

Rada Bieberstein

Lost Diva – Found Woman

Female Representations in *New Italian Cinema*
and National Television from 1995 to 2005

SCHÜREN

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Preface

In *Lost Diva – Found Woman. Female Representations in New Italian Cinema and National Television from 1995 to 2005*, Rada Bieberstein accounts for the attempt of women in Italian film to free themselves from the stereotyping imposed on them by a largely male *Weltanschauung*. She ultimately concentrates her study on ten years quite close to us, 1995 to 2005; nevertheless, she also presents a concise and knowing historical overview of the representation of women in Italian film history, often closed within the suffocating boundaries of two extremes – the good and the evil, being allowed to be either mother/wife/saint or diva/ femme fatale /prostitute. Quite rightly, Bieberstein notes how, notwithstanding this stereotyping, the female figure has consistently taken on a symbolic function within the narratives of this rich national cinematic tradition, and has been charged with the multiple meanings generated by a metaphoric relationship with the country and its people. As the author notes, only rarely is the attempt made for an image of a woman in Italian film as a character in her own right, representing herself and her kind. The films by the new Italian cinema (1995–2005) presented in this volume illustrate this change in the representations of women in their contemporary national cinema.

Many years ago, in my volume dedicated to Italian filmmaking, while discussing Ettore Scola's *WE ALL LOVED EACH OTHER SO MUCH*, I suggested that in this enchanting cinematic fiction three is the magic number that allows for internal mirroring and transformation which ultimately enact a thorough retrieval of reality: three men, and a triad made of Italy, cinema and a woman who await to be mastered and conquered by them. Because of the woman, Luciana, in fact, three worlds and three narratives can unfold in front of our eyes, and three diverse interpretations of comedy, of the filmic event and of the country itself develop. Luciana, likewise many other women in the history of Italian filmmaking in the postwar years, takes on a dense metaphoric meaning, and becomes a prismatic object which stands for love, erotism but also cinema, politics and the country itself. Yet, quite interestingly, this woman who is born in the narrative as a fairly unaware subject, barely capable of uttering almost incomprehensible words and thus drawing quite meaningless paths for her life, in the end of the picture is a strong subject who reclaims her right to a freedom of choice – in personal life and in history. Luciana's trajectory in the film's story is the one many women have travelled in the postwar years.

Lost Diva – Found Woman concludes by outlining the ways in which the new Italian cinema uses female protagonists and contemporary notions of realism and subjectivity to challenge established social discourses; in her central argument, Bieberstein resorts to contemporary interpretations of realism to establish a close link between the real and its challenge, a theme that runs through much of Italian contemporary filmmaking and popular cultural productions. As observed by Bieberstein, the woman's endeavour as represented in many films of the decade oscillates between a journey towards a self-conscious emancipation and the opposition to old and prevailing social conditions, then Luciana in Ettore Scola's *WE ALL LOVED EACH OTHER SO MUCH* may be the Mother figure for all the female characters populating our contemporary cinematic silver screen.

In the rich critical panorama on Italian filmmaking, Rada Bieberstein's *Lost Diva – Found Woman* comes to fill a gap by which the role of women – as characters but also as people (actresses, directors, and critics), has been largely overlooked over time. Bieberstein reviews the few important critical studies dedicated to the role of women in Italian films and filmmaking, and then proceeds with a distinctive critical and theoretical apparatus. The author matches Jungian psychoanalysis – introducing it as an unusual approach for film analyses –, as well as women and cultural studies with the most recent acquisitions made by film studies, to the poignant analysis of a number of films as well as television productions such as *VERISSIMO* or fictions such as *CARABINIERI*. The volume also contains an outstandingly large bibliography and an equally extensive filmography, which constitute a rich grounding for further studies, after this excellent first contribution to fill the gap on the subject.

