andrea then angrily tells a male guest that is staring at her legs that he'd be happy to "bring him a pair of binoculars." His paranoia over controlling the visual regime of his guests, his lack as inability to do so, is transformed into an imagined striptease, brought on by his own observation to the guest staring at Stella's legs that in Paris, all the women are nude, "while we lose our minds for a little piece of thigh." The erotic-envious fantasy in which his wife performs a

striptease in front of his male guests plays on the fear of women that is the origin of Andrea's anxiety.

Barthes' analysis of the striptease from *Mythologies* illuminates Andrea's psychological mechanism as well as refutes the idea that the striptease serves only to eroticize and objectify the female body. Rather, Barthes writes that "one could therefore say that we are dealing with, in a certain sense, a spectacle of fear, or better "scare me," as if the eroticism was arrested in a sort of delicious terror in which it is enough to announce the ritual signs in order to provoke the idea of sex and with it, its exorcism."³⁰⁷ The cohabitation of fear and eroticism during the striptease is palpable in the case of Andrea's fantasy, to which the exaggerated length, the high saturation of black and white, the windy, tempestuous atmosphere, and the mode of audience participation all testify. The issue of dissimulation is also at stake, recalling Nietzsche's claim that women "put something on even when they take off everything." In giving herself up to consumption, the eroticized image of Maria Grazia arrives at the very core of Andrea's anxiety and is in many ways the visual representation of the mechanism of jealous behavior itself. The striptease, which Andrea imagines taking place in his own home, is both a symptom of and a remedy to his fear of betrayal. Let us examine how Pietrangeli's formal choices make this striptease simultaneously erotic and threatening.

The ambiguity of sexuality is represented in the precariousness of the traditional gender roles within the striptease sequence. For instance, while it is Andrea who, in controlling the narrative of the film, fantasizes about his wife stripping in front of his friends, it is Maria Grazia who leads his friends upstairs on a tour of the house. "Don't think badly," his friends joke as they head upstairs, a straggler even running after the group. Maria Grazia warns them that "much is

still missing,” and “for example, in the bedroom, there’s practically only the bed,” to which the one of the group replies “well, that’s the essential part, right?” The music signaling entry into Andrea’s psychosis returns as the camera zooms in slowly on his face, and, accompanied by gusting wind, Andrea imagines his wife dressed in black, perched on a pillared bed, dressed in a bra top with numbered pieces of fabric, numbered veils, a lottery of desire hanging from it. What is interesting is that the sequence begins with a slow pan of the room, of the male faces in deep *chiaroscuro*, blinding whites and highly saturated blacks, from the perspective of Maria Grazia. At least for an instant, Andrea imagines the scene from his wife’s perspective. The pan returns to film her head-on and the striptease, complete with the trappings of feather boa, begins. The fetish-play involved in this striptease involves the men selecting a number from a tumbler, like bingo, and pulling the corresponding piece of fabric towards them in a game of tactile attraction that renders them participants in removing Maria Grazia’s clothes. They are, however, voyeurs who participate only partially in the denuding of their hostess. Yet these numerous veils engage the spectator, both the diegetic and extra-diegetic spectator, in a palpable tension between the visible and the hidden. The form of Maria Grazia’s striptease, and the numerous (literally - they are numbered) veils present therein, can be explained by the following observation from Doane: “the veil functions to visualize (and hence stabilize) the instability, the precariousness of sexuality.”³⁰⁸ The longer the striptease, the more numerous the veils, the higher the sexual stakes become, according to this theory. Pietrangeli also signals the scene’s precariousness with other formal choices, such as the deep *chiaroscuro* of his black and white photography, the instability of the atmospheric conditions with the gusts of wind, flashes of lightning, the blowing leaves, and the “chance” element of the numbers game itself.

Andrea imagines Maria Grazia hiding and revealing, wrapped in fetish objects, signifiers of exoticism such as the feather boa and the numerous veils. As a performance, Claudia Cardinale winds herself around the bedposts, assumes provocative positions, animalesque poses, all of which present themselves in stark contrast to the passive male spectators, whose only actions involve their participation in her game. The jazz accompaniment, soundtrack to her striptease, heightens the sense of seduction and danger with strong contrasts in the rhythmical guitar and the loud brass of the trumpets. The more she disrobes, the more intolerable and eroticized the fantasy becomes. As she approaches nakedness, the threat her sexual potentiality represents quite literally shines through - the whiteness of her nude body setting her apart, making her “unreal, smooth, closed like a beautiful, fleeting object, abstract in its extravagance from the human norm.”³⁰⁹ She is hiding something still, and it is her sex - in fact, while she removes her bra top only at the end of the striptease, the main object veiled from the male gaze would in this case be her pubic area. There is no final reveal. Maria Grazia retreats onto the bed, supine, crawling backwards smiling provocatively and holding up disc number thirteen, presumably that which would enable the spectators to disrobe her completely. The spectators move towards her and envelop her and this is where Andrea’s fantasy ends.

Could Andrea’s fear, the anxiety that fuels his betrayal fantasies, be summarized in the image of Stella’s revealing her pudendum, her sex, to his male acquaintances? Her sexual organs represent the thing that was the most exclusively Andrea’s of all of his exclusive possessions, for his viewing pleasure only. Certainly in Crommelynck’s original theatrical version, Bruno, despite encouraging Stella to sleep with half of the town’s male population, continues to seek visual proof of her betrayal as he harbors the belief that she is “faking” it. Bruno’s visual preoccupation

with his wife's betrayal mirrors the male inability to register, to know with certainty, the level of female pleasure in the act of coupling; in short, woman's ability to "fake" an orgasm. While male orgasms provide visual proof of pleasure, there is no such correspondent in the female. The vulva, the female pubic area, becomes a site of visual anxiety and a castration threat, a logos of dissimulation. Maria Grazia's pubis, lurking behind the veils that are slowly stripped from her, poses numerous risks to Andrea's concept of masculinity and hence his concept of self. His most prized possession risks becoming the object of the gaze of other men. The smile on Maria Grazia's face as she offers her up to be seen, contains the cruel knowledge of the futility of Andrea's preoccupation with the visual, with empirical proof of emotional betrayal and the loss of her love for her husband. With this striptease, Pietrangeli creates a spectacle of male castration by creating an image of a beautiful woman as threat, a good wife as bad woman, and the veils signify the slippage between the two categorical types.

The veils and the striptease are not the only clues to the purpose of this elaborate filmic sequence that Pietrangeli leaves for the spectator. The expression on Claudia Cardinale's face throughout this sequence embodies the ambiguity of Maria Grazia's veiled region as the two unify and challenge categorical oppositions, showing the absurdity, the farcical nature of vision as certainty. Her derisive, provocative smile acts as surrogate to what we cannot, but would like, to see. This smile recalls a Nietzschean discussion of women and veils, entitled *Vita femina*, in which he discusses the veiled nature of truth and knowledge. Life is veiled, like a woman, "covered by a veil interwoven with gold, a veil of beautiful possibilities, sparkling with promise, resistance, bashfulness, mockery, pity, and seduction. Yes, life is a woman,"³¹⁰ Nietzsche confirms. In Andrea's case, the origin of his envy remains veiled, unknown to him, as he is

distracted by, or rather, as he distracts himself with, his fantasy of his wife's fetishistic dance. Andrea ignores the fact that this fantasy, like Maria Grazia's imagined betrayal, are his own creations rather than objective fact, preferring instead to indulge his own vision of truth rather than see clearly. The image of woman, of Maria Grazia, hence becomes an image of Andrea's own destabilization of vision as empirical knowledge.

The source of Andrea's destabilized vision of his wife can be located in his own betrayal and Pietrangeli is careful to show that until her husband began philandering, there was no doubt about Maria Grazia's fidelity to him. Andrea's anxiety to shield his exclusive possession, his wife's "private parts," reflects vision's potential to undermine his Kantian idea of marriage as the couple's exclusive and mutual possession and use of each other's sexual organs for reproduction and pleasure, a pact which Andrea himself has undermined. As Kant writes in *Metaphysics of Morals*, with the sexual organs come the rest of the person and "acquiring a member of a human being [i.e., access to or possession of the other's genitals and associated sexual capacities] is at the same time acquiring the whole person, since a person is an absolute unity."³¹¹ Andrea's preoccupation with Maria Grazia's genitals and what she is doing with them can be read as a consequence of his rupturing of the mutually-objectifying bond of marriage, reduces his capacity for seeing her as a whole person, reducing her instead to bearer of sexual organs, sexual organs that bear the potential for both fetishistic pleasure and castrating threat. He does not recognize what this sequence means *beyond the veil* even though he is clearly terrified by the significance of this striptease, what it means about him and his ability to see, rather than what it means about her. He does not see the truth that haunts him and, moreover, he cannot even imagine it. His horror, the horror he projects onto her, is that it was *he* who created the destabilization of their

union and sowed the seed of doubt by undermining the authority of vision as truth. Moreover, in creating the doubt, he, like a perverse Pygmalion, creates a situation in which his wife is almost compelled to cheat. As we shall see, she does.

VISION AND KNOWLEDGE

Andrea still maintains that he can recuperate the potency of his vision, and when the couple begins to argue about Maria Grazia's fidelity, Andrea shows himself more than ever invested in the visual-empirical regime. When Maria finally lies to him, saying that she has been unfaithful, his choice of words show that he feels, at least temporarily, that the power dynamic of watcher-observer and the observed has been re-stabilized. "A blind man, when he reacquires his sight, is content no matter what he sees." This theme of playing with the visual regime in the film, I remind the reader, has been present from Pietrangeli's film debut, *Il sole negli occhi*, or *Empty Eyes* in English. Here, however, what Andrea "sees" is a fiction his wife has created to satisfy his paranoid delusions. Despite this attempt to bolster his own confidence by convincing himself that he can indeed "see clearly," the doubt remains and Andrea continues to push, to provoke, to act irrationally towards, Maria Grazia. The only real assurance he can have, the only final proof his obsession with the visual, is death. His behavior takes a deadly turn as he begins to drive too fast, lie to his wife about taking a trip in order to spy on her, and ultimately, he injures himself by crashing his car into the wall around their house while chasing Maria Grazia. His final fantasy, in which he imagines taking revenge on his wife, occurs during his convalescence following the car crash. He imagines three scenarios - tucking his wife and Gabriele into bed, then having them arrested, arriving in their bedroom with two women on his

arms, and finally, shooting them dead. The final scenario is shown in its full violent force, with Andrea lingering over the bodies of his victims. This daydream is broken by a phone call, which he intercepts (as he has been doing throughout the film) and which provides him with the empirical proof he has been seeking all along. He hears Maria Grazia explain to Gabriele that she was forced to lie to Andrea, saying that she had slept with him, Gabriele, who reacts surprisedly and remarks that “I never laid a finger on you.”

Satisfied but ashamed, Andrea gets the proof he so longed to have, and although it was auditory, not visual, Andrea admits to the brutality of his behavior, admitting to his colleague Belisario that he forced a confession from Maria Grazia “like someone getting beat up by the cops.” While Andrea’s anxiety and envy has been quelled, Maria Grazia, however, has lost faith in him. She has begun an affair with Andrea’s doctor, who listens to her problems as she confesses to him that “you can’t love someone whom you don’t know, whom you don’t admire.” Maria Grazia’s loss of love is wrapped up in her inability to recognize her husband and the couple’s inability to communicate, the incommunicability of anxiety and fear as human condition. Andrea has created his wife’s infidelity by becoming another man, a man obsessed with his wife’s beauty and the affect it has on men, rather than the loving, doting husband he was at the beginning of the film. This seems to be a primary source of Maria’s discontent as she confesses to Gabriele in their earlier conversation that “its been twenty days since we’ve talked,” a icy domestic atmosphere that Pietrangeli reproduces in several scenes where the two spouses are side by side but silent, worlds apart. The need for dialogue can be seen as potential remedy to Andrea’s objectifying behavior by treating his wife as a speaking subject, a subject to be spoken

to. But it is too late as Pietrangeli shows that Andrea has carried his possessive, objectifying behavior beyond the point of no return. The damage to the relationship has been done.

Ultimately, when Andrea calls from his office to apologize, Maria Grazia undermines the auditory regime that gave so much empirical hope to her husband in the form of proof of her fidelity. While he apologizes, she says, as the doctor lies in her lap, that “yes, she cheated on him.” The farce of proof is complete as Andrea no longer believes the truth nor has the ability nor the desire to distinguish the truth from lies, honesty from betrayal. With both visual and auditory regimes proven to be unstable, the film ends with Andrea confirming that “trust is everything in marriage” while sitting at a table with Mariotti, *Corna d’oro*, while his wife dances with another man, whom she tells she will see on Sunday. Andrea’s guilty conscience, originating in his infidelity, has resulted in his projecting all too well his behavior onto his wife. And as in many films of this period, including Pietro Germi’s *Divorzio all’italiana* (1961)³¹², “*vissero felici e cornuti*,” “they all lived happily ever after with their horns.”

