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DONNE / WOMEN:
CANADIAN FILM AND VIDEO MAKERS OF ITALIAN
HERITAGE

In October of 1971, in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau acknowledged the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism's Book IV: *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*. He stated,

For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly [...] Such a policy should help to break down discriminatory attitudes. (Trudeau, *Hansard*, 8545)

It was here where the Multiculturalism Act, Bill C-93, had its genesis and then became law in 1988. Though multiculturalism has been nurtured both symbolically and through policy statements and legislation, both Himani Bannerji's (2000) and Will Kymlicka's (2001) writings provide ample evidence for the ongoing lively debate and the complexity of the "multiculturalism" experience in Canada and what "diversity" can mean both in words and in actions. As Bannerji points out, multiculturalism is not a thing: "It is a mode of the workings of the state, an expression of an interaction of social relations in dynamic tension with each other, losing and gaining its political form with fluidity" (Bannerji, *The Dark Side*, 120).

The Act, then, is a living tug of words and actions between diverse peoples. One of the continuing areas of tension for Canadians is that while some ethnic and visible minority groups have begun to receive more understanding and support in relation to the dangers of reproducing their stereotypes and how these can contribute to the perpetration of racism, Italian Canadians instead, continue to be marginalised. There is a silence in academic research that explores the problem of negative stereotyping from an Italian Canadian perspective. Most mainstream representations, both in Canada and in the USA, continue to reproduce many negative stereotypes of Italians (L'Orfano, "Challenging Exclusion," 2002; Italic Studies Institute, *MediaWatch*, 2001). Italian North Americans are constantly told that the overwhelming negative media reproductions are not

only supported in their representations, but are even legitimised with government financing and artistic awards. Recent Canadian examples are *Mob Stories* (2002) and *Mambo Italiano* (2003), both funded by Telefilm Canada and *Ciao Bella* (2004) funded by the Canadian Broadcast Corporation. American examples include HBO's *The Sopranos* (1999-2004) with its multiple Emmy Awards and its Canadian distributor, the CTV Network, and Dreamworks production *Shark Tale* (2004). With the issue of funding and distribution, then, we are therefore reminded of Smaro Kamboureli's "point of great importance, namely, the increasing awareness that the political and the cultural are inextricably inter-related, that they in fact inhabit the same discursive site" (Kamboureli, "The Technology," 209). As Carol Tator notes, "'Codes of Recognition' such as stereotypical representations are woven into radio and television news production and programming, advertisements, the print media, the visual arts, literature, the music industry, and the theatre [...] and communicate [...] powerful messages about the core values, norms, cultural hierarchies, and central narratives of mainstream society" (Tator, *Challenging Racism*, 5).

This article continues to build on the work of my MA thesis "Challenging Exclusion: Film, Video, Identity, Memory and the Italian Canadian Immigrant Experience" (2002). While "Challenging Exclusion" broke the silence and absence in scholarly writings of Italian Canadian film and video produced since 1955, it also began to analyse critically ethnic-minority representation, action, and agency, framed against a mainstream media dominated by the negative Italian stereotypes. Both Christopher Gittings' *Canadian National Cinema* (2002) and Kay Armitage's *Gendering the Nation: Canadian Women's Cinema* (1999) make no mention of any Italian Canadian filmworks. The purpose of this article then is to explore the representations in the films and videos by Canadian women of Italian heritage. While the mass media continues to disseminate one-dimensional stereotypical renditions of Italian culture, as noted above, Arjun Appadurai suggests the actual "work of the imagination" (Appadurai, *Modernity*, 4) is taking place in the margins of these sites.