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1 Introduction

On the one hand, representation serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects; on the other, representation is the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women.¹

Judith Butler

Beautiful women gifted with character and charm, passionate men who read the wishes of their loved ones from their eyes; Mediterranean goddesses such as Sophia Loren and Latin Lovers such as Marcello Mastroianni; the melodramas of the 1950s and the fights between men and women in the auteur and genre films of the 1960s – all this populates the collective memory and imagery of the audience when considering gender in Italian cinema. Since these famous filmic reflections on the condition of gender in Italian society, things have changed. With the beginning of the 1980s the re-evaluation of the relationships between the genders has become a central issue in media discourses, including national cinema. Therefore, of particular interest to the present study is the representation of women in Italian cinema from 1995 to 2005, paying close attention to the films of *New Italian Cinema*.

However, the focus on women and the issue of gender and identity in film is not an isolated Italian phenomenon since the mid-1990s. Mainstream films around the globe since then have paid more attention to women and female characters in general as evidenced in productions such as *AIMÉE & JAGUAR* (Färberböck 1999), *CAL-NDAR GIRLS* (Cole 2003), *EYES WIDE SHUT* (Kubrick 1999), *HEAD IN THE CLOUDS* (Duigan 2004), *SHE HATE ME* (Lee 2004), *THE STEPFORD WIVES* (Oz 2004), *VERA DRAKE* (Leigh 2004), *VOLVER / THE RETURN* (Almodóvar 2006), *8 FEMMES / 8 WOMEN* (Ozon 2002). Similar tendencies can be observed in Italian films of the same period, such as *CASOMAI / IF BY CHANCE* (D'Alatri 2002), *LE FATE IGNORANTI / HIS SECRET*

1 Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 1.

LIFE (Ozpetek 2000), FUORI DAL MONDO / NOT OF THIS WORLD (Piccioni 1998), I GIORNI DELL'ABBANDONO / DAYS OF ABANDONMENT (Faenza 2005), IL PIÙ BEL GIORNO DELLA MIA VITA / THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE (C. Comencini 2001), NON TI MUOVERE / DON'T MOVE (Castellitto 2004) or LA SCONOSCIUTA / THE UNKNOWN (Tornatore 2006).²

1.1 Women and Film

Interest in the character of the woman as demonstrated by Italian directors, especially since 1999, was the spark that initiated the analysis of female representation in Italian cinema from 1995 to 2005 as proposed in this study.

This attention to women is a significant development. Throughout Italian film history the woman has occupied a precarious position on celluloid and very few women can be counted among known Italian directors or scriptwriters. Such examples include Elvira Notari (1875–1946), Lina Wertmüller (1926), Liliana Cavani (1933), Cristina Comencini (1956), Francesca Archibugi (1960), Suso Cecchi D'Amico (1914).³ On screen the Italian woman has been confined to the extremes of good and evil, meaning she was allowed either the role of mother, wife and saint or of femme fatale, diva and prostitute. Despite such stereotyping, the woman has always had a fundamentally symbolic function for this national cinema. The woman and the female body – her/its use, her/its honour and her/its representation – stand for Italy and its people. The use of the woman as a personification of the nation has allowed Italian directors to describe and illustrate the state of their native country, its developments, its experiences and its crises. Rarely was the woman a character in its own right, representing herself and her kind.

This study suggests that the recent concern with women in Italian film is linked to the manifestation of the broad success the directors of *New Italian Cinema* had with the audience. Though the origins of this cinema go back to the 1970s, its public recognition began in the 1990s.

The filmmakers of *New Italian Cinema* focus primarily on the issue of identity and, in relation to this, on the loss of the real suffered by Italian society as a whole. They have articulated the urgent themes about identity and the real mainly through

2 Official English distribution titles of Italian and other non-English language films are cited directly after the film in question. If films do not have an English distribution title, a translation is given by the author in Roman letters. Films which keep their original title are not translated.

3 If at the time of publication the date of birth was not available, it is not given behind the names of directors, actors, actresses or scriptwriters.

the issue of gender as determined by the expectations of society and the institutions concerned.

Within this thematic choice, a shift was observed with the year 1995. The then prominent male-centred films, represented by the work of such directors as Gabriele Salvatores (1950), gave way to female-centred films or choral stories with female protagonists. In other words, female characters were positioned at the centre of a great number of *New Italian Cinema* films through which these filmmakers gave the woman a key role in the ongoing discussion of identity and gender definitions in Italian society.