Crommelynck’s play ends with Stella leaving Bruno for another man, of whom she asks “please let me be faithful to you.” In this sense, Stella is recuperated for the spectator and can be considered a “good” woman besides becoming the sexual pariah of the village. She comfortably becomes the exclusive love object as male possession. But Maria Grazia, in her transformation from white-clad “good” woman to black-clad “bad” woman, is a more ambiguous case. From a desirable object, she is transformed into a desiring, sexual subject by her husband’s fear and jealousy, making appointments for extramarital affairs and dancing with other men. In projecting his guilt onto Maria Grazia, Andrea has been all too efficacious. Yet Maria Grazia’s transformation, if we can call it that, from good to bad woman, demonstrates the blind alley of

female sexual identity, the fact that women, when it comes to their appearance, are caught between a rock and a hard place; women are culturally compelled to be attractive to their husbands and to men in general, but being seen as attractive is also a burden that carries the risk of soliciting male (and female) envy and even rage. While cinematically, Pietrangeli is able to capitalize on Claudia Cardinale's sexual power to capture the gaze of the spectator, the director simultaneously shows how problematic beauty and the powers of attraction can be for an "average" woman, the wife within the film's narrative. Maria Grazia's sexual liberation from her husband thus carries the risk of society labeling her as a dangerous, castrating woman, while her prior faithfulness saw her as a fetish object because of her all-too-perfect interpretation of that role of beautiful, young wife. Castration and fetishism: for this reason, Doane writes that "the male theorist's relation to woman, in general, seems to oscillate between fear and envy of the feminine."³¹³ By using Andrea as a proxy for an almost parable-like study into male envy, Pietrangeli's film demonstrates cinema's reliance on the oscillation between good and bad of the female image as well as society's need to establish, through empirical means, whether a woman is trustworthy. This second, empirical preoccupation with a woman's trustworthiness is an especially salient point in times of socio-sexual upheaval like the Twenties and the Sixties, when women were experiencing new freedoms and soliciting new fears. The crisis of communication that Crommelynck's play sought to convey to spectators becomes a cinematic crisis of empirical knowledge as vision, of vision of epistemological certitude, that the film does not recuperate but underscores instead. Pietrangeli will continue to question the epistemology of vision in his next film, *Io la conoscevo bene*. With *Il magnifico cornuto*, the "magnanimous" cuckold, what is unsettling to the male protagonist of these works, the *cocu* himself, is the potential of good and

bad woman to reside in the *same* woman, for a woman to be both a fetish object and a castration threat despite appearing as either one or the other. Pietrangeli's *Andrea* takes Crommelynck's *Bruno* a step further in the psychological exploration of envy through Andrea's projection of his guilt onto and his possessivity towards Maria Grazia, all played out in a crisis of the visual, and on a second register, the auditory, that only cinema can adequately and ambiguously represent in its devastating and provocative fullness.

Chapter Eight

Io la conoscevo bene... Or did I? Antonio Pietrangeli, the Author, and the Actress



Figure 1. Pietrangeli and Stefania Sandrelli on the set of *Io la conosco bene*
By kind permission of Reporters Associati.

Classical criticism has never paid any attention to the reader; for it, the writer was the only person in literature. We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant, antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favour of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing a future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.³¹⁴

- Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1968.

THE DEATH OF THE CINEMATIC AUTEUR

This last chapter of my study will investigate Pietrangeli's portrayal of an "Economic Miracle" era actress, Adriana Astorelli (Stefania Sandrelli) in the final full-length film he would complete as director, *Io la conosco bene* (1965). As part of his on-going investigation into the psychology of his female protagonists, with this film, Pietrangeli turns the camera back on itself to show how the male-dominated fields of cinema, television, advertising, and modeling are

based upon the fetishizing and hence the deconstruction of the female subject. To show how this deconstruction of the female subject in turn objectifies and commodifies her, Pietrangeli takes great pains to demonstrate how cinema has a hand in this process, making his film a sort of meta-reification of Adriana, a commentary on the functioning of the male gaze and its effects on the object-to-be-looked-at.

To briefly summarize the plot, this episodic film shows Adriana as she navigates the sleazy and ruthless world of show business, piecing together a career as a model / actress / hostess. Her upward career ambitions are consistently threatened by the potential of being seen as a prostitute, a position to which the numerous male journalists, businessmen, and acquaintances try to submit her. Despite this, Adriana soldiers on, until one morning, after a long night out, after we the spectators have witnessed time and again the professional and personal disillusionments and humiliations she has suffered, she decides to take her own life. Adriana's self-destruction recalls that of Flaubert's protagonist Emma Bovary, whose suicide is inspired by romance novels; here Pietrangeli is unfolding a type of self-exposé of authorial guilt before the spectator's eyes. His film asks the uncomfortable question, what do we, the males in the film industry — directors, journalists, critics — have to do with creating this idea of femininity? Moreover, I will discuss the theoretical implications of this line of inquiry. I will tie Pietrangeli's portrayal of authorship to feminist theory dealing with male authorship, basing my analysis here primarily on the works of Mulvey, De Lauretis, Doane, and Silverman. I will also refer to Barthes' 1967 essay "The Death of the Author."³¹⁵ Because Pietrangeli undermines the idea of male authorship as authority, engages the spectator on an interpretive level, and problematizes representations of female subjectivity, I believe that his film is an outstanding example of a male

director grappling with the psychological and cultural dilemmas of the female subject-as-object as well as the filmic production of gendered roles and gendered images.

In a sort of *8 1/2 al femminile*, Pietrangeli, as the above photo demonstrates, inculpates himself while simultaneously focusing the plot on Adriana as protagonist. The film is a delicate tapestry of representation which undermines the epistemological certitude that the act of representation represents. Pietrangeli upsets the binomial author-authority and as a consequence the authors, the journalists, the directors within the film are transformed from bearers of knowledge into figures of epistemological doubt and incertitude. By distinguishing himself from his protagonist rather than using her as a proxy for himself, Pietrangeli as director asks the uncomfortable question, what do the men in the film industry — directors, journalists, critics — have to do with creating this idea of femininity? The film also proposes the more pressing question of how these male-dominated institutions, whether economic, legal, or social, affect women's self-perception? The changes in female subjectivity — what Pietrangeli calls a “radical and profound interior revolution”³¹⁶ that his protagonists, in this case Adriana Astarelli, are undergoing not only anticipate the evolution of Italian society, but the evolution of film criticism and theory as well. Pietrangeli, I will argue, includes himself among those who, despite their claims, “did not know her well,” so that Adriana is ultimately not simply an object of Pietrangeli's study but a subject whose depths he remains unable to portray.



Figure 2. Articles from the Pietrangeli Archives:
 Gendered Images, Mascots, and Star-Suicide in 1960
 By kind permission of the Archivio Antonio Pietrangeli, Centro Cinema Città di Cesena.

AN ABSURD REASONING

Many of the articles, reviews, and magazines found in Pietrangeli's archive in Cesena reveal the source of the director's discontent that inspired the film. *Io la conoscevo bene*, by the director's own admission, was inspired by the cinematographic atmosphere in Rome at the beginning of the Sixties. He states in the *Bianco e nero* interview with Fausto Montesanti that,

in the spring of 1961, I became close with dozens of girls who were involved in the world of show business, the underworld of the 'pin-up,' the 'cover girl,' the struggling actresses, *generiche*, *genericchette*, models, and the like. And I conducted a real and true sociological investigation, with lot of tables and parallel studies. It was startling to see how the paradigm of such different existences was always the same ... And from that study, with this overwhelming evidence of the truth, Adriana Astorelli was born.³¹⁷

Not only does Pietrangeli's film, then, directly reflect his experience in the "sottobosco," the underworld, of cinema, but he later in this same interview expresses his disgust with those in this

underworld who take advantage of these vulnerable women. When asked why he included such a damning indictment of the *cinegiornali*, he responds

The *cinegiornali*, the tabloids, with their vulgar plays on words and their editing tricks are one of those ignoble inventions that for years now alienate our audiences. I did not invent them myself. They are part of the daily experience of any moviegoer. Between the daily tricks and defeats that my protagonist stumbles across, I didn't see how it would be possible not to include this, yet another example of cynicism and cruelty of a particular social scene.³¹⁸

Pietrangeli continues to lambast this tabloid culture, even remarking how many of the episodes in the film are based on real, documented fact. The misogynistic / sadistic discourse of journalists, and by extension, writers and filmmakers, found in articles such as “Suicidi o quasi” (“Almost suicides”) speaks to the atmosphere to which Pietrangeli's film is responding. The article, an ironic commentary by N. Capr. (his signature) on the practice of young starlets who feign suicide attempts for the publicity, contains statements such as “in my time, when a damsel wanted to commit suicide, she used a system that was rational, and technically brought about a secure result ... Today no. Today one plays for sympathy or publicity with the silly comedy of wrists slit with a Gillette razor and cured with a simple Band-Aid.”³¹⁹ He then remarks that once upon a time, only great divas committed suicide, that taking one's life was a gesture with some artistic cache. Not any more. “A diva and a generic extra. Alas! In the face of this dangerous hypnotic drug [i.e. fame], stars and extras are equal. A stomach pump evens out artistic roles.”

Cynicism aside, suicide remains a profound philosophical enigma for many modern artists, writers, and theorists, as well as musicians, actors, and actresses, from Goethe to Camus, from Luigi Tenco to Mario Monicelli and most recently, Carlo Lizzani.³²⁰ Camus wrote in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, that, “dying voluntarily implies that you have recognized, even instinctively,

the ridiculous character of that habit, the absence of any profound reason for living, the insane character of that daily agitation, the uselessness of suffering.”³²¹ This (re)cognition of self, this moment of reckoning, of devastating self-awareness, is precisely what Pietrangeli bestows on his protagonist-actress, Adriana, at the end of the film, and the issues of cognition, of knowledge, of epistemology, are present from the words in the opening titles. The failure of the author is written into the title. By ending his film with his subject’s suicide, a suicide-as-rebellion against the “authorial” authority of others over her, Pietrangeli creates a break in the unity of the performance of self carried out by Adriana and written / filmed by Pietrangeli himself. The director hints at this mechanism of mis-recognition — that is, of the tendency to misread Adriana — when he states in the interview with *Bianco e nero* that

Despite appearances, Adriana was not alone—like all those who claim to have ‘known her so well’ believed her to be ... In other words, the negative experiences cut at her, left their mark inside of her. Had I been pitiless and had I wanted to end her ‘casual’ and pointless life pessimistically, I would have calmly let her continue in her absurd and endless whirlwind. In that case, yes, everything would have truly slid off her back without leaving their mark ... it would have been enough ... for her to run her comb through her hair, so that she could, , wiggling her hips and smiling, every time pick up her monotonous journey where she left off, that iteration of gestures, of attitudes, of situations that were always the same, with ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’ not meaning anything. This is why I must repeat that for me, Adriana’s suicide is the ‘optimistic’ part of my story.³²²

As we shall see, this citation from Pietrangeli contradicts the depiction of Adriana by the writers in the film itself, and later, by journalist Ugo Casiraghi in a review of the film. By problematizing this representational relationship, by making Adriana different than she appears to be, Pietrangeli creates a gap in significance in which he involves the writer, the reader, and the spectator. Carrying this tendency to its logical conclusion, Adriana’s death ushers in the “death” (Barthes) of Pietrangeli as author-as-authority over this female subjectivity, making *Io la*

conoscevo bene not only a modern representation of author and subject but a writerly film text which, to use Barthes' own language, "births" the reader/spectator.

EMBODYING THE (MALE) GAZE

I'd like to examine three modes of representation within *Io la conoscevo bene*, three formal techniques that Pietrangeli uses to manipulate our vision of Adriana: the male author as voyeur, the depiction of spectacle and crowds, and the motif of acting. These three modes of representation have meta-linguistic and meta-cinematic implications that render passive spectatorship difficult. These motifs are not unique to *Io la conoscevo bene*; already with *La parmigiana*, we have seen Pietrangeli use the dance hall as an effective metaphor for social theater spectacle, and hence cinema itself. The director's obsessive use of mirrors also serves as evidence of this fixation with apparatus, with showing the process of acting, of cinema taking place as it doubles back on itself. In this film in particular, the male voice is not invisible and anonymous; instead, Pietrangeli lets the absences speak, emphasizing the male gaze in his camera technique and hence the spectator's own role in objectifying the young actress. In other words, he bares the authorial device, announces the enunciative apparatus.³²³



*Figure 3. The Author as Voyeur: Portraying the Male Gaze
By kind permission of Titanus Films S.p.A.*

From voyeuristic detachment in long shots and pans to the reduction of distance in close ups, Pietrangeli's camera excels in producing in the spectator a sense of intrusion and violation. Let us take for instance the opening titles. The title sequence locates Adriana on the beaches of Ostia, where a circular pan of the landscape finishes with a slow pan up her body from her feet to her head, almost a kino-caress, followed by a reverse zoom which reveals her whole body. This lingering on the various parts of the actress as well as providing a full body shot of her underlines from the beginning of the film Adriana's "to-be-looked-at-ness," as she lies naked in her fetishistic and scopophilic glory.³²⁴ Consequently, as if to give us what we think we want, in the very next scene, Pietrangeli shows Adriana as she is groped by her married boss at her job in a beauty salon. This scene serves to collapse the distance between the spectator and fetish-object by showing us the lurid potential consequences of our desire for Adriana, what would happen if the kino-caress were embodied. Yet let us return to the titles for a minute.