The films and videos of Italian Canadians such as Angelina Cacciato (and Tom Trotter), Gabriella Colussi-Arthur, Giovanna D'Angelo (and Cristine Alexiou), Sara Angelucci, Patricia Fogliato (and David Mortin), Donna Caruso, Anita Aloisio, Daniela Saioni, Michelle Messina, Laura Timperio and Gabriella Micallef, Maria D'Erme and Sonia DiMaulo, and Josephine Massarella, will show that women as creators of films and videos speak from, and create distinct and complex spaces where, memory, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, family, identity and culture mingle and mix in a playful and potent choir of voices that are far from stereotypical. By devel-

oping an interdisciplinary frame, postcolonial theory, feminist theory and film theory, within the context of globalisation, will be used to continue the discourse over questions of subjectivity and representation in Canada. While acknowledging that filmmaking is an interdisciplinary art, for my purpose this paper will focus on a general overview of the works that Italian Canadian women have produced mostly in their roles as directors.

Liminal Spaces

Postcolonial theorists Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall are interested in the experience of social marginality (Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 1990; Hall, "The Local," 1991). Bhabha seeks to conceptualise the overlapping, migratory movements of cultural formations across a global division of labour. He asks how can identity be categorised for those who find themselves in exile, between nations, where borders become porous and undefined. While he reflects partially on the myths, memories, and narrations of ethnicity that are carried forward, remembered, and re-negotiated through time and space, Bhabha finds that cultural identities cannot be scripted or pre-given. Within the "hybrid" spaces, the places "in-between" (race, ethnicity, etc.), or what he refers to as the "liminal" spaces, experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value, are negotiated and not simply constructed within modernism. Hall also uses the concept-metaphor of "hybridity" for his analysis of black diasporic cultural and aesthetic practices, where hybridity signifies the complexity of the presence / absence of Africa, to highlight the relationship of power and resistance to the dominance of European cultures and European nationalisms. For Hall the diasporic experience is defined by its necessary heterogeneity and diversity where identity lives through hybridity. As in Bhabha's case, the liminal space becomes a space of performance of cultural difference that also signifies the space where identity is constructed as multiple and shifting. Hence the 'coloniser' and the 'colonised' are not separate entities that are defined independently, but exist in relation to each other, and both at the same time.

Italian Canadian Context

While Bhabha and Hall do not discuss Italian Canadians or their immigrant experience in particular, there are similarities that can be drawn from their theories of liminality and hybridity and applied to the Italian experience. As Monica Stellin writes in her preface to *Pillars of Lace: The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Women Writers* (1998), "for Italian-Canadian women writers the question is, therefore, not one of ethnicity, to accept or not to accept one's background; the question is how to bridge the ocean of

time and space created by the immigration experience" (Stellin, *Pillars*, 8-9). Reflecting and reinforcing Stellin's comments, historian Franca Iacovetta's *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (1992a), also includes an important chapter on the role of women in the postwar period. "From Contadina to Woman Worker" (Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 77-102) is a pivotal text that begins to address the role of Italian women in Canada and counters much of what had been written to date. As Iacovetta notes,

The transition from *contadina* (peasant woman) to worker did not require a fundamental break in the values of women long accustomed to contributing many hours of labour to the family. As immigrant workers, however they confronted new forms of economic exploitation and new rhythms of work and life. Women at home similarly performed valuable support roles and endured the alienating aspects of urban industrial life. Bolstered by networks of kin and paesani, women not only endured these hardships but displayed a remarkable capacity to incorporate their new experiences as working-class women into traditionally rooted notions of familial and motherly responsibility. [...]

Contrary to contemporary assumptions that women were little more than part of the male newcomer's cultural baggage, southern Italian women, like their compatriots who came from Italy's other regions, were active agents in family migration. [...]

The literature on southern Italy, which consists largely of the postwar ethnographic accounts of social anthropologists, emphasizes the segregation and subordination of women and virtually excludes consideration of how women's work contributed to family survival. In his study of a Calabrian village, anthropologist Jan Broger stresses the predominance of 'female exclusion'—a code of conduct that imposed severe restrictions on women's interaction with males outside of their household. [...]