Then, the aim of this study is to discover the representation given to the contemporary Italian woman by *New Italian Cinema* from 1995 to 2005. Therefore, the study of the female characters has three objectives:

- (a) in what way does *New Italian Cinema* take part in the process of questioning, remodelling and reforming gender and identity definitions and understandings;
- (b) through which social topics are women characterised and in which social aspects and conditions are they contextualised by *New Italian Cinema*;
- (c) to what extent do the representations comment on the actual social, cultural, political and economic conditions of women in Italy since 1995.

The deconstruction of the representation of the woman between 1995 and 2005 ought to reveal whether *New Italian Cinema* mirrors, distorts or constructs a new reality and if it proposes therefore new perspectives on identity and gender issues. This concept implies that this cinema is continuing the critical practice familiar from Italian film history, where social and cinematic realities have been mutually influencing each other. In consequence, this study continues the illumination of this reciprocal relationship between cinema and nation.

First, the special attention paid to heroines in *New Italian Cinema* films rests on its core themes – the definition of identity and the loss of the real. In this context, the loss of the real refers to the break up or vanishing of traditional social structures in Italian society. Vanishing structures include not only the family, but concern also the individual's inability to live in the present, his/her incapacity to recognise what is real and therefore meaningful and the obliteration of the individual's past. These aspects are intimately bound to the definition, construction and maintenance of identity.

Apparently, women's primary function in relation to these core themes is the embodiment and display of social unease and problems. Hence, *New Italian Cinema* remains true to the national film tradition of using the woman as a metaphor for the state of the nation, as a construction within a set of cinematic discourses and with specific narrative functions – similar to how Antonio Pietrangeli (1919–1968)

and Michelangelo Antonioni (1912–2007) used the heroines of their films during the 1960s. The female character is a mirror of reality and a seismograph of society whose task it is to mediate in family and generational conflicts as well as between people from different geographical regions and social classes.

Second, the film analyses in this study aim for a multi-faceted and multi-layered interpretation of the female characters presented. It is hypothesised that the woman becomes patron of her own reality, which is visualised in most films through the heroine's individuation and maturation. The environments concerned with this process can be the family, marriage and life in a partnership, working life, journeys or social and political events. Hence, *New Italian Cinema* might narrate stories of women different from the ones known from Italian film history or from certain commercial films of the last decades.

Third, reflecting on the two main groups of social relevance, it is likely that the women most frequently portrayed will be those in their late twenties and early thirties as well as those over fifty years of age. The analysis of the representation of the first age group is of marked interest as the loss of the real is felt particularly strong within it. The reasons for this feeling is rooted in specific social and political conditions in Italy: Silvio Berlusconi's administration (President of the Council of Ministers 1994, 2001–2006); membership in the European Union; terrorist threats; high unemployment; social issues regarding foreigners and *extra-communitari* (usually referring to citizens from non-European countries); difficulties women encounter when searching for employment in spite of their higher education compared with men; and finally an extraordinarily low birth rate. The forced confrontation with these conditions, also fostered and enhanced through the productions of *New Italian Cinema* leads to and necessitates for the country and its people to search and find a new national identity and new relationships between the genders. However, this is not the first time the topic has been addressed on screen. Italians' difficulties with their sense of identity have been at the heart of previous film historic periods as well.

Fourth, the hypothesis is advanced that the socio-critical contribution of *New Italian Cinema* in this period of transition lies in the representation of the woman in her process of individual maturation. In other words, the films are unlikely to comment directly on society's problems regarding the woman – such as the union between work life and child-raising – and will not call for radical changes in gender conventions. Rather, the depiction of how the woman relates to and copes with the core themes of this cinema reveals its attitudes to these social changes.

To close the circle to the first hypothesis made, this sketch of the emotional and psychological condition of the woman will probably be the metaphor for the nation's social distress and identity crisis.

Why talk about the representation of women in Italian film since the mid-1990s, when there are historical, economical or technological aspects to be analysed, which have introduced numerous changes to the Italian film industry in this period? From a historical point of view the time in question, 1995 to 2005, is special in the history of Italian cinema. It is hailed as having ended the crisis of national cinema that lasted for over twenty years and as marking the beginning of the box-office success of *New Italian Cinema*. Its productions have brought Italian cinema, so rich in traditions and cult films, back to the attention of the international audience, and more importantly, back to the regard of its own national audience.