Figure 4. Opening Titles: *Adriana on the Beaches of Ostia*
By kind permission of Titanus Films S.p.A.

The authorial signature reigns over her, dominating her body. Pietrangeli presents us with an authorial psychological landscape of desire which is dependent on aligning the female with the body and passivity and the male with creation and authority. As Kaja Silverman explains in her discussion of female bodies and male voices in cinema,

the male subject is protected from unpleasurable self-knowledge through a fictional redrawing of diegetic boundaries, a redrawing which situates him in a position of apparent proximity to the cinematic apparatus, while firmly reiterating the isolation of the female voice from all productivity. This opposition expresses itself through the close identification of the female voice with spectacle and the body, and a certain aspiration of the male voice to invisibility and anonymity.³²⁵

By underlining his name with his protagonist's body, he is showing his reliance on this opposition, his building of authorial discourse *on the back* of his passive, immobile female subject-object. This representation of the male displacement of lack onto Adriana continues throughout the film as men use Adriana's availability, her physicality, to their own ends, covering up what Kaja Silverman calls the male subject's "symbolic castration" with Adrian's culturally

created lack.³²⁶ The episode of Adriana's encounter with the writer-novelist provides the most interesting and pertinent example of this meta-representational tendency of Adriana's physical, vulnerable image.



Figure 5. *Adriana in the Writer's Apartment: Discovering her Lack*
By kind permission of Titanus Films S.p.A.

This post-coital scene opens with Adriana lounging in bed at the Writer's apartment, surrounded by art, time, and technological objects: clocks, statues, a phone, a cigarette, items which, because of their connections to image, temporality, and industry, point to a metacinematic discourse within the scene. The Writer emerges from the bathroom. Even though he is portrayed as a well-known writer of success, he remains nameless throughout the following discussion of his profession, anonymous as the ideal male voice should be, according to Silverman's definition of classic cinema.³²⁷ Adriana mentions that she saw his photo in the newspaper *Paese Sera*. She does not mention his writing, but rather the reproduction of his image, his photo, hinting at the writer's own potential state of alienation and objectification. Adriana continues, remarking that writing must be a great job, "*un bel mestiere,*" since it is satisfying, "*dà soddisfazione.*" The author-character does not respond. He confirms this lacuna, this moment of his lack of voice, this void of satisfaction within him as the scene continues. When Adriana remarks that he writes a lot, emphasizing the volume, not the quality, of his writing, he responds, "*come tutti quelli che*

non hanno niente da dire.” He writes a lot because he has nothing to say. His frenetic activity of writing is simply a compensation reaction, covering up his lack of discursive power, his reliance on the female image, his symbolic castration. Yet rather than recognize this as his condition, the writer projects this lack onto Adriana.

Moments later, Adriana lifts a sheet of paper from a typewriter in which she finds a description of “Milena,” herself. Here, the writer makes Adriana conscious of her status as Other, the bearer of Lack with a capital “L.” The writer’s description reads like a laundry list of ideal feminine sexual qualities; ideal, that is, for a certain type of man.

Everything is fine with her. She’s always happy, she doesn’t desire anything, she’s not jealous, she’s not curious about anything. She’s never surprised. She doesn’t feel humiliation. Although, poor thing, she’s humiliated every day. Everything rolls off her back without leaving a mark, like waterproofed material. Zero ambition. No morality; not even financial morals because she’s not a whore. For her, yesterday and tomorrow don’t exist. She doesn’t live day by day, because this would force her into complicated plans. Which is why she lives minute by minute. Sunning herself, listening to records, dancing are her only activities. As far as everything else goes, she’s fickle, inconstant, always needing new, brief encounters; it doesn’t matter with whom: never with herself” (My translation)

She’s not ambitious and she’s not a moral subject. She’s too stupid, too wed to the present, and too physical to be humiliated. “I’m Milena, right?” Adriana asks, already knowing the answer.

This assumption of intimate knowledge, this imposition of a lack of consciousness, a lack of subjectivity onto Adriana’s psyche, is precisely the mis-recognition that Pietrangeli forces on spectators who assume to know Adriana by observing, looking, and seeing her in the role constructed for her. Her availability, her passivity, and her physical capacity for pleasure correspond with the definition of female sexuality required by patriarchal cultural discourse of the Fifties and Sixties, according to Dyer, yet we, as spectators, think less of her for it.³²⁸ We don’t recognize our own patterns of consumption.

Contemporary criticism of the film fails to extend this idea to its logical conclusion.

Writing about the film at the time of its release is marked by a tendency to repeat this same attribution of lack to Adriana, locating fault for her death and her humiliations in the anonymous, disembodied institutions of “culture,” “society,” and “human failure,” when in fact, the world of journalists, critics, writers, and directors who are at least partially responsible for this misunderstanding. Emblematic of this is the Communist critic Ugo Casiraghi’s description of Adriana.

The heroine of the film is a girl like many others: a girl who lets herself live without being minimally conscious of what she is doing. She sunbathes half-nude, picks up the men she likes, she hangs out, an external imprint, superficial... She has a great little body, an attractive face; she adores dancing and listening to music. These are all of her interests, her horizons don’t ever extend beyond this noisy world, that is the world of the twenty year-olds from the countryside who come to Rome to become actresses. A world that we have seen described many times, but that here assumes the precise and lucid dimension of human failure.³²⁹

Therefore, the failure the film represents becomes an anonymous human failure, “un fallimento umano,” that Casiraghi’s review only perpetuates. Casiraghi’s review is taken, almost verbatim, from the Writer’s faulty description of Adriana within the film. Casiraghi, for his part, sees Adriana as a symptom of his own ideological world-view. For him, she is merely symptomatic of the malaise of consumer society, not a thinking subject in her own right. Pietrangeli’s critique of the film industry cuts too close to the quick for many critics who are unable recognize their complicity in reproducing this image of the woman-as-lack.



Figure 6. Pietrangeli “Baring the Device”: Adriana Filmed within the Film
By kind permission of Titanus Films S.p.A.

The second element of Pietrangeli’s metacinematic technique is the inclusion within the diegesis scenes of spectacle and spectating. Behind-the-scenes at photo shoots and film sets, Pietrangeli shows the process of manufacturing the image to be consumed, forcing the spectator to witness the production of the object to be consumed, the object of his or her desire. Adriana is also shown to be a spectator, working as an usher in a movie theater.³³⁰ We shall return to this theater in a moment. The spectator, in Pietrangeli’s film, is not portrayed with the popular sympathy of, for example, many of Fellini’s spectators. Rude, coarse, and cutting, spectating is shown in its full sadistic potential. It is not a coincidence, for example, that Adriana models at a fashion show that takes place at the intermission of a boxing match; boxing and modeling here both become occasions for violence and objectification. This is not the only scene in which Pietrangeli admonishes his spectator.

Later in the film, Adriana ostensibly catches her big break at a party where she films an interview for a newsreel called “*Un volto nuovo*” — A New Face. This party, where Adriana works as a *bella presenza*, a hired party girl, serves as the occasion for several humiliations,

including that of Bagini, an old, male actor and ex-Latin Lover played by Ugo Tognazzi. With such a climate of indiscriminate exploitation, Adriana would, one would hope, be on her guard. Yet she gives this interview in a bedroom, lying for part of it on the bed (see figure above), in that same charming, naive manner that becomes a point of frustration for the spectator precisely because of her unguarded, disarming belief in her fellow men of cinema, again, her vulnerability, her apparent “naturalness,” all of which betray her better judgment in the end. The viewer sees the original interview as it is filmed; it all seems rather normal, if not banal, made up of routine questions about what she is doing in Rome and how her career is going.

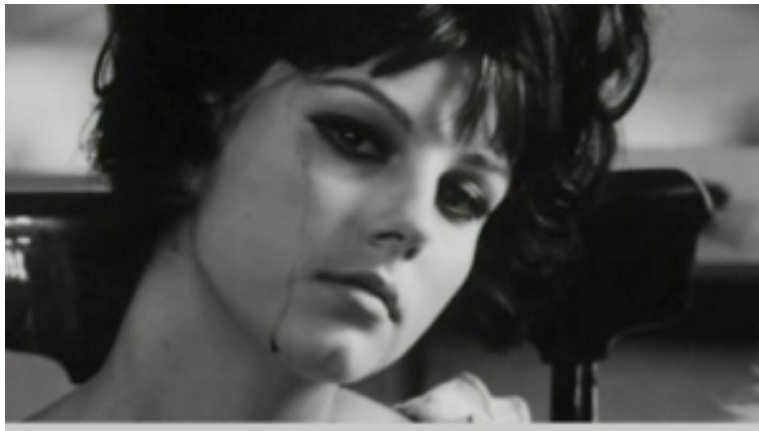
After the interview, Adriana is thrilled, thinking that finally, this will be what launches her in the world of cinema and she returns to the theater where she worked as an usher. Among her female “friends,” her fellow ushers, she watches herself as she is humiliated by the editing and manipulation of her interview. The questions in the projected newsreel, issued from a male-voice over, are different from the original questions. Instead of asking what she is doing in Rome, they ask her what she is doing on the bed, to which she replies, “I’m here to work,” (“*Sto qui per lavorare.*”) The second response, “*Non so, speriamo!*” or “I don’t know, let’s hope so!” is repeated several times in response to various questions, her image reduced to passivity and puppetry and her professional ambition to prostitution. She is again the butt of the joke, laughed at by men and women, friends and foes in the audience within the film. At this point, however, the spectator of *Pietrangeli’s* film is not laughing.

Laughter brings us to the third metacinematic discourse within the film — the representation of acting and the masquerade. Scene by scene, Pietrangeli deconstructs Adriana’s image of feminine naturalness and desirability by showing its affectation. As discussed in the last

chapter regarding Claudia Cardinale's performance of the role of *femme fatale* during her infamous striptease in *Il magnifico cornuto*, Doane believes the veil functions in film thus; "by destabilizing the image, the masquerade confounds this masculine structure of the look. It effects a de-familiarization of female iconography."³³¹ The spectator sees both Adriana's performance and her preparations backstage, and most importantly, the difference between the two. For instance, in one scene Adriana attends an acting class led by an elderly actress, a Gloria Swanson-type *grande dame* complete with the extreme expressions and flashing eyes of a silent film actress. It is a recitation course in which proper speech patterns are stressed through the repetition of nonsensical phrases and different reactions, different kinds of laughter are categorized through a systematic approach to acting, one that is rigorous, repetitive, and as Pietrangeli shows, oppressive and disorienting. He accompanies the repetitive exercises with a zoetrope-like circular pan that registers the faces of the students in the class as they recite, but the dizzying sense of loss of equilibrium is highlighted by its increasing rapidity, blurring the individual faces in a nausea-producing vortex that ends with Adriana's fainting. At this point in the narrative she discovers that she is pregnant. Rather than discuss the narrative conclusion of this scene, I want to highlight the formal quality of this scene that blurs the line between the real, performance, and schizophrenic disorientation.

This disorientation is present in other formal choices Pietrangeli makes. The absence of linear narrative structures, an absence that makes the film a psychological mosaic, is only the beginning of his exploration of this image-manufacturing on Adriana's psyche. His propensity for shooting his protagonist through windows, in mirrors, through the windshield as she drives, has a twofold function. First, by creating a triangular structure, often the reflection or vision of

Adriana is mediated by the glass, her own body which comes between the mirror and the camera. The indirectness of this kind of looking heightens the spectator's awareness of the process of looking. The fact that Adriana's direct gaze into the camera often serves as a point of departure for a memory or a segue to another scene emphasizes the fragmented feeling of identity that characterizes the modern subject, in this case, Adriana.



*Figure 7. Adriana Looks into the Camera
By kind permission of Titanus Films S.p.A.*

Second, there is a notable lack of suturing. Suturing, briefly, is the shot — reverse shot formation which according to Silverman conceals the origin of the gaze so, “that the level of enunciation remains veiled from the viewing subject’s scrutiny, which is entirely absorbed within the level of the fiction.”³³² In other words, suturing functions so that the male gaze of the director is seen as a universal experience for the spectator. Suturing serves as a way of assuring the epistemological authority of the director. Pietrangeli lifts this veil of scrutiny by emphasizing the voyeuristic and illusionistic by shooting through windows and mirrors, pointing to the missing male gaze, the missing third kino-eye, the lack as camera or spectator. In short, Pietrangeli’s method of shooting Adriana highlights its own lack, its own limitations, rather than displacing them onto her. There is no character to stand in for the gaze of the camera itself, which makes

itself felt throughout the film; it is the camera that stalks, not a stalker / character. The spectator is not, therefore, bound by the fiction, but remains outside, looking in, our gaze aligned with the camera, not with the fictional male gazer. The “stalking” presence of the camera does not maintain the illusion of autonomous authorial vision, but underlines the to-be-looked-at-ness of Adriana and that, moreover, it is we who do the looking.