While such extreme views must be rejected—indeed, a careful reading of the anthropological texts reveals that, as in most cultures, the actual practice of the villagers repeatedly contradicted the ideal types so carefully charted by academics [...] it is clear, as in the past, the patriarchal organization of the southern family and the cultural mores of southern society significantly shaped gender relations inside and outside the family in the postwar south.[...] A model of male-dominance/female-submission is ultimately too simplistic to account for peasant women's experiences in the Mezzogiorno [southern Italy]. It ignores the complexity of gender relations in Italy and underestimates the importance of female labour to peasant family production.

(Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 77-80)

In light of Iacovetta's historical study and the words of the women in both Marisa De Franceschi's *Pillars*, and Nzula Angelina Ciatu's *Curaggia: Writing by Women of Italian Descent* (1998), on the creative writing of Italian North American women, it is not a surprise, then, to find that second generation Italian Canadian women who are working as directors continue the "remarkable capacity to incorporate their new experiences as working-class women" (Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 77), in their role as filmmakers, within this context of the historical experience of Italian women in Italy and in Canada.

This historical context and experience is complexified even further by both Pasquale Verdicchio's *Bound by Distance: Rethinking Nationalism through the Italian Diaspora* (1997), and John Zucchi's *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity* (1988). Their works explore the particular Italian Canadian context and discuss the distinguishing factors that led to the formation of a strong, nationalistic Italian community in Toronto and to the shift in loyalty from the local level of ethnic and historical origins in Italy to their sense of belonging to the Canadian nation. Verdicchio especially argues that Canadian 'nationalism' often excludes the different identities that regional, social, and economic elements define. This applies to both the Italian nation as well as to the Canadian one.

The history of northern Italy's colonisation of southern Italy is important to understand, as it too used language, education, and homogenisation to assimilate southern Italians into a unified Italian state, therefore operating as a nation-state. As the need for workers increased, culture became secondary to the economic stability of the nation. Particular dialects and cultures were challenged and supplanted by the "Italian" language. As Italian emigration to Canada brought mostly southern Italians to this country, their history, their particular cultures, and their class stratifications need to be better understood. Verdicchio's and Zucchi's nationalism includes identity formation as heterogenous because the complexities of trans-cultural migration, emigration and immigration, from one country to another, result in destabilising borders, making identities no longer fixed or homogeneous. Just like Bhabha and Hall, Verdicchio states that new liminal and hybrid spaces are created where identities develop not only from the new nation space, but from a mix of previous national and ethnic histories carried by the various individuals to their new spaces / nations. There is a mixing and intersecting of multiple languages, cultures, with other spaces, and so the construction of culture remains in constant flux. It is here that identity resides. Like that of other ethnic groups, Italian Canadian identity is at first formed from a common origin, a shared history, and cultural and economic experience in Italy (or in the mother country) and then it transfers

to, and evolves in the new territorial space of, and cultural experiences in Canada. Loyalties and identities do not stop at the borders, for multicultural experiences and identities diverge from any 'limited' space.

Cross-cultural Experiences

Angelina Cacciato, from Ottawa, and husband Tom Trottier are the team behind Act Productions. Through their work they have shown their interest and sensitivity to the difficulties of ethnic communities being unable to access space and time in mainstream media. Not interested in staying within the ethnic media that these communities perhaps have more access to, and being more interested instead in transforming the mainstream so that, as Robert Harney had suggested, it too becomes multiculturalised (Harney, "So Great," 1988), Act Productions established itself with its first major production, the series *Gaining a Voice* (1997). The project began with media relations workshops offered to community organisations and remained in development for nine years. The workshops sought to help members of minority groups understand the workings of the news media and present their issues, attitudes, and events in the mainstream media. The workshops eventually produced a book that was then used as the text for a television series. While the workshops were primarily targeting minority ethnic community groups, the *Gaining a Voice* television series addressed all community organisations wishing to gain a more direct presence in mainstream media. Because no other such series is available, *Gaining a Voice* is both educational and significant.