Furthermore, recent Italian films offer a large number of thematic, theoretical and film-analytical phenomena worth examining, such as

- (a) the ever present debate of the last two decades among Italian film critics and intellectuals on whether Italian cinema has finally overcome its crisis that commenced with the death of the representatives of *neorealismo* and the decline of auteurs such as Roberto Rossellini (1906–1977), Luchino Visconti (1906–1976), Federico Fellini (1920–1993) or Michelangelo Antonioni;
- (b) discussions on the use of new technologies such as digital filmmaking;
- (c) the flourishing of genres in Italian cinema such as the horror film, the thriller, the comedy, the road movie or the autobiographical film;
- (d) the significance of the regional background of directors such as Giuseppe Tornatore's (1956) Sicily or Mario Martone's (1959) Naples;
- (e) the impact of legal changes and shifts in the global market and cinema industry on film production;
- (f) the prevalence of social and historical themes such as the family or the Mafia and its implications.

Many of the above mentioned topics and the films of a number of successful Italian directors are incorporated in the discussion on the representation of female characters in *New Italian Cinema*.

The obsessive interest in and the search for identity are the main themes of many of these recent Italian films. In general, the analysis of the issue of identity reveals the significant link between the articulation and structuring of identity and the role film plays in this individual and collective process. Not least, the issue of identity is one of the principle preoccupations of both European Cinema and *New Italian Cinema*, which focus on it with themes like the past, the memory and the individual. One of the most successful Italian films of the last twenty years explores these issues

thoroughly – NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO / CINEMA PARADISO (Tornatore 1988): an aged filmmaker returns to his home village in Sicily and recalls his childhood when he fell in love with the movies and became friends with the projectionist at the local cinema.

The reason for this concern with identity is that it has become thoroughly unstable in its personal, national and cultural dimensions. This state of fragmented, multiple, momentarily prone to change and substitution, ambiguous and contradictory identity has been characterised in cultural theory as the integral part of post-modern identity and theory.⁴ Whichever position to post-modernism as theoretical discourse is taken, its description gives a complex picture of the individual and of society at the turn of the millennium facing globalisation and mass media.

The knot between the post-modern condition of individuals and cinema's active role in the construction of identity lies in the individuals' need for stories to make sense of themselves and to shape their identities. *New Italian Cinema* has responded to this need with particular and renewed attention to storytelling, presenting stories and protagonists that overcome the post-modern condition. Therefore, cinema has a direct influence on how humans perceive and understand themselves and the world around them. It guides their perception of reality and helps identify their selves through the stories it narrates.

This book is only the first response to the lack of systematic academic research on the representation of women in Italian cinema in general and *New Italian Cinema* in particular. Certainly, to elaborate specific features and characteristics of a given period, artistic label or theme demands a retrospective position, but despite the lack of historical distance, the theoretical construct of the study is to guarantee the scientific objectivity required to analyse the representation of women in *New Italian Cinema* from 1995 to 2005.

4 Post-modernism does not only describe a social and cultural state of being. Since the 1980s various sciences have given different definitions to the term and refer different historical periods to it. Psychologist Steinar Kvale gives a definition of post-modernism, which serves the present purpose without deepening the discussion on the subject: "A doubt that any human truth is a simple objective representation of reality. A focus on the way societies use language to construct their own realities. A preference to the local and specific over the universal and abstract. A renewed interest in narrative and story-telling. Acceptance that different descriptions of reality can't always be measured against one another in any final – i.e. objective or nonhuman – way. A willingness to accept things as they are on the surface rather than to search (à la Freud or Marx) for Deeper Meanings." Anderson, Walter ed. *The Fontana Postmodernism Reader*. London: FontanaPress, 1996, p. 18. The main ideas of post-modernism head in different directions and are not coherent with each other. Typical is also the duality between fragmentation and the search for an all-embracing frame that can unite its contradictions.