Pietrangeli’s choice to end his film with Adriana’s suicide is not a sadistic choice to punish the bad woman as one might suspect. As he admits in the above-cited interview, his choice to conclude with the protagonist’s suicide was, strange as it may seem, an act of love towards her, a way of breaking the cycle of mis-recognition, of bestowing interiority on Adriana.³³³ As Elisabeth Bronfen writes in *Over Her Dead Body*, “suicide implies an authorship with one’s own life, a form of writing the self and writing death that is ambivalently poised between self-construction and self-destruction ... another kind of attempt to know the self as radically different and other from the consciously known self during life.”³³⁴ The formal elements of the sequence that lead up to Adriana’s suicide show her divesting herself of the performative — she begins by examining a photo of herself, which she then places on her vanity. Rather than the ye-ye music she has listened to and that has accompanied her throughout the film, she puts on a circus-like march, a soundtrack that fits the theme of absurdity. She removes her wig, which, again, we see through the window, a billowing curtain coming between the camera and Adriana’s contemplative face.



Figure 8. Adriana Moments Before Her Suicide
By kind permission of Titanus Films S.p.A.

At this point, the suicide is told from Adriana's point of view — she pulls back the curtain, looks at the horizon, the sky, and then the camera zooms downwards. The spectator is forced into her point of view, feels the sense of her falling. Again, there is no suturing; no gaze or shot from above or below to confirm Adriana's death, writing it into the film's visual language with sign of her dead body, the spectacle of death; no newspaper article, as Pietrangeli had originally planned to end the film, reporting her death; no friends who claim to have known her. Pietrangeli himself wrote in a press release for the film that,

The last image of Adriana could show her to us at the bottom of her building, covered by a white sheet [. . .] The article in the evening paper would read, 'The desperate act of a girl, victim of her filthy life' [. . .] ' I knew her so well' [. . .] No. Maybe they did not know her so well.³³⁵

Pietrangeli's word choice here, in the original Italian, is important to note. For the invented title of the story recounting Adriana's death, he emphasizes the false moralistic tendency of newspaper headlines, writing, "l'insano gesto di una ragazza, vittima della sua turpe vita." In one fell stroke of the pen, the journalist that Pietrangeli imagines into existence has transformed Adriana from a sensitive subject to a desperate victim whose life was dirty, disgusting, shameful enough to drive her to suicide. By using words such as "insano," "vittima," and "turpe," in his

description, the director underlines the sensationalist aspect of such stories, a reminder of the sort of journalism that uses these suicides to sell papers.

In comparison, Pietrangeli's choice to end his film as he does seems even more extraordinary. Formally, Pietrangeli does not steal the scene of the suicide from Adriana by imposing the male gaze and fetishizing her dead body; he does not steal the pen from Adriana and rewrite the scene himself.³³⁶ Pietrangeli does not offer a facile explanation nor does he assume logical authority — the suicide he represents is only a void, a negative space of misrecognition, an epistemological failure. It would have been much more simple to end the film with one of her friends' banal recitation of the title, "I knew her so well," which would neatly resolve the semiotic gap between title and filmic experience. This is not what happens.

Pietrangeli leaves us only a record player that stops the absurd march, the needle skipping off the spinning disc, ending the music, ending the diegetic soundtrack.

BIRTHING THE SPECTATOR

Critics at the time failed to recognize their complicity in reducing the actress, the female subject, to lack. By applying a new set of critical ideas to this film, what has become apparent is the complex interplay of the nodal points of cinematic and linguistic discourse within the film's structure, De Lauretis' "ruptures in the fabric of representation" that, "perform the terms of the production of woman as text, as image."³³⁷ By questioning his, the author's, the critic's and the spectator's relationship to those terms, has Pietrangeli "stepped through the looking glass?" I believe so. He is opening up "critical spaces in the seamless narrative space constructed by dominant cinema and by dominant discourses."³³⁸ This article began with a behind-the-scenes

photo taken on the set of the film shows Pietrangeli looking at Stefania Sandrelli in the trappings of Adriana Astarelli. I have reproduced it again here below to emphasize that it is the director's reflection we see in the mirror, this mirror which serves as the screen, a metaphor for cinema itself. This photo is striking because while Pietrangeli studies the actress, the spectator sees him as well, so that we are presented with an equally incomplete and fragmented view of both director and actress. The film's, and hence the director's, epistemological authority is ultimately and most clearly undermined by the protagonist's suicide, with which Pietrangeli deconstructs his own narrative and with which Adriana who authors her own death. This operation affirms the filmmaker's failure to know his subject completely, a failure which throughout the film has served as the site of conflict that drives the plot of the film forward. This is a rare thing for a director to admit.



*Figure 1. Pietrangeli in the Mirror
With kind permission of Reports Associati*

My final point refers to the title. While there are clearly linguistic ambiguities written into the title, laden as it is with issues of knowledge, whether it be the intimate “biblical” knowledge said with the wink of an eye by Adriana’s boyfriends or instead the ostensible knowledge a

viewer gains by consuming the film’s narrative. Leonardo Autera wrote in *Bianco e nero* a review of *Io la conoscevo bene* that the title is an example of *pleonasm*, a linguistic device characterized by redundancy and linguistic excess.³³⁹ Which begs the question why *Io* when simply *La conoscevo bene* would have sufficed? This first person subject pronoun, *Io*, I, prominently beginning the title of the film, to whom does it refer? To the director, the critics, the spectator, the characters in the film? *La*, the third person feminine object pronoun, does it mean simply Adriana, or all actresses, be they divas or extras, or perhaps all women? As in the publicity poster below, Pietrangeli’s film reflects our “male” gaze back onto itself.



*Figure 9. A Revealing Publicity Poster: The Spectator Reflected Back
With kind permission of the Archivio Antonio Pietrangeli, Centro Cinema Cesena*

The scope of the film, it seems to me, is to work upon the spectators, the journalists, the critics, and our sense of knowledge about the way that we consume imagery. *Io*, I, an indexical pronoun in the linguistic theory of Emile Benveniste, activates someone to-be-addressed, hence a *You*.³⁴⁰ Following this logic, the title of the film therefore speaks directly to the spectator by a

process of interpellation, a sort of “calling,” linguistically involving the spectator in the semiotic process of signification. What is implied is the following line of discourse: I “knew her so well” — what about you? Moreover, these pronouns, You and I, “are not predictable, but vary from discursive instance to discursive instance, and even within the same signifying chain.”³⁴¹ They are endlessly reversible, endlessly signifying. Pietrangeli’s intent, by not pinning down a precise motive for Adriana’s suicide, is to show his own lack of knowledge about his female protagonist. His film’s narrative contradicts its own title. By not pinning down a precise motive for Adriana’s suicide, Pietrangeli casts into relief his own lack of knowledge about his female protagonist. Unlike Godard — whose similarly titled *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d’elle* was released in 1967, two years after *Io la conosco bene* — Pietrangeli does not use the female-centered film as a way of reestablishing “his authority, since that is what we are talking about”³⁴² Of Godard’s film, Truffaut writes that the director’s authority is either a “good luck charm,” or, more tellingly, “an infallibility curse,”³⁴³ and the emphasis on infallibility is Truffaut’s. There is no doubt in the spectator’s mind, according to Truffaut, that Godard does know his protagonist, despite the French director’s statements about his film’s problematization of language. On the film’s soundtrack, we, the spectators, hear Godard, the director, state in voice-over that “since my thought is only a unit, since an immense moat separates the subjective certitude that I have for myself from the objective truth that I am for others [. . .] since I always seem to fail to communicate [...] it’s necessary that I listen, it’s necessary that I look around me more than ever [. . .] the world [. . .] my fellow creatures [...] my brothers.” Yet rather than listen to his brothers (or sisters), it seems that, when compared to Pietrangeli, Godard’s epistemological confidence establishes itself through his portrayal of the titular her, Juliette, a character who serves to prop

up his ideological and formal critique of capitalism and consumerism rather than undermine or problematize them. Despite his protestations, Godard is merely reestablishing his authority under the guise of “failure to communicate.” How else does one explain Truffaut’s attribution of “an infallibility curse” to Godard’s cinema? The two New Wave directors’ statements contradict each other. Can one be infallible and simultaneously fail to communicate? The “I” in Godard’s title was the director himself, no doubt. The question of epistemology in *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* is not as open, not as gracefully handled or as nuanced, as it is in Pietrangeli’s film. As Chuck Kleinhans writes of Godard’s film, “the situation of women, as portrayed in *Two or Three Things*, is to be exploited, to be driven into prostitution, into being an object,”³⁴⁴ much like Adriana in Pietrangeli’s film, only the difference is that Juliette, the titular *elle*, is created at a distance.

We are first introduced not to Juliette, but to Marina Vlady, and then a few seconds later, Marina Vlady playing the role of Juliette. The intent of this device is explicitly Brechtian, for Godard is seeking to distance the audience from the screen action and to inhibit their falling into sympathy with a conventional character in a conventional narrative.³⁴⁵

Juliette is not created, as with Pietrangeli’s Adriana, out of a sociological experience of the director, or with his real cinema life, but instead *elle* is a formal device subordinated to Godard’s own poetics. Unlike Juliette, Adriana is not a puppet/actress/prostitute who Pietrangeli uses to establish his auteur status nor his infallibility as cinematic artist. While both Juliette and Adriana commit suicide, there is not the same process of interpellation, of calling, or of involving the spectator in the process of signification in Godard’s film; instead the spectator is alienated along with the protagonist, Juliette.

By revealing his authorial iniquity, his fallibility as the epistemological impossibility of truly knowing another person, Pietrangeli leaves it to the spectators, to the readers, to interpret the open text of his film and what Adriana's suicide means to us. It is fitting to end this chapter with an observation. In the *Bianco e nero* interview conducted by Fausto Montesanti, there is only one moment in which a female voice is recorded in dialogue with Pietrangeli. This woman, Loredana Dordi, is a first-year student in film photography at the Centro Sperimentale. Unlike many of the students during this interview, she does not ask a question, but rather makes an observation about suicide, the two suicides that are bookends to Pietrangeli's cinematic production. She says

making a parallel between this last suicide and the first [i.e. the failed suicide in *Il sole negli occhi*], it is possible to see the underlying current that runs between woman and society ... In the first film, there is a woman who finds herself caught up in the crisis between an evolved society and a society now past; she wants to kill herself because certain values have crumbled around her. In the second film, however, the woman does not kill herself because her values have crumbled, but because she feels alienated in a society that brings her to suicide.³⁴⁶

Pietrangeli's response to this, the only female voice in this interview, is one of solidarity. He replies,

that seems exactly right to me. Society has changed everything has changed profoundly. While in *Il sole negli occhi*, the attempted suicide is born of an exact cause (Francesco's betrayal in that, while Celestina was pregnant at the beach, he married another woman and pretended like nothing was happening) in *Io la conoscevo bene*, there is no immediate motive (if not Adriana's relentless solitude.) On the other hand, if in the times of Celestina, 1953, girls, before killing themselves, wrote a beautiful letter to their mothers, to their relatives, to their faithless lovers or maybe to the police, now they throw themselves off the balcony without saying either 'hi' or 'bye,' without writing a line, maybe because even they do not know the reason behind that definitive gesture.³⁴⁷

The theme of alienation, of solitude, of loneliness and the absurd nature of daily struggle against these societal forces allows Pietrangeli to show that even whom we consider to be the most superficial person, this woman-object, is capable of profound and existential suffering. As the director himself admits, perhaps Adriana did not know how to express her sentiments, how to write down her desperation; nonetheless she was a philosophical subject, an interior as well as an exterior. *Io la conosco bene* is the *summa* of Pietrangeli's directorial poetics since he is addressing, deconstructing, and therefore undermining the whole dynamic in cinema of woman as body / image and man as bearer of knowledge. If anything, Pietrangeli is showing himself to be part of the representational problem Adriana and, in general, women in cinema, face, not offering himself as solution to or the problem. Consequently, Adriana's death is the death of the director as author, authority on his female subject and her malaise. We, the titillated spectators, are transformed by Adriana's suicide into survivors who are left behind to ask the unanswerable question, why?

CONCLUSION: ANTONIO PIETRANGELI, FEMINISM, AND FILM THEORY

THE NEED FOR NEW THEORIES, NEW FATHERS

This study of gender, feminism, and film theory in Antonio Pietrangeli's films has intended to shed light on the importance of considering the director as a unique cineaste whose woman- and couple-centric films have been undervalued, misunderstood, and marginalized by contemporary and historical criticism. While some readers may fault me at times for being overly theoretical, I have been consciously so, in the hopes that this inundation of theoretical parallels between critical writings and Pietrangeli's films creates a new way of considering this director. He has, for a long time, deserved an autonomous study of his films in conjunction with developments in feminist and film theory; moreover, he deserves a serious study of his own film theory as well. Many feminists in Italian studies have called for this sort of theoretical methodology to treat a marginalized director and his works. Reflecting Pietrangeli's own theoretical and practical concern with the act of spectating, Jackie Stacey writes that "it is particularly important for feminists to challenge the absence of audiences from film studies, since it has reproduced an assumed passivity on the part of women in the cinema audience."³⁴⁸ Pietrangeli was already thinking about the spectator in the Postwar period as evidenced by his writings in *Star* magazine cited in this study's introduction. While Catherine O'Rawe faults critics of Italian cinema for "the discipline's obsessive interest in neorealism and in auteur cinema," she also calls, in her article, "*I padri e i maestri: Genre, Auteurs, and Absences in Italian Film Studies*," for "a more sophisticated theoretical and historical approach to the study of both neorealism and popular cinema, in order to account for neglected films."³⁴⁹ What is interesting about Pietrangeli is that whether or not one deems gender an important factor in his

filmmaking, he both made important contributions in creating the atmosphere of neorealism and can be considered an auteur in his own right. Consequently, one feasible explanation, following the logic of O’Rawe’s article, of why his films have not been examined in-depth by current Italian studies practitioners could be the gender element.