Self-reflection

Like Cacciato and Trottier, who are interested in the ethnic community's access to mainstream media, Gabriella Colussi Arthur, who is also a language teacher at York University, uses video as a means of accessing the Italian Canadian community. She organised, produced and directed the video taping of three very unique round table discussions for the Italian Canadian community: *Mirrors and Windows I, II, and III*. The title reflects the challenge Colussi Arthur levelled at the community: to see themselves and these truths reflected back to them as in a mirror, to be self-critical, while at the same time to look beyond present conditions towards a possible future. All three videos hold critical information that can and should be used to relay to audiences some aspects, challenges, and successes of the Italian Canadian community in need of recognition. In 1995, a six hour taping of *Italian Canadian Women: Struggles, Defeats and Triumphs*, with keynote speaker historian Franca Iacovetta of the University of Toronto,

was edited down to 55 minutes. Through the words of various women on the panel, who came from various disciplines and sectors of society, a complex picture was created, as to the status of gender issues in the lived community in 1995. Going far beyond CHIN and Telelatino (TLN) television's often quoted construction of women in their various states of undress, *Italian Canadian Women* is refreshingly truthful and infinitely more accurate in its complexity. This was followed by *Italian Canadians and the Law*, in 1996. Here, the keynote speaker, York University sociologist Livio Visano introduced the panel to the cultural construction of Italian Canadians and the law. Unfortunately, because of funding cutbacks *Italian Canadians and the Law* has remained in its unedited version. It nonetheless holds valuable information that reflects the important issue of the negative effects of stereotyping in the Italian Canadian community at large. Specifically it explores the faulty perceptions of criminality in this community. The last in the series, shot in 1997, has also remained in its unedited version. It too is exceptionally valuable because it focuses on *Italian Canadians and the World of Arts and Culture*. Like *Italian Canadians and the Law*, there are distinct interconnections between arts and culture and the world of politics and law. The keynote speaker was theatre professor Domenico Pietropaolo, of the University of Toronto, who in his introductory address includes the critical awareness of the complexity of how the southern Italian heritage has been transported to Canada. These three tapings demonstrate Colussi-Arthur's sensitivity to the critical need for a community's self-reflection, beginning with that of her own gender within an Italian Canadian construction. Sadly, lack of a title for the two unedited version of *Mirrors and Windows II and III* makes it difficult for the public to access them. Yet because of their unedited state there is also much in them that, luckily, has not been left on an editing room floor.

Gendered Experiences

Two recent films that follow on the work of *Italian Canadian Women: Struggles, Defeats and Triumphs*, are Montreal filmmaker Anita Aloisio's *Straniera come Donna*, and Toronto filmmakers Gabriella Micallef and Laura Timperio's *Instantanee/Snapshots*, both from 2002. For Aloisio, the theme of identity continues to be explored in *Straniera*. However, Aloisio extends this search to the mother country, Italy, while Micallef and Timperio in *Instantanee* feature interviews with women of Italian heritage in Toronto alone. Aloisio's film "is an intimate, lyrical journey through the experiences of second-generation Italian-Canadian women living in Montreal and [as well with] their Italian 'sisters' in the *Basilicata/Lucania*

region of southern Italy" (Aloisio, "Press Release," 1). The film was shot over several seasons in Montreal, Muro Lucano, Pietrapertosa, Potenza and Matera. It explores the experiences of eight women in different "phases of life, motherhood, career, creativity and Italian-ness, all dealing with various issues of progress, existence and identity. [The] testimonials are woven together by [...] Aloisio's personal, impressionistic narrative, which reveals her own inner need to explore her family's land of origin and discover her roots" (Aloisio, "Press Release," 1). Both films, *Straniera* and *Instantanee*, show how women, in various environments, negotiate their individual space and time within the contexts of family and work, in their roles as women, wives or mothers, and vis-à-vis themselves. Micallef and Timperio write:

Our intention was to allow Italian-Canadian women to speak their experiences. We did not seek a homogeneous faction of Italian-Canadian women but rather emphasized the diversity within our community. Why? Because it is this very diversity that prompts many of the questions, doubts, assumptions and judgements about our identity. Are we still Italian if our skin is not white or olive? If we were not born in Italy? If we do not speak the language? If we are feminist or lesbian? Who decides who is really Italian or how Italian [one] needs to be? (Micallef / Timperio, "Press Release," 1)