1.2 Women, Deconstruction and Myth

Focusing on female portraits and gender in this study on *New Italian Cinema* does not intend to foster a particular feminist perspective on or preferred reading of the representation of the woman and the female body, of the discourse of the gaze and possible identifications of the female viewer or of Freudian or Lacanian analytical approaches as proposed by various feminists and feminist film scholars.⁵ In other words, as feminist Judith Butler affirms:

[...] the juridical formation of language and politics that represents women as “the subject” of feminism is itself a discursive formation and effect of a given version of representational politics.⁶

The analysis of women in *New Italian Cinema* from 1995 to 2005 aims to reveal certain psycho-socio-historical zones.⁷ It aims to investigate the direct and indirect testimonies its films provide about the social and political concerns, the psychological states and the emotional moods of Italian society of the time in question.⁸

This film-sociological approach considers cinema as a mirror of a given society in a given place and time. Then, the study starts out from the assumption that film reveals information and provides insight about the unconscious of a nation and changes in society – Italian society in this case. Hence, there is an invisible, deeply reaching link between film images and the culture that produces them.

Furthermore, the representations of women offered in *New Italian Cinema* are contextualised in Italian film history (Chapter 3), contemporary Italian television and Italian society (both in Chapter 4). The analysis of the representation of women in these different media borrows an approach from cultural studies, which places the roles, identities, tasks and themes most frequently characterising the heroines in

5 cf., Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990; De Lauretis, Teresa. *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987; Doane, Mary Ann. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987; Doane, Mary Ann. “Film und Maskerade: Zur Theorie des weiblichen Zuschauers.” *Frauen und Film* 38 (1985): 4–19; Mulvey, Laura. *Visual and other Pleasures*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989; Mulvey, Laura. “The myth of Pandora: A psychoanalytical approach.” Pietropaolo, Laura, and Ada Testaferri eds. *Feminisms in the Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 3–20.

6 Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990, p. 2.

7 cf., Andrew, Dudley. “Film and history.” Hill, John, and Pamela Church Gibson eds. *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 179; Ferro, Marc. *Cinema and History*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988, pp. 83–83.

8 cf., Andrew, Dudley. “Film and history.” Hill, John, and Pamela Church Gibson eds. *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 176–189.

relation to dominant ideological discourses. With this approach reference is made to the importance media have in the construction of social and cultural reality.⁹

The information obtained about the social differentiation of the film characters, with reference to education, employment, gender and regional background, reveals hegemonic or institutional rhetoric or its subversion. Hence, the representation or misrepresentation of women across different media uncovers ideological issues and negotiations or compromises. In ideological terms, relating the films to the social, cultural and economical changes Italian society has faced in the last twenty years allows conclusions on whether they simulate, deform or construct the reality of Italian society and women in a different way. In brief, the cinematic deconstruction of myth and revelation of counter-myth on women in *New Italian Cinema* is at the core.

For the analyses of the film characters, the concepts and theories of Analytical Psychology by Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) have revealed themselves as most useful. Analytical Psychology serves to illuminate how the stories told by *New Italian Cinema* can contribute to the development of both the individual and collective conscious of the film characters as well as of the audience. It helps to question and deconstruct the reality, identity and gender understanding represented. In particular, the theories on issues such as the collective unconscious, the archetypes, the anima and the animus are introduced (Chapter 5). They allow for a critical discussion of the representation of women that encourages the search for counter-myths and a more differentiated understanding of the narratives and characters offered.

Three aspects of Analytical Psychology are of particular relevance to the present study, though they are not to be the exclusive approach to the given film analyses. First, C. G. Jung uses Analytical Psychology with a psycho-historic approach. This means that constructive links can be established between the human psyche, a given society and its myths and representations in expressive cultural forms such as film or television. From this theoretical perspective conclusions can be drawn about the contribution of *New Italian Cinema* to the current discussion of the situation of women in Italy and the meaning these filmmakers attribute to the female characters in their films. Second, the characters, events and situations depicted in the films refer to social, cultural and popular myths, such as the myth of the family, of the journey or of the generational conflict. C. G. Jung's theory on myth offers a key to the main themes and recurring motives in the films and their significance for the individual and collective psyche today. Also, the commercial success of the films se-

9 cf., Hepp, Andreas. *Cultural Studies und Medienanalyse: Eine Einführung*. Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999, p. 17.

lected for analyses, and their depiction of certain cultural myths, testify that they hit certain inner and maybe still unconscious themes relevant to Italian society. Third, characteristic for *New Italian Cinema* is its concern with the psychological state of its characters. Therefore, in some cases use is made of C. G. Jung's archetype theory to analyse the representation of women. Archetypes describe different psychological states and functions inherent to individuals. This method provides insight into the functions of women in given film situations and their relationships to themselves. The choice to apply C. G. Jung's Analytical Psychology to some film analyses in this study offers a new point of view on the argument in question and helps to reveal that Italian society is in a transformation process that does not allow for fixed and secure cinematic images, representations and stories of itself and of its reality.