Danielle Hipkins, in her article “Why Italian Film Needs a New Take on Gender,”³⁵⁰ calls for an opening up of what has become a canon of Italian film, a canon centered around male auteurs, male actors, and male problems. What I have tried to demonstrate in this study on Pietrangeli is how, in his films, male problems are bound up with female problems and vice versa. For this reason, the heterosexual couple is so often at the center of the narrative conflict in his films, often with the female partner pushing against social, historical, and representational conventions. In 1953, with his directorial debut, *Il sole negli occhi*, Pietrangeli gave us Celestina, a maid-protagonist looking for love and finding work and female friendship instead. In *Nata di marzo* (1957), Francesca’s marriage as “happy ending” reveals itself to be little more than the beginning of the couple’s struggles. Adua’s romantic disillusion in *Adua e le compagne* (1960) mirrors a larger political and societal conflict based on gender and, by the director’s own admission, is the most stark vision of male / female relations that he created. In *Fantasma a Roma* (1961), which debuted in Rome this past month as a musical theater production, Pietrangeli uses the ghosts, Reginaldo (Mastroanni) in particular, as proxies for himself and his screenwriters in order to comment on the difference between past and present, especially regarding sexual matters and gender roles. With *La Visita* (1963), Pina represents the toll that going against the societal norm of “married with kids” takes on a woman of a certain age, despite her being financially and socially independent.

Dora, the protagonist in *La parmigiana* (1963), embodies the “open woman” problematic since she is open both sexually and with her criticism of male hypocrisy. In *Il magnifico cornuto* (1964), Pietrangeli examines the dynamics of a married couple from the perspective of the jealous husband, showing how a husband’s envy of his wife’s beauty can create infidelity and how female beauty can consequently be a double-edged sword. With his final film, *Io la conoscevo bene* (1965), Pietrangeli turns the camera on his own industry, cinema, and deconstructs a would-be actress, Adriana (Sandrelli), representing her suicide as an act of rebellion, a *mise en abyme* of the act of representation in cinema itself, the dependence of director as auteur on actress as signifier, as body, as cinematic text. Perhaps the *summa* of his poetics of cinema and femininity, Pietrangeli’s final film attempts to collapse the distance between spectator and spectated, showing us how the male gaze works to objectify, peel apart, and fetishize the female body. By problematizing the male gaze, Pietrangeli begins to formally deconstruct the traditional norms of “classical” Hollywood cinema. Unfortunately for us, his life was cut short when, in 1968, he drowned off the coast of Gaeta while shooting his next film, *Come, quando, perché*.

Before closing, I would be remiss to not briefly mention two full-length films directed by Pietrangeli, *Lo scapolo* (1955) and *Souvenir d’Italie* (1957), as well as two film episodes, *La girandola* from *Amori a mezzo secolo* (1956) and *Fata Marta* from *Le fate* (1966), that I have chosen not to include in this study. To a great extent these films are consistent with Pietrangeli’s concerns about changing gender roles in Italian society, and here I would like to explain how.

The first film, starring Alberto Sordi as Paolo, the titular *scapolo*, is typical of the *commedia all’italiana* style as characterized by Maurizio Grande in his works on this genre.

Indeed, the film is upheld as exemplary by many texts on the *commedia all'italiana* and for the purposes of this dissertation I felt that there were already satisfactory discussions of the film in circulation. For instance, Maurizio Grande's formula for the *commedia all'italiana*, the *epos capovolto*, or epic structure turned-on-its-head, is true here, making *Lo scapolo* a canonical example of Italian-style comedy. The difference, perhaps, is that Pietrangeli's terms for the hero's (Sordi) ultimate failed attempt to get out of marriage as societal expectation is that he must marry the one woman who challenges him, a woman who Pietrangeli depicts as his peer, his equal, Carla (Madeleine Fischer). In "this 'great code of adaptation' of the individual to societal pressures ... an ancient tradition that goes from a slap in the face to cross-dressing the crisis of the subject appears to be pathologically exasperated, pathetically excessive, humanly untenable."³⁵¹ The comedic antihero, who seeks escape from the society in which he is forced to live, is constantly re-assimilated into his society despite his knowledge of that society's corruption. In the case of *Lo scapolo*, the question becomes more a meditation on loneliness, on the value of exclusion or self-exemption from a place in society. As a foil to the bachelor, Pietrangeli creates Gabriella (Sandra Milo) as an flight attendant whose comings and goings create a tension as their gender roles are reversed; Gabriella leaves and returns, is mobile, simultaneously part and not part of society and in many ways, she possesses the freedom of which he is envious. Paolo's decision to "settle down" is therefore a choice to re-assimilate into society but even when he does so, his new wife represents a castration threat to him as an equal partner. Thus *Lo scapolo*, the bachelor, is a failed rebellion against a society dominated by female forces to which Paolo ultimately succumbs. These forces are both archaic, represented by the maternal superego urging him to marry, as well as modern, in the form of Gabriella and

Carla, two strong, independent, professional women. This is a gendered aspect of the plot that has been ignored by many critics and one consistent with Pietrangeli's depiction of changing gender roles in society.

Souvenir d'Italie (1957) is a film centered around three foreign, female tourists in Italy. A road movie, the film was exported and distributed by Rank Films, a British entertainment conglomerate. The film's touristic protagonists thus end up serving as diegetic stand-ins for the spectator in the audience watching the film, consuming Italy as a commodity on-screen. A sort of picture postcard highlighting the adventures and misadventures of these young British, French, and German women traveling alone in Italy, the film both celebrates modern *foreign* women, who seem so capable of navigating this postwar Italy on their own, while simultaneously criticizing a certain type of modern Italian man who would take advantage of such a forward-thinking woman of independent means, foreshadowing the theme that Pietrangeli later developed fully in *La visita*. Even in this later film, Adolfo is constantly comparing Pina to foreign women and talking about how "Northern" Emilian women are. In *Souvenir*, Alberto Sordi once again steps in to play the man-child as Sergio, the *mantenuto*, whom the women meet in Florence at the side of an older, British woman. His comedic character is a caricature of the stereotypical Latin lover, a stereotype at which he balks but which Pietrangeli shows Sergio using to his advantage as he serenades his elderly lover on the mandolin. This dynamic between adventurous, foreign female tourists looking for love in Italy and Italian men as Latin lovers remains as relevant today as it was then. What is interesting is that the role of Latin lover in some ways switches the traditional dynamic of commodification or objectification; here, the man is the object-to-be-consumed by the foreign female tourist, whose souvenirs of her trip to Italy may

include a few sexual ones. Rather than Italy being associated with the female body, as in so many films but especially those that fall under the heading of *neorealismo*, here, in this film, the Italians are primarily men. In neorealist works such as *Riso amaro*, *Ossessione*, and *Roma, città aperta*, the female body is often aligned with the landscape and the social ills and struggles of Italy. In *Souvenir d'Italie*, it is the men who represent Italy at the level of the plot since the protagonists are foreign women. Among these men, perhaps a proxy for the director himself, is a galant Vittorio De Sica who plays a Venetian count with neapolitan roots. In Venice, he stands up for the group of women when they are groped in a crowd by some soldiers, offering his home as a refuge for the women when one of them gets her dress dirty. The filmmakers seem to be suggesting that while there is some sort of sexual threat in traveling abroad, in Italy, there will always be a gentleman around to help. Pietrangeli and his screenwriters are upsetting the gendered conventions for representing Italy “as a woman”; instead, what the spectators and the protagonists of the film remember about Italy are the men.

In both of the narrative episodes *La girandola* and *Fata Marta*, the roles of doctor and doctor’s wife are central. The first short film, *La girandola* from *Amori a mezzo secolo* (1953), a doctor from the *belle époque* is asked to intervene with a patient’s lover when the patient is told to limit his sexual activity. Acting as sanctioned, sexual authority, the doctor intervenes to tell the patient’s lover to also limit her sexual activity, but is then in turn asked to intervene on her behalf with *her* lover. On the *girandola*, the pinwheel, turns until the doctor discovers that one of these lovers whose sexual activity he is asked to reign in is, in fact, his wife. This film not only finds resonance in Pietrangeli’s self-referential choice of protagonist since Pietrangeli himself was a trained physician, but also in the examination of infidelity and the sort of danger that comes with

sanctioning it or approaching it with a permissive attitude. The danger is, of course, that one will eventually find oneself cuckolded. In this episode, we can identify the problem of sanctioned infidelity that Pietrangeli will further elaborate in *Il magnifico cornuto* (Andrea “sanctions” his own infidelity before obsessing about his wife’s) as well as the general problem of coupledness that runs throughout his films.

In *Fata Marta*, Pietrangeli’s episode from *Le fate* (1966), the plot again revolves around a famous surgeon, his wife, and their manservant, played by Alberto Sordi. The wife, a *contessa*, seduces the manservant one night when she is drunk and when he discovers she is the wife of the *professore*, he attempts to seduce her again, only to be rebuffed. The *contessa* is only interested in him when she is drunk. As critic Maraldi writes, “in this brief and flavorful tale with a Chaplin-esque quality (when she is drunk, she turns to Giovanni as a lover, when she is sober she treats him like a servant), Pietrangeli limits himself to the role of director, as he moves confidently and with irony in this high society setting.”³⁵² Pietrangeli’s own professional formation as a doctor offers a third possible reading of this recurring figure of the doctor, especially the doctor who is cuckolded. In these episodes, Pietrangeli investigates the theme of male insecurity, an insecurity that remains despite the title of *professore*, *dottore*, or *maestro*. By addressing the potential castration threat that the woman represents, especially in an adulterous, sexual scenario, Pietrangeli facing down a taboo that persists still today. Regardless of a man’s titles, degrees earned, wealth, or prestige, the ability to undermine all those trappings of male power still lies with his wife. Pietrangeli continues to use his own personal and professional experience as a doctor as a fount of inspiration for his films which, while comedic, still possess a heaping dose of psychological insight. A precursor to *La città delle donne*, in which Fellini as

male director confronts feminism and gender issues in a circus of the imagination, Pietrangeli lays out, in his two short, episodic films, scenarios in which the proxy for his figure as *dottore*, *maestro*, is a would-be cuckold. Rather than worry about creating a false face of masculinity, Pietrangeli reveals and discusses the problem of male insecurity and how it is bound up in fidelity. Here, in the works of Pietrangeli, the titles *dottore*, *professore*, *maestro*, and even *padre*, are masks for male identity that cover over the layers of insecurity that lie beneath. His engagement with questions of sexual difference, of male and female identity, indicate how he was anticipating film and gender theory to come by basing his cinema on art he upheld as worthwhile, that which reveals the psychological depths of the human condition, our insecurities, our alienation, our solitude, our secrets and our desires.