Sexuality

In an earlier film from 1990, Daniela Saioni, of Toronto, like Micallef, Timperio, and Aloisio, also investigated gender, spirituality and sexuality which were part of her consciousness when she filmed her docu/drama *Rites*. In this film she explores, celebrates and challenges patriarchal doctrine, but not specifically from an Italian Canadian context, as Colussi Arthur and Micallef / Timperio and Aloisio develop. As Saioni writes,

I could never understand why a church such as mine (I'm Roman Catholic) holds so many doctrines which exclude women—the majority of its members! After videotaping several interviews with other young women, I realized I was not alone in my feeling of alienation from the church. We decided to make a film about it and wrote a fictional framework around the interviews we already had. This film is for any woman who has ever been told by her religion that she couldn't do something expressly because she was a woman. (Saioni, "Press Release," 1)

Rites ends with exceptional and moving footage of the International Women's Day March in downtown Toronto in 1989, interspersed with words by Canadian women talking about their personal experiences with

their spirituality, their sexuality, their feelings, and especially their freedom. Currently, as a complement to *Rites Saioni* is filming interviews with women who are in their eighties, discussing with them what they were told about sex, how they felt about their sexuality, and how they feel about it now.

Toronto's Michelle Messina continues the discussion of sex and sexuality in a different direction, with her 1998 short animated film *Fruitful Sex*, which uses real fruit as props and characters. A review on the film states "Audiences catching *Fruitful Sex* will witness a wedding carried out in classical Italian fashion. The happy couple has the blessing of such succulent guests as Blue Berry, Red Cherry and Kiwi Kiwi. On their honeymoon, Mr. Banana and Mrs. Orange literally multiply. After the loving, a seed jumps out of the orange and off the bed, representing conception. The seed becomes a bush which grows into a tree, producing a healthy harvest of banana and orange offspring" (Caspersen, "*Fruitful Sex*," 8). The film's lively and humorous playfulness hides what Messina says is its deeper meaning, "The whole message is to be committed, have respect for each other, and when you take those steps, it is natural to have sex and the whole cycle is complete" (Caspersen, "*Fruitful Sex*," 8).

For Donna Caruso, from Saskatchewan, her docu-drama *Doll Hospital* (1998) is far from playful though it too deals with gender and sexuality. She writes:

In 1978, I was twenty-nine when I had my first mastectomy. Thirty when I had the second. For thirteen years I lived without breasts before undergoing a series of procedures for reconstructive surgery, procedures which took two years to complete. That story, one of medical decisions, operations, and life changing choices, is part of my story. But only part. *Doll Hospital* is about my mother's inexhaustible love of being female, and how that love led me, fed me, saved me, helped me to find a way out of the darkness of being Venus disarmed. (Caruso, "Press Release," 1)

The filmmaker's own voice is used to tell this story for "maximum emotional authenticity." The childhood scenes are cloaked in a dreamy, glowing, and luxurious light with black backdrops, as the characters "move through memory [in] a world of richly coloured images" (Caruso, "Press Release," 1). In contrast, the "scenes dealing with surgery and disease [are] strikingly bright and dangerous; the glint of the silver scalpel and the beads of blood from fresh cut flesh [...] the nightmare mirror image, a terrifying shock. Places like the dressing table in the mother's bedroom as well as the pantry in the kitchen overflow with glass containers of all kinds and colours, rich, abundant, welcoming and warm" (Caruso, "Press Release," 1).