The common feature between the theoretical approaches, film sociology, cultural studies and Analytical Psychology applied in this study lies in their conviction that there is a link between film images and the society that produces them.

In other words, cinema, by its inherent characteristics, gives answers or pleasures to its audience, or both, and meets collective social and psychological needs. Therefore, *New Italian Cinema* offers responses to collective necessities, sensations or fears of a certain part of the Italian cinema-going audience. It adds another layer to the dialogue between the viewer's reality and film reality, as it links social and psychological myth to extra-diegetic aspects such as ideology or politics in order to come to terms with the present.

1.3 About this Book

Given the intention to gain knowledge about the representation of women and Italian society in *New Italian Cinema*, the films' success with the box-office has been chosen as selection criterion for the analysis. Only top 10 box-office films are considered. This determines that very few films of female directors are analysed. During the selection of the films three overarching themes were identified. The films have been grouped in three chapters referring to the following themes

- (a) the conquest of the ordinary and its myths (Chapter 6),
- (b) the present and the past (Chapter 7),
- (c) consciousness-raising (Chapter 8).

Clustering the films serves to pin down the roles given to women in *New Italian Cinema* in a more differentiated way. In this sense, reinforcing images different to the traditional, one dimensional representations of women as sex objects or as

man-hating women of the 1980s demonstrates the reflections of these filmmakers on changing gender identities and expectations in society.

Much has been written on Italian cinema. International research has paid great attention to *neorealismo* and has dedicated many volumes to directors such as Roberto Rossellini or Federico Fellini. Especially the Italian scientific literature discusses more in depth issues such as genre, the significance of children and adolescents in the national cinema and shifts in film industry itself.

On the other hand, monographs and overviews of *New Italian Cinema* are missing. Merely one publication (Zagarrio 2006) considers explicitly the developments in this cinema in the years 2000 to 2006. Further information can be gained from various books with single chapters treating the issue. Usually, they cover the historical period up to 1995, or 1999 at the most. Volumes by Gianni Canova (1999), Barbara Corsi (2001), Peppe D'Antonio (1999), Marcia Landy (2000), Carlo Macchitella (2003), Monica Repetto and Carlo Tagliabue (2000), Piere Sorlin (1996), Vito Zagarrio (2001) are to be considered as well. The chapters or essays in these volumes provide valuable information on the latest years of Italian film history (Millicent Marcus 2002, Mario Sesti 1996, Vito Zagarrio 2000). Other authors have succeeded in keeping the balance between more general historical introductions and well-grounded chapters giving detailed insight on specific topics or issues (Manuela Gieri 1995, William Hope 2005, Mary Wood 2005). However, one must point out that Italian publications in particular focus only marginally on film analysis and are more concerned with positioning films in their thematic context (Giulio Martini and Guglielmina Morelli 1997). However, the topics, themes and issues discussed are similar in the different volumes, presenting individual points of view.

In order to give an overview of the very dynamic historic period of *New Italian Cinema*, which has its origins in the 1970s, Chapter 2 focuses on issues of cultural studies, delineating what the term or group *New Italian Cinema* means and what constitutes its importance for Italian cinema from 1995 to 2005. Reference is made to audiences, legal and structural changes in Italian film industry and genre. This allows for a contextualisation of the developments in Italian film of the period in question and for an appreciation of certain critical and theoretical discussions on the nation's cinema still in progress.