POST-NEOREALISM, PRE-FEMINISM

Since I began writing this dissertation, several new studies have taken steps to reconsidering the importance of Pietrangeli and his films, signs that the time has come to take serious scholarly interest in this unique theorist and director. One of these texts is *Italian Post-Neorealist Cinema* by Luca Barattoni. Published in 2012, it follows on the heels of Natalie Fullwood's essay "Commedie al femminile: The Gendering of Space in Three Films by Antonio Pietrangeli," which I have often cited in this study. Both critical works are valuable English-language contributions to the film criticism about Pietrangeli which has unfortunately generally painted him as a secondary figure. While Barattoni helpfully recontextualizes Pietrangeli in the Postwar period, he too focuses more on the film historical elements of the postwar and chooses to analyze only Pietrangeli's "masterpiece," *Io la conosco bene*, in any real depth. What I have

attempted to do in this dissertation is not only read Pietrangeli's own feminist theory and theory of cinema into his films themselves, focusing on issues of gender, sexual difference, apparatus theory, and concern for the spectator; I have also attempted to explain why Pietrangeli's films, whose reception ranged from complete critical dismissal to the highest of praise, have been such difficult ground for critics. In some cases, the criticism had to catch up with Pietrangeli's praxis, as I have shown in the chapter of this study on *Adua e le compagne*; in other cases, Pietrangeli's nontraditional narratives, exploited protagonists, and diverse endings perplexed critics with their bucking of the conventions spectators were used to seeing. What this study has sought to remedy is the past methodological and critical loopholes, the gaps in past studies on Pietrangeli, that, while naming him and mentioning his affinity for representing on-screen the postwar Italian woman, do little to explain how and why he did so and moreover why he deserves the title Barattoni bestows upon him as "a feminist *ante litteram* with visionary filmmaking."³⁵³

From Celestina who as a figure embodies Italy's own transformation from a rural to an urban economy to Pina who chooses to be alone rather than marry to Adriana whose suicide serves as testimony of her difference from what she appeared to be, Pietrangeli's female protagonists transform the spectator's perception of what a female protagonist can be, of what a woman is capable on screen. Barattoni explains Pietrangeli's difference from other contemporary directors by connecting Pietrangeli's call for cinema with social commentary to his need to tell the untold, female perspective. Since he was talking about neorealism before the word existed, Pietrangeli's realist commitment was "almost prophetically"³⁵⁴ transformed into neorealist films since, as Brunetta states, "Pietrangeli (nomen est omen) can ideally assume the role of apostle, angel at the gate, the foundational stone upon which the idealistic, ethical, and aesthetic

framework, what the project, what a new Italian cinema as a possible world, must be.”³⁵⁵ It is helpful to recall this citation, from the introduction of this study, now in the conclusion so that the reader can see how the Pietrangeli’s female project grew out of his realist, or neorealist, theory. The director’s realism takes a female turn in the Fifties when “the Roman filmmaker was looking for a philosophical bridge allowing Italy to catch up with the rest of Europe, while at the same time adopting a sort of cinematic inquiry that would allow the discovery of previously missing protagonists, such as Italian women.”³⁵⁶ For this reason, Pietrangeli’s films resonate in the French *Nouvelle vague* as discussed in the chapter on *Io la conosco bene* as well as recall Josef Sternberg’s obsessive representation of Marlene Dietrich as Lola-Lola, the sort of *femme fatale* Andrea imagines his wife as during the strip tease sequence in *Il magnifico cornuto*. As a critic and a cinephile himself, Pietrangeli’s breadth of knowledge about film is staggering and his films themselves are, as I have tried to demonstrate, metacinematic, intertextual and inspired by a variety of national cinemas, particularly the French Realists. By engaging with missing typologies of Italian women on a psychological level, from maids to working girls, from teenage brides to spinsters, from modern, aspiring models and actresses to deceased *donzelle*, Pietrangeli expanded the horizons and the scope of Italian cinema. On this, the critics seem to agree. My dissertation has sought to show how it did so and why this is important to us as contemporary spectators of these films.

In a time before Laura Mulvey and the male gaze, before feminist and structuralist film theory, Pietrangeli was engaging with these ideas in his cinematic theory and practice, writing about cinema and making films that not only spoke to a female audience and their daily reality, but also anticipating many of the discussions about patriarchal pressures and power structures

present in this sort of theory that would arrive in the following decades. As Ettore Scola admits in an interview with Mario Sesti entitled “Sceneggiare per Pietrangeli,” Pietrangeli’s stamp was unique and set him apart from his contemporaries. “Between the ‘50s and the ‘60s woman would appear in Italian cinema, in comedies, as mother, sister, whore but not as bearer of problems, unhappiness, suffered repression. The word ‘feminism’ did not even exist back then.”³⁵⁷ What I have sought to show is that even though the word “feminism” did not exist, feminist praxis did and Pietrangeli is an extraordinary example of it. In chronological order according to his films discussed in this study, Pietrangeli engaged with: the issues of single motherhood and female friendship, the “Italian feminine mystique” and bored housewife syndrome, prostitution as the absolute bottom of the social hierarchy, the performance of gender, the societal pressures women face to get married and settle down despite economic independence, the double-edged sword of female sexuality and the price of beauty, male jealousy, and male-dominated cinema’s own hand in the production of fetish images of female sexuality. These are questions that remain open and unanswered still today and Pietrangeli was discussing them, I believe, before they were even considered questions. It was the status quo.

What was truly revolutionary about Pietrangeli is that he identified these issues and problematized them often before society realized that there was a problem. An example of this phenomenon is the fact that *Nata di marzo*, Pietrangeli’s exploration of bored housewife syndrome, comes out in 1957, six whole years before Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* popularized and gave a name to this female malaise in 1963. For every woman who has ever, in her thirties, heard the question, “why aren’t you married?” or “why don’t you have kids?” Pietrangeli offers us Pina from *La visita* as an alternative. Cinematically, Pietrangeli took great

pains to offer endings that were not traditionally happy nor sad but unconventional, not what the viewer would expect. These narrative structures liberated women from the strictures of the need to “resolve” them according to Russell Campbell’s analysis of the figure of the prostitute in film.³⁵⁸ Pietrangeli’s female protagonists that we have discussed were not killed, humiliated, ruined, nor were they married off in an orchestral swell. Their roads were more complicated and nuanced and often what Pietrangeli offers as an ending could just as easily be the beginning of another story. This study has sought to show that Pietrangeli was engaging with feminist film theory before it was considered a critical perspective on its own. Despite the fact that forms of feminism existed in Italy for decades before Pietrangeli’s cinematic contribution, Pietrangeli’s cinema certainly contributed to creating awareness of the female perspective in the popular culture of the time. Yet critics’ ambivalence towards him demonstrates the difficulty in dealing with a figure who was attempting to straddle a representational divide, a divide between genders, between generations, between art and commercial cinema. In Pietrangeli’s case, he was an auteur of a cinema grounded in realism but concerned with the realities of others, the psychology of modern men and women, as well as the problems of alienation, incommunicability, loneliness, and anxiety. Throughout the arc of his cinematic career, his own reality became increasingly bound up with the female image until it became inseparable from her in *Io la conosco bene*. His premature, tragic death in 1968 marks the end a life written on film, through film, about film. A committed realist, Pietrangeli’s films, I believe, ultimately stand up to the theoretical concerns he himself put forth as a critic. Our task as scholars should be to see Pietrangeli’s films as formal mirrors of his own cinematic theory; when taken on his own terms, Pietrangeli’s theory and his films mutually inform one another, revealing that Pietrangeli engagement with feminist film

criticism and film criticism in general makes of him a master of his craft, a director whose activity behind the camera reflects his activity behind the typewriter, in a darkened theater, watching as a spectator observing other spectators.

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Filmography

BY DIRECTOR

Antonio Pietrangeli, Director

- *Il sole negli occhi* (1953)
- *Amori di mezzo secolo* (1954)
- *Lo scapolo* (1955)
- *Souvenir d'Italie* (1957)
- *Nata di marzo* (1958)
- *Adua e le compagne* (1960)
- *Fantasmia a Roma* (1961)
- *La parmigiana* (1963)
- *La visita* (1963)
- *Il magnifico cornuto* (1964)
- *Io la conoscevo bene* (1965)
- *Le fate* (1966)

- *Come, quando, perché* (1969) Pietrangeli, screenplay

Federico Fellini, Director

- *Le notti di Cabiria* (1957)
- *La dolce vita* (1960)
- *Otto e mezzo* (1963)
- *Toby Dammit* (1968)
- *Roma* (1972)
- *Casanova* (1976)

Pier Paolo Pasolini, Director

- *Accattone* (1961)
- *Mamma Roma* (1962)

GENERAL FILMOGRAPHY, 1914-2010

1929 *Pandora's Box*, G.W. Pabst
 1930 *Prix de beauté (Miss Europe)*, René Clair
 1932 *Blonde Venus*, Josef Sternberg
 1935 *The Ghost Goes West*, René Clair
 1936 *La tendre ennemie*, Max Ophüls
 1940 *Love by Appointment*, William A. Seiter
 1941 *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, Albert Hitchcock
 1942 *The Lady is Willing*, Mitchell Leisen
 1943 *Sorelle Materassi*, Ferdinando M. Poggioli
 1943 *Ossessione*, Luchino Visconti
 1944 *The Pimpernel Smith*, Leslie Howard
 1945 *Roma città aperta*, Roberto Rossellini
 1945 *Spellbound*, Albert Hitchcock
 1948 *La terra trema*, Luchino Visconti
 1949 *Riso amaro*, Giuseppe De Santis
 1952 *Europa '51*, Roberto Rossellini
 1952 *Umberto D.*, Vittorio De Sica
 1954 *Dov'è la libertà...?*, Roberto Rossellini
 1960 *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, Luchino Visconti
 1961 *L'avventura*, Michelangelo Antonioni
 1961 *Divorzio all'italiana*, Pietro Germi
 1967 *One or Two Things I Know About Her*, Jean-Luc Godard
 2010 *Black Swan*, Darren Aronofsky

Notes

- ¹ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 20-21.
- ² Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 19.
- ³ Lino Micciché, *Cinema italiano: gli anni '60 e oltre* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2002), 110.
- ⁴ Tullio Masoni e Paolo Vecchi, "Degeneri e scostumati: commedia, satira, e farsa nel cinema sonoro italiano," in *Commedia all'italiana: Angolazioni controcampi*, ed. Riccardo Napolitano (Roma: Gangemi Editori, 1986), 81.
- ⁵ Lorenzo Pellizzari, "Antonio Pietrangeli e la critica," in *Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*. eds. Piera Detassis, et al. (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1987), 55.
- ⁶ Piera Detassis, "A Castelluccio non ci torno più.." Storie di donne nell'Italia di Pietrangeli," in *Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*. eds. Piera Detassis, et al. (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1987), 47.
- ⁷ Natalie Fullwood, "Commedie al femminile: The Gendering of Space in Three Films by Antonio Pietrangeli," *Italian Studies* 65 (2010): 102.
- ⁸ Claire Johnston, "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema," in *Notes on Women's Cinema*, ed. Claire Johnston (London: SEFT, 1974), 28.
- ⁹ Teresa De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 29.
- ¹⁰ Fausto Montesanti, "Ritratti cinematografici di donne italiane di oggi," *Bianco e nero* 5 (1967): 36.
- ¹¹ Adriana Cavarero, "Il pensiero femminista. Un approccio teoretico," in *Le filosofie femministe*, ed. Adriana Cavarero e Franco Restiano (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2002), 79.
- ¹² Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice and Psychoanalysis in Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 1.
- ¹³ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 16.
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Gian Piero Brunetta, Preface to *Sala di proiezione*, ed. Antonio Maraldi (Cesena: Il Ponte Vecchio, 1994), 15.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, 12
- ¹⁷ Antonio Pietrangeli, "La commedia umana," in *Sala di proiezione*, ed. Antonio Maraldi (Cesena: Il Ponte Vecchio, 1994), 30.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Pietrangeli, "Cinema a Roma," 21
- ²⁰ *ibid.*
- ²¹ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 24.
- ²² Brunetta, preface, 12.
- ²³ Pietrangeli, "Amore per appuntamento," 48.
- ²⁴ Walter Benjamin cited in Doane, 1987, 31.

- ²⁵ Pietrangeli, "Amore per appuntamento," 48.
- ²⁶ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 33.
- ²⁷ Pietrangeli, "Sorelle materassi," 95.
- ²⁸ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 38-39.
- ²⁹ Pietrangeli, "Sorelle materassi," 93-94.
- ³⁰ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 46.
- ³¹ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 202.
- ³² De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 153.
- ³³ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 209.
- ³⁴ Pietrangeli, "Il signore e la signora Smith," 25.
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, 27.
- ³⁶ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 45.
- ³⁷ Antonio Pietrangeli, "Cronache dell'ottava mostra di Venezia. Quattro film di qualità su una massa mediocre," in *Neorealism e dintorni*, ed. Antonio Maraldi (Cesena: Il Ponte Vecchio, 1995), p. 117.
- ³⁸ *ibid.*
- ³⁹ Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 80.
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Pietrangeli, "Osessione," 121.
- ⁴² *ibid.*, 123.
- ⁴³ Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, 18.
- ⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 46.
- ⁴⁵ Pietrangeli, "La signora acconsente," 79.
- ⁴⁶ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 26.
- ⁴⁷ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 73-74.
- ⁴⁹ Pietrangeli, "La signora acconsente," 80.
- ⁵⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² This short list does not do justice to Pietrangeli's frenetic cinematic writing and collaboration in this period. Beyond Visconti and Rossellini, this post-critical, pre-directorial moment saw Pietrangeli working alongside figures such as Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Sergio Amidei, Lucio Battistrada, Vasco Pratolini, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Carlo Lizzani, Carlo Ponti, Dino De Laurentiis, Luigi Malerba, Alberto Lattuada, Giuseppe Franciolini, and Ugo Pirro. Ultimately, this list would also include the names of Totò, Vittorio De Sica, Eduardo De Filippo, Ingrid Bergman, Marcello Mastroianni, Vittorio Gassman, Dario Fo, Sandra Milo, Alberto Sordi, Nino Manfredi, and Ugo Tognazzi. For a complete list of Pietrangeli's screenwriting activity, see Antonio Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1991), 24-29.

⁵³ Antonio Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1991), 28.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 43-44.

⁵⁵ Fullwood, "Commedie al femminile," 106.

⁵⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.

⁵⁷ Montesanti, "Ritratti cinematografici," 37.

⁵⁸ Antonio Pietrangeli, "Entra la cameriera," in *Cinema nuovo* 18 (1953). My translation.

⁵⁹ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* (New York: Random House, 1981), 261.

⁶⁰ Pietrangeli, "Entra la cameriera"

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 29-30.

⁶³ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 3.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁶ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 31.