Ethnicity, Memory and Grandparents

Caruso's more recent film, *Story Album* (2000), weaves stories and portraits of her Italian immigrant grandparents. Like *Doll Hospital*, it continues to build from the strength of maternal relationships and includes the paternal ones with Caruso's father and grandfather. Through the use of home movies and archival photographs, childhood memories and old spaces are re-entered, re-imagined and re-told in order to tell present truths. Caruso develops very personal stories continuing to tell them in her own narrative voice. This results in rich and poetic images that "honor the personal journey of those ordinary people who we call our family" (Caruso, "Press Release," 3). *Story Album* consists of two stories: "Customs" and "Lullaby." In both, Caruso explores the lives of her Italian grandparents.

In "Customs," Caruso recalls [her grandfather's] wonderful garden and the stone lions which guarded his house, images which imparted a sense of safety and abundant deliciousness to a childhood filled with strong family memories. But only in adulthood comes the realization that the grandfather and grandmother lived separately, long ago, when such things were never heard of. [...]

Although his parents were separated in life, after their deaths, Caruso's father plants a garden for his father and a fig tree for his mother. When both the garden and the fig grove flourish, the son takes it as a sign, as comfort, that they are reunited in Heaven. [...]

In "Lullaby," Caruso remembers her maternal grandmother's lullaby during early childhood when they spent years together, a pair of outcasts; the grandmother old and foreign, Caruso crippled and wearing a heavy plaster cast. But the real story was in the old photographs and the deep silences of the afternoons when nap time for Donna meant a time of reflection for grandma, who had left her beloved home in Italy to be with her husband in the New World. In her solitude and her sighs, the widowed grandmother tells her story, only later understood by Caruso when her own life leads to similar solitudes. (Caruso, "Press Release," 3)

In *Story Album*, the signifier of the Canadian space of the garden is much more than a place for growing vegetables for food, but a garden where the birth and life of plants does signify the communal relationship between people. The fig tree, for Caruso's grandmother, who had never wanted to leave her "beloved Italy," and the garden, for her grandfather, who immigrated to Canada. The reconciliation in the garden, the cyclical representation of the seasons of birth and death, is a powerful and dynamic signifying space for many immigrants. For Italians in Canada, the gar-

den represents a spiritual connection to people's lives from a past in Italy, to their present transplantation in Canada.

Two Ottawa filmmakers, Giovanna D'Angelo and Christine Alexiou, also using the theme of negotiating ethnicity through grandmothers. *Nonna* (1997) and *Meme* (1995) are also titled *Telling Lives: Portraits of Immigrant Grandmothers*. Both these videos were jointly co-directed. D'Angelo is of *Abruzzese* and Alexiou of Macedonian descent. D'Angelo indicates that she has worked with Alexiou on all of her video and film projects to date and has found that their experiences as 'ethnic' Canadians are quite similar. *Nonna* and *Meme* mean grandmother in their respective languages. As the titles indicate, from the beginning there is an awareness that these films are very personal, for they immediately acknowledge a genealogical relationship of grandmothers and granddaughters. Though it seems as if *Nonna* and *Meme* alone are the protagonists, and they do indeed dominate the filmspace with their strong views and with their laughter, both D'Angelo and Alexiou include their own voices to enter by allowing the questions they ask to be part of the sound the audience hears. Both films are very intimate portraits from the perspective of all four protagonists, even if the granddaughters also have a larger audience in mind. Each tries to convey the strength that the filmmakers discuss when speaking of their grandmothers. All of these women have strong personalities.

Culture, Time, and Memory

In addition to *Nonna* and *Meme*, D'Angelo and Alexiou also produced a video titled *Hello Dolly* (1996). D'Angelo writes:

Christine and I worked on a five minute piece called *Hello Dolly* about a fibre artist who makes cloth dolls that are based on real women—either political figures or activists or female characters from literature or women that she met in a women's shelter. Her goal is to celebrate women—different shapes and sizes, different cultures etc. ... Our video traced the making of a doll as a loving—nurturing process—reclaiming what 'doll' is—the imagery etc. ... It was nice." (D'Angelo, Re: *Hello Dolly*, 1999).

Though it seems that women as filmmakers are apt to reflect the playful imagery of childhood, as do Messina, Caruso, D'Angelo and Alexiou, the messages their film and video texts convey are far from childlike.