A historical account of the representation of women in Italian cinema is given in Chapter 3. The current state of research on this topic is scarce. Italian film studies have not expressed great interest in it up to the 1980s, for there are only three pub-

lications that pick up the subject: Giovanni Grazzini's *Eva dopo Eva: La donna nel cinema italiano dagli anni Sessanta a oggi* (1980), Annabella Miscuglio's and Rony Daopoulo's *Kinomata: La donna nel cinema* (1980) and Patrizia Carrano's *Malafemmina* (1977). Bearing in mind that the Italian feminist movement was at its height during the 1980s, a strong feminist influence is inherent to the respective publications. Since the 1980s there has been no research published in Italy on the contemporary image of women in national film. However, since the mid-1990s a number of studies on the representation of the woman and her role in Italian film history have been conducted: Gianfranco Casadio's *Adultere, fedifraghe, innocenti: La donna del "neorealismo popolare" nel cinema italiano degli anni Cinquanta* (1990), Tonia Rivello's *Women in Italian Cinema* (1999), a collection of essays by Italian and American researchers discussing the significance of actresses such as Silvana Mangano and their roles. *Donne e cinema nell'Europa duemila fra immaginario e quotidianità* by Maria Ossia (1998) reflects on a number of national European cinemas, including the Italian one. However, the points made in these essays are general. Giovanna Grignaffini's *La scena madre* (2002) investigates the role of the mother and woman in cinema in general, dedicating also a chapter to Italian film history.

With regards to gender and myth and their subversion in Italian film, a dissertation at the University of Los Angeles was published in 2001. In it, Dana Elizabeth Renga focuses on the means through which Italian artists have subverted prevailing gender constructions in literature and film in the historical period from the 1940s to the 1970s. A publication by Maggie Günsberg, *Italian Cinema: Gender and Genre* (2005), looks in great detail into various genres such as comedy and western and the respective gender constructions. However, her research covers only the historical period from the end of World War II to the end of the 1970s. The brief historical account of the representation of women in Italian cinema given in Charter 3 of his book spans from the end of World War II to the year 2005 making reference to actresses as well as female directors. This unique review of female representations in the nation's film history is one of the scientific contributions made in this study.

Sociological aspects regarding Italian society and the representation of women in Italian television between 1995 and 2005 are presented in Chapter 4. A considerable number of Italian publications on the situation of women in Italy – through history as well as on their current social condition – emerged in the decade before the new millennium. Most of them are feminist interpretations of political and economic events or focus primarily on the situation of women at work.

Considering the limited application of C. G. Jung's Analytical Psychology to film analyses, Chapter 5 is dedicated to the relevance it can have for film studies, clarify-

ing in more detail how this approach is useful to the study of the representation of women in *New Italian Cinema* from 1995 to 2005. The scientific material available is not abundant. Traditionally, research using Analytical Psychology in film studies focuses on genres such as the detective film or science fiction where archetypes are easily identified and interpreted (Luigi Forlai and Augusto Bruni 1998, Christopher Hauke and Ian Alister 2001, Luke Hockley 2001, James Iaccino 1998). However, there have been attempts to introduce the cultural significance and dimension of C.G. Jung's work into film theory and film analysis as publications by John Izod (2001) show.

The heart of the study consists of the film analyses concerning the representation of women in *New Italian Cinema* (Chapters 6, 7 and 8). For this, the selected films are clustered in the three groups mentioned earlier: the conquest of the ordinary and its myths, the present and the past, consciousness-raising. The close analysis of women in Italian cinema serves to establish a "mapping" of the representations and functions of women offered. Ultimately, it ought to reveal in which way the deconstruction of gender is to remedy or recover the loss of the real as experienced by Italian society.

In conclusion, this study aims to trace the possible path that links *New Italian Cinema* with its national predecessors and their struggle to elaborate new ways to understand Italian reality.

In brief, a cultural history of cinema proceeds neither through the direct appreciation of films, nor through the direct amassing of 'relevant facts' associated with the movies, but through an indirect reconstruction of the conditions of representation that permitted such films to be made, to be understood, even to be misunderstood [...]. This is a doubly hermeneutic venture, for it puts into play the reading of films for their cultural consequence and the reading of the culture for the values or moods conveyed in films.¹⁰

10 Andrew, Dudley. "Film and history." Hill, John, and Pamela Church Gibson eds. *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 186.