⁶⁷ De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 69.

⁶⁸ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 31.

⁶⁹ De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 153

⁷⁰ *Umberto D* also marked the commercial end of neorealism, since it did so poorly at the box office, but was still discussed by critics who called it De Sica's "return to pure neorealism" after *Miracolo a Milano* (1950) which was seen as "pink" neorealism. Note the gendered coloring of this criticism.

⁷¹ Andre Bazin, "Umberto D," in *Cahiers du Cinema: The 1950's Neorealism, Hollywood, The New Wave*. ed., trans. Jim Hillier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 180-181.

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 1-2.

⁷⁴ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 30.

⁷⁵ Gilberto Perez, *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 36.

⁷⁶ De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 107.

⁷⁷ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 29.

⁷⁸ See both Maurizio Grande, *Il cinema di Saturno. Commedia e malinconia* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1992) and *La commedia all'italiana* (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2003).

⁷⁹ Piera Detassis, "A Castelluccio non ci torno più," 43. In fact, Detassis attributes this quality to ALL of Pietrangeli's female characters.

⁸⁰ Antonio Pietrangeli, "Perchè il dialetto," *Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*. (Venezia: Marsilio Editore, 1987), 155. Originally published in *L'eco del cinema e dello spettacolo* 64, 15 gennaio 1954. My translation.

⁸¹ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 30.

⁸² Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 333.

⁸³ I must credit Lucia Re with bringing this praxis to my attention in her keynote address "Eleonora Duse and Women: Performing Desire, Power and Knowledge" at the conference *Desiring Divas: the Diva in Modern Italian Culture*, Downing College, Cambridge University, September 23, 2011.

⁸⁴ Adriana Cavarero e Franco Restiano, *Le filosofie femministe* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2002) 98. My translation.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 78.

⁸⁷ Detassis, "'A Castelluccio non ci torno più,'" 47.

⁸⁸ De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 113.

⁸⁹ Detassis, "'A Castelluccio non ci torno più,'" 46.

⁹⁰ Not only is Celestina's new Roman *padrona* introduced in the same supine position position, laying on her bed, as Fellini's host is when she is introduced in his 1973 film, but the overgrown baby of a son is depicted in an almost identical fashion. Roman dialect, while not unique to these two directors, is also used to similar comic effect by both.

⁹¹ This problematization of motherhood and the tension between caretakers and biological mothers is still a very current theme in cinema, perhaps more so now than in the Fifties. One only need consider *The Help* (2011), a film that deals with race, class, and motherhood in the American South in the Sixties. Yet this historical film resolves the tensions and has the luxury of a historical distance from which to examine these problems. Pietrangeli's film neither resolves nor deals with these issues at a distance. They are contemporary, current problems for him.

⁹² Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 118.

⁹³ Heath as quoted in Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 119.

⁹⁴ Detassis, "'A Castelluccio non ci torno più,'" 46.

⁹⁵ Doane, 1987, 120.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language, A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 283.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 284.

⁹⁹ Cavarero and Restiano, "Il pensiero femminista. Un approccio teoretico," 99.

- ¹⁰⁰ For information on the film's reception, as well as the reception of Pietrangeli's other films, see Lorenzo Pellizzari, "Antonio Pietrangeli e la critica," in *Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli* a cura di Piera Detassi ed al. (Venezia: Marsilio Editore, 1987), 57-87.
- ¹⁰¹ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 51.
- ¹⁰² This idea of Hollywood ideology and the impasse of paternal logic and the Oedipal solution is discussed in Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008), 56.
- ¹⁰³ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 50-51.
- ¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 52.
- ¹⁰⁵ Stelio Martini, "Tre domande a Pietrangeli," *Cinema Nuovo* 126 (1958).
- ¹⁰⁶ Marjorie Rosen, "Popcorn Venus or How the Movies Have Made Women Smaller Than Life," in *Sexual Strategems: The World of Women in Film*, ed. Patricia Erens (New York: Horizons Press, 1979), 19.
- ¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 26.
- ¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 27.
- ¹⁰⁹ Pellizzari, "Antonio Pietrangeli e la critica," 68.
- ¹¹⁰ Rosen, "Popcorn Venuses or How the Movies Have Made Women Smaller Than Life," 28.
- ¹¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹¹² Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997), 9.
- ¹¹³ Giuseppe Turrone, cited in Pellizzari, "Antonio Pietrangeli e la critica," 68.
- ¹¹⁴ Giulio Cesare Castello, cited in Pellizzari, "Antonio Pietrangeli e la critica," 68.
- ¹¹⁵ Detassis, "A Castelluccio non ci torno più," 46.
- ¹¹⁶ Mary Wood, "Pink Neorealism and the Rehearsal of Gender Roles 1946-55," in *The Trouble with Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema*, ed. Phil Powrie, Ann Davies, and Bruce Babington (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), 142.
- ¹¹⁷ Jones cited in Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 112.
- ¹¹⁸ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 19.
- ¹¹⁹ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 104.
- ¹²⁰ Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 81.
- ¹²¹ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 77.
- ¹²² *ibid.*, 52-53.
- ¹²³ *ibid.*
- ¹²⁴ *ibid.*, 56.
- ¹²⁵ *ibid.*, 54.
- ¹²⁶ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 52.
- ¹²⁷ Pietrangeli cited in Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 52.

- ¹²⁸ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 9.
- ¹²⁹ Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1978), 745.
- ¹³⁰ Andrea Dworkin, *Life and Death: Unapologetic Writings on the Continuing War Against Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 139.
- ¹³¹ *ibid.*, 150.
- ¹³² Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 56.
- ¹³³ Molly Tambor, "Prostitutes and Politicians: The Women's Rights Movement in the Legge Merlin Debates," in *Women in Italy, 1945-1960: An Interdisciplinary Study*, ed. Penelope Morris (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2006), 131-132.
- ¹³⁴ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 148.
- ¹³⁵ Montesanti, "Ritratti cinematografici," 49.
- ¹³⁶ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 140-141.
- ¹³⁷ *ibid.*, 144.
- ¹³⁸ Tambor, "Prostitutes and Politicians," 140.
- ¹³⁹ Tambor, "Prostitutes and Politician," 141.
- ¹⁴⁰ Marco Massara, "Adua e le compagne." in *Un'invisibile presenza: Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*, ed. Guglielmina Morelli ed al. (Firenze: Il Castoro Cinema, 1998), 91.
- ¹⁴¹ Lino Micciché as cited in Lorenzo Pellizzari, "Antonio Pietrangeli e la critica" in *Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*, ed. Piera Detassis et al. (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1987), 69-70.
- ¹⁴² Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 58.
- ¹⁴³ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 58. Maraldi notes that Pietrangeli himself was not in attendance at the Festival as he was busy shooting another film.
- ¹⁴⁴ With permission of the Archivio Pietrangeli, Centro Cinema Cesena. Box 3G5.
- ¹⁴⁵ Claudio Quarantotto, "Diario di un Festival," *Il Borghese*, September 8, 1960, 380.
- ¹⁴⁶ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 72.
- ¹⁴⁷ Russell Campbell, *Marked Women: Prostitutes and Prostitution in Cinema* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).
- ¹⁴⁸ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 72.
- ¹⁴⁹ Catherine MacKinnon. *Women's Lives, Men's Laws* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 151.
- ¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 152.
- ¹⁵¹ *ibid.*
- ¹⁵² *ibid.*
- ¹⁵³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁴ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 73.

- ¹⁵⁵ Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 189.
- ¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 205.
- ¹⁵⁷ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 145.
- ¹⁵⁸ Montesanti, “Ritratti cinematografici,” 49.
- ¹⁵⁹ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 145.
- ¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 147.
- ¹⁶¹ MacKinnon, *Women’s Lives, Men’s Laws*, 158.
- ¹⁶² *ibid.*, 154.
- ¹⁶³ *ibid.*, 155.
- ¹⁶⁴ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 143.
- ¹⁶⁵ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 58..
- ¹⁶⁶ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 149.
- ¹⁶⁷ Danielle Hipkins, “‘I Don’t Want to Die’: Prostitution and Narrative Disruption in Visconti’s *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*.” in *Women in Italy, 1945-1960: An Interdisciplinary Study*, ed. Penelope Morris (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 194.
- ¹⁶⁸ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 144.
- ¹⁶⁹ Peter Bondanella. *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 121.
- ¹⁷⁰ Tullio Masoni e Paolo Vecchi, “Il realismo difficile di Antonio Pietrangeli”, in *Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*, ed. Piera Detassis et al. (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1987), 16.
- ¹⁷¹ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 147.
- ¹⁷² *ibid.*, 148.
- ¹⁷³ Christopher Wagstaff. *Italian Neorealist Cinema: An Aesthetic Approach* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 135. The whole paragraph is worth citing, since Wagstaff essentially agrees with our examination of the issue of prostitution in this chapter. “Another theme running through early post-war Italian cinema is prostitution. No matter that sometimes it is investigated seriously, and sometimes merely exploited for audience gratification; it functions like a shorthand.... Dozens of mainstream Italian commercial films make it the central theme of their narratives, and it is one of the favorite plot elements in the *strappalacrime* formula. Fellini picks it up in *Le notti di Cabiria*, Visconti once again in *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, and Antonioni in *Cronaca di un amore* and, more obliquely, his 1960s trilogy. It is taken up by Pasolini in his first two films, *Accattone* and *Mamma Roma*, and even by young Bertolucci in his first film, *La commare secca*.” What follows is a vague argument that “prostitution is like women doing the work that men had failed to do,” the theme, for Wagstaff remains “the examination of women’s sexuality as an economic resource in a time when masculinity was impotent to sustain the world’s productive equilibrium.” Pietrangeli’s film seems even more extraordinary in its realistic, political, and legal nature when compared to this list of films and Wagstaff’s attempt at explaining the proliferation of the prostitution motif, which touches on gender issues without delving into the social ramifications of these same issues.
- ¹⁷⁴ Cecchi D’Amico, cited in Hipkins, “I Don’t Want to Die,” 199.
- ¹⁷⁵ Hipkins, “I Don’t Want to Die,” 197.
- ¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 199.

- ¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 201.
- ¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 202.
- ¹⁷⁹ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 146.
- ¹⁸⁰ Baldelli as cited in Hipkins, “I Don’t Want to Die”, 202.
- ¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, 205.
- ¹⁸² *ibid.*
- ¹⁸³ Hipkins, “I Don’t Want To Die,” 199.
- ¹⁸⁴ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 149.
- ¹⁸⁵ Tambor, “Prostitutes and Politicians,” 143.
- ¹⁸⁶ Dworkin, *Life and Death*, 150.
- ¹⁸⁷ Maraldi. *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 62.
- ¹⁸⁸ Montesanti, “Ritratti cinematografici,” 52.
- ¹⁸⁹ Perez, *The Material Ghost*, 34.
- ¹⁹⁰ Perez, *The Material Ghost*, 28.
- ¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, 310-311.
- ¹⁹² Tullio Masoni and Vecchi, Paolo. “Il realismo difficile di Antonio Pietrangeli,” 37.
- ¹⁹³ *ibid.*, 14-15.
- ¹⁹⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 82.
- ¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 98.
- ¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹⁸ Jacqueline Reich. *Beyond the Latin Lover: Marcello Mastroianni, Masculinity, and Italian Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 169.
- ¹⁹⁹ Perez, *The Material Ghost*, 319.
- ²⁰⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 82.
- ²⁰¹ André Bazin. *Jean Renoir* (New York: Dell, 1974), 87.
- ²⁰² Herbert Marcuse. *One-Dimensional Man*, 186.
- ²⁰³ *ibid.*, 187.
- ²⁰⁴ Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,” 736.
- ²⁰⁵ Kristin Thompson, “The Concept of Cinematic Excess,” in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed. by Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 141.
- ²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 130.

- ²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 139.
- ²⁰⁸ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 76.
- ²⁰⁹ *ibid.*
- ²¹⁰ Maria Pia Fusco, “Recitare per Pietrangeli,” in *Io la conoscevo bene di Antonio Pietrangeli*, ed. Lino Micciché. (Turin: Lindau, 1999), 20.
- ²¹¹ Fullwood, “Commedie al femminile,” 96.
- ²¹² Gabrielle Lucantonio, ed. “Segnalazioni cinematografiche,” in *Antologia*, dvd jacket for Minerva Classics edition of *La visita*.
- ²¹³ Gabrielle Lucantonio, ed. “Cinema nuovo,” in *Antologia*, dvd jacket for Minerva Classics edition of *La visita*.
- ²¹⁴ Fusco, “Recitare per Pietrangeli” in *Io la conoscevo bene di Antonio Pietrangeli* (Turin: Lindau, 1999), 18.
- ²¹⁵ Thompson, “The Concept of Cinematic Excess,” 130-142.
- ²¹⁶ *ibid.*, 141.
- ²¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: Norton and Company, 1961), 55.
- ²¹⁸ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 75.
- ²¹⁹ Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 59.
- ²²⁰ Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,” 736.
- ²²¹ *ibid.*, 742.
- ²²² *ibid.*, 740.
- ²²³ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 149.
- ²²⁴ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 56.
- ²²⁵ *ibid.*
- ²²⁶ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 142.
- ²²⁷ *ibid.*, 162.
- ²²⁸ Giulio Martini, “Un impossibile viaggio al Nord,” in *Un'invisibile presenza: Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*. a cura di Guglielmina Morelli, ed al. (Cesena: Il Castoro, 1998), 50-51.
- ²²⁹ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 149.
- ²³⁰ Fullwood, “Commedie al femminile,” 94.
- ²³¹ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 162.
- ²³² Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 75.
- ²³³ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 46.

²³⁴ I would also propose a third, intertextual reading of this scene as a sort of revenge for Francois Périer's betrayal and abandonment of Cabiria in Fellini's *Le notti di Cabiria* (1957). Certainly, Pietrangeli knew the film and admired the director. Several thematic similarities including Cabiria's (Giulietta Masina) loneliness and desperation and the similarities between the two characters that Périer portrays in the two films make such a reading possible. In Fellini's earlier film, Périer's character physically robs Cabiria rather than marry her. In Pietrangeli's film, the director does not let the relationship arrive at that point, but instead gives Pina the opportunity to "unmask" Adolfo and reveal him for what he really is, a scoundrel set on taking advantage of a lonely woman, before he can establish himself as "lord and master" of Pina's domestic realm. In both cases, the promise of marriage renders the women vulnerable to emotional manipulation by Périer's characters, but Pina, unlike Cabiria, does not fall victim to his exploitation of the promise of marriage and what he seeks to gain from it economically.

²³⁵ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 164.

²³⁶ Thompson, "The Concept of Cinematic Excess," 139.

²³⁷ Fullwood, "Commedie al femminile," 94.

²³⁸ Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, 56.

²³⁹ Thompson, "The Concept of Cinematic Excess," 140.

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*

²⁴¹ Sandra Milo as cited in Fusco, 1999, 20.

²⁴² Pellizzari, "Antonio Pietrangeli e la critica," 75.

²⁴³ *ibid.*, 75-76.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Bruna Piatti, *La parmigiana* (Roma: Longanesi, 1962).

²⁴⁷ Guglielmina Morelli, "La parmigiana." in *Un'invisibile presenza: Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*, ed. Guglielmina Morelli ed al. (Firenze: Il Castoro Cinema, 1998), 101.

²⁴⁸ Peter Gay, Introduction to "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case History ("Dora")," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 172.

²⁴⁹ Morelli, "La parmigiana," 102.

²⁵⁰ Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case History ("Dora")," in *The Freud Reader*. ed. Peter Gay (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 181.

²⁵¹ Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case History ("Dora")," 173-174.

²⁵² *ibid.*, 176.

²⁵³ Morelli, "La parmigiana," 106.

²⁵⁴ Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case History ("Dora")," 176.

²⁵⁵ Morelli, "La parmigiana," 102.

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Jane Gallop. "Keys to Dora," in *In Dora's Case: Freud, Hysteria, Feminism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer ed. al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 205.

²⁵⁸ Jane Gallop. "Keys to Dora," 205.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*

²⁶⁰ "Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case History ("Dora")," 181.

²⁶¹ *ibid.*, 210.

²⁶² *ibid.*, 215.

²⁶³ Neil Hertz. "Dora's Secrets, Freud's Techniques," in *In Dora's Case: Freud, Hysteria, Feminism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer ed. al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 235.

²⁶⁴ Fullwood, "Commedie al femminile," 90.

²⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 92.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 93.

²⁶⁷ The line is "'er boom, 'er miracolo italiano... sarà perchè non vado in chiesa ma io non sono mai stato miracolato." My translation is slightly different due to the lack of the expression "essere miracolato" in English.

²⁶⁸ Morelli, "La parmigiana," 103.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*

²⁷¹ *ibid.*

²⁷² Armando Nannunzi, "Il piacere di un'intesa, Colloquio con Armando Nannunzi a cura di Barbara Perversi," in *Un'invisibile presenza: Il cinema di Antonio Pietrangeli*, ed. Guglielmina Morelli ed al. (Firenze: Il Castoro Cinema, 1998), 144.

²⁷³ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 71.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 72

²⁷⁵ Morelli, "La parmigiana," 107.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 103.

²⁷⁷ Fullwood, "Commedie al femminile," 97.

²⁷⁸ Morelli, "La parmigiana," 102.

²⁷⁹ Russell Campbell, *Marked Women: Prostitutes and Prostitution in the Cinema*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006). He discusses the punishment-redemption motif as the unifying characteristic of films about prostitution. In simple terms, the prostitute must be "dealt with" as a problematic figure, so she is either killed off or married off, both solutions which neutralize the problem that she presents. Dora is neither married or killed; instead, she simply moves on.

²⁸⁰ Fernand Crommelynck, *Le cocu manifique: farce en trois actes* (Paris: Éditions de la Sirène, 1921), 96.

²⁸¹ Jerry Tallmer, "Flemish playwright no longer lost in translation," *The Villager*, October 3-9, 2007, accessed April 2, 2012, http://thevillager.com/villager_231/flemishplaywright.html.

²⁸² *ibid.*

²⁸³ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 19.

- ²⁸⁴ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 46.
- ²⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 73.
- ²⁸⁶ Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 81.
- ²⁸⁷ While it is not a point I want to belabor, the hat as signifier connotes not only male identity but also male identity threatened by castration. If the head is a surrogate for the phallus, the hat serves to cover up this phallic proxy, to hide it, and to protect it. Andrea's paranoid behavior towards his wife, his hypocrisy and his insecurity can, in the simplest terms, all be boiled down to his insistence on men wearing hats.
- ²⁸⁸ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 46.
- ²⁸⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Random House, 1974), 316-317.
- ²⁹⁰ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 18.
- ²⁹¹ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 69.
- ²⁹² *ibid.*
- ²⁹³ Lacan cited in Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 69.
- ²⁹⁴ *ibid.*
- ²⁹⁵ Mark C. Micale, quoted by Sherwin B. Nuland in "Macho Misery: *Hysterical Men: The Hidden History of Male Nervous Illness*" *The New Republic* (April 15, 2009), accessed April 6, 2012, <http://www.tnr.com/article/books/macho-misery>.
- ²⁹⁶ Freud, "The Aetiology of Hysteria," in *The Freud Reader*, 101.
- ²⁹⁷ *ibid.*
- ²⁹⁸ Freud, "A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men," in *The Freud Reader*, 389.
- ²⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 388-389.
- ³⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 389.
- ³⁰¹ De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 108.
- ³⁰² Luce Irigaray, *Speculum: Dell'altro in quanto donna* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1974), 122.
- ³⁰³ *ibid.*
- ³⁰⁴ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 19.
- ³⁰⁵ Fullwood, "Commedie al femminile," 102-103.
- ³⁰⁶ Luca Barattoni. *Italian Post-Neorealist Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 229.
- ³⁰⁷ Roland Barthes, *Miti d'oggi*, trans. Lidia Lonzi (Torino: Einaudi, 1994), 143. My translation.
- ³⁰⁸ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 46.
- ³⁰⁹ Barthes, *Miti d'oggi*, 144.
- ³¹⁰ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 271-272.
- ³¹¹ Emmanuel Kant as quoted in *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, ed. Alan Soble et al. (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 278.

³¹² In Germi's film, while it is true that the wife, Rosalia, dies, the film ends with the couple, Ferdinando (Mastroanni) and Angela (Sandrelli) sailing away under the auspices of a happy ending, until a pan shows Angela playing footsie with the deck boy. In both films, the husbands' comeuppance arrives in the ironic form of an "ignorance is bliss" comedic plot twist.

³¹³ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 67.

³¹⁴ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 148.

³¹⁵ Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 142-148.

³¹⁶ Montesanti, "Ritratti cinematografici," 36.

³¹⁷ *ibid.*, 37-38.

³¹⁸ *ibid.*, 50.

³¹⁹ N. Capr. "Suicidi o quasi," *Mascotte* (1960, 40) My translation.

³²⁰ It is also worth pointing out that Monicelli and Lizzani, Pietrangeli's contemporaries and peers, both chose Adriana's same method of suicide by jumping off of buildings in Rome.

³²¹ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York, Random House, 1955) 5.

³²² Montesanti, "Ritratti cinematografici," 37-38.

³²³ This theory is borrowed from the feminist works of Teresa de Lauretis, Kaja Silverman, Mary Ann Doane, and Laura Mulvey. See bibliography for a complete list of their works.

³²⁴ These terms are all used with reference to Laura Mulvey's seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16.3 (August 1975) 6-18.

³²⁵ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 39.

³²⁶ I am using "lack" here in the Lacanian sense of the word. Silverman defines lack as "a castration to which all cultural subjects must submit, since it coincides with separation from the world of objects, and entry into language." In short, all subjects are symbolically castrated when entering into the realm of representation. This concept of lack is important to representations of gender in film since this "symbolic castration" that the lack symbolizes is often covered over by classic film narrative, which "projects male lack onto female characters in the guise of anatomical deficiency and discursive inadequacy." (Silverman, *Alice Doesn't*, 1).

³²⁷ *ibid.*

³²⁸ Richard Dyer elaborates this theory of sexual availability as ideal femininity about the image of Marilyn Monroe in *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1986).

³²⁹ Ugo Casiraghi, "Perchè una ragazza d'oggi può uccidersi," *Unità* (Milano, 2 dicembre, 1965) My translation.

³³⁰ Pietrangeli shows his formal skill as a director here with a beautiful segway during which a close-up of Gassman's face, assumed to be part of the narrative sequence of this film, is shown to be the object of Adriana's gaze as she is watching it projected onto the screen in the theater where she is working. The film, ironically enough, is *Il successo*, *The Success*.

³³¹ Doane, *Femmes Fatales*, 26.

³³² Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983), 202.

³³³ Montesanti, "Ritratti cinematografici," 37-38.

- ³³⁴ Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity, and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992) 142.
- ³³⁵ Antonio Pietrangeli, "La mia Adriana. La Ultra Film presenta un film di Antonio Pietrangeli, Io la conoscevo bene." Box 22C, 1–6. Pietrangeli Archives, Cesena.
- ³³⁶ Film history is rife with examples of films that end with the fetishizing of the dead female body. From *Prix de beauté* (1930) to *Black Swan* (2010), it is a motif that assures a certain psychological satisfaction and resolution within the spectator. Let us not forget that Natalie Portman's performance as an anorexic, manic, and finally suicidal ballerina won her an Oscar and that this film ends with the display of her bloody, broken body.
- ³³⁷ De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 29, 36.
- ³³⁸ *ibid.*
- ³³⁹ Leonardo Autera, "Io la conoscevo bene," *Bianco e nero* 1-2 (1966): XXVII.
- ³⁴⁰ See Silverman, 1983, 43-53, for a discussion of the linguistics of Benveniste. For more on this theory of indexical signifiers, see Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971).
- ³⁴¹ Silverman, 1983, 196.
- ³⁴² François Truffaut, "French Boxing and Finance, or Two or Three Things I Know About Him." Rialto Pictures Press book of Jean-Luc Godard, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, 1966, 4. The comparison between Godard and Pietrangeli does not stop at the similarities between the titles of their films. These contemporary filmmakers are drawn to stories with female protagonists as well as the theme of prostitution. Several of Godard's films end with the death of the protagonists, either at the hands of the female lead like in *Breathless* (1960) or the female lead is herself shot as in *My Life to Live* (1962). My criticism of Godard, here, is based on his obsession with form, a tendency which often abstracts the female protagonist to symbol of the ideological critique he is trying to make at her expense. Despite his protestations, I believe that his elimination of traditional narrative only obscures his authorial intentions.
- ³⁴³ *ibid.*
- ³⁴⁴ Chuck Kleinhans, "Two or Three Things I Know About Her: Godard's Analysis of Women in Capitalist Society," in *Sexual Strategems: The World of Women in Film*, ed. Patricia Erens (New York: Horizons Press, 1974), 75.
- ³⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 77.
- ³⁴⁶ Montesanti, "Ritratti cinematografici," 60.
- ³⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 60-61
- ³⁴⁸ Jackie Stacey, "Feminine Fascinations: Forms of Identification in star-audience relations," in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991), 141.
- ³⁴⁹ Catherine O'Rawe, "'I padri e i maestri': Genre, Auteurs, and Absences in Italian Film Studies," *Italian Studies* 63.2 (2008): 173.
- ³⁵⁰ Danielle Hipkins, "Why Italian Film Studies Need a Second Take on Gender," *Italian Studies*, 63.2 (2008): 213-234.
- ³⁵¹ Maurizio Grande, *Il cinema di Saturno* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1992), 65-66.
- ³⁵² Maraldi, *Antonio Pietrangeli*, 88-89.
- ³⁵³ Barattoni, *Italian Post-Neorealist Cinema*, 4.
- ³⁵⁴ Barattoni, *Italian Post-Neorealist Cinema*, 133.

³⁵⁵ Brunetta, preface, 15.

³⁵⁶ Barattoni, *Italian Post-Neorealist Cinema*, 12.

³⁵⁷ Mario Sesti, "Sceneggiare per Pietrangeli: Conversazione con Ettore Scola," in Micciché, *'Io la conoscevo bene'* di Antonio Pietrangeli (Turin: Lindau, 1999), 25. Cited in Barattoni, 138.

³⁵⁸ Russell Campbell, *Marked Women: Prostitutes and Prostitution in Cinema*.