Following on the theme of grandparents and childhood, and no less complex in their messages, are the videos of Toronto artist Sara Angelucci. Her 1997 *America il Paradiso* "addresses the complex and rich cultural history inherited by children of immigrants" (Angelucci, "Press Release," 1). In it, Angelucci explores her memory of her grandmother, as well as the

memories of other immigrants that Angelucci has received in writing via personal letters. It paints a portrait of the difficulties of immigrating and settling in a new land with its different myths and realities. Her video *In a Hundred* (2000) uses a child counting to one hundred to explore the place of memory and time. As Angelucci writes:

In A Hundred is framed by a child counting to one-hundred who becomes the keeper of time, the metronome reminding us of its relentless march forward. While the child creates the framework which guides the video, this progression is broken by other sounds and footage which lead the viewer back in time [...] Underlying this obsession with time is an examination of family via three generations of women; the child counting as the youngest, the video maker as the middle and the video maker's memory (via Super 8 footage),[as] the past. (Angelucci, "Press Release," 1)

Following the generational explorations that Angelucci investigates, Maria D'Erme and Sonia DiMaulo, of Montreal, with *In Bocca al Lupo* (1996), deal with an examination of family, tradition and culture. *In Bocca al Lupo*, however, focuses more directly on second generation Italian Canadian women and men who grew up in Montreal. The setting for this film is a trendy café in the heart of Montreal's *Piccola Italia*. What is wonderfully memorable about this film is the fact that, like Michael DeCarlo's *Fellini and Me* (1995), *In Bocca al Lupo* re-creates, through dramatic fiction, scenes from the magical filmic space and mythology of Fellini's film: *La Dolce Vita*. No other Italian filmmaker or film of the prestigious cinema of Italy has entered the psyche of second generation Italian Canadians as powerfully as Federico Fellini and his *La Dolce Vita*. As the scenes of quiet and calm wine-making in *In Bocca al Lupo* are contrasted with the trendy space of the café scene, there is the recognition that for the second generation this space is no longer just the space of the grandparents that lives only through the memories of both children and parents. Their space also includes the more powerful mythology of the film world and the high and commodified global culture of present day Italy. As in the documentary interviews of the *Mirrors and Windows Series*, *Straniera come Donna*, *Instantaneel/Snapshots*, and *Rites*, a series of interviews are the basis of this film's text. They are juxtaposed with images of traditional cultural events. The interrogation, as in Angelucci's *In A Hundred*, is on memory, family, time and the loss of cultural connections. Though childhood and youth are the focus of both Angelucci's and D'Erme and DiMaulo's works, these are childhoods that ask some significant adult questions.

'Canadian' Culture and Identity

Patricia Fogliato and David Mortin's film *Sons and Daughters: The Italians of Schreiber (A Scattering of Seeds: The Creation of Canada)* (1997) goes beyond Angelucci's and D'Erme's and DiMauro's works.

'They are more Canadian,' is how filmmaker Patricia Fogliato describes Italians living in Schreiber, a town of 2,000 about 200 kilometres east of Thunder Bay on the north shore of Lake Superior, in relation to most of those in Toronto.[...] 'And with the small town accent comes a lack of the snobbery and hipness that is associated with being Italian in large urban centres.'" (Pasquali, "The Italians," 12)

There is no preoccupation with identity, memory or angst for having lost one's culture. What we see, instead, is the assimilation of a lifestyle that is 'Canadian.' This film acts almost as counterpoint to their 1992 film, *The Good Life*, a work that questioned cultural identity and belonging, and reflected the same kind of issues and messages as *In Bocca al Lupo* and *In A Hundred*. The Italians of Schreiber are not concerned with these questions at all. There is still an earlier film by Fogliato and Mortin, *Enigmatico* (1995), that is, however, interested in problematizing Italian Canadian identity. Its message successfully parallels the round table discussion of Colussi Arthur's *Italian Canadians and the World of Arts and Culture* (1997) and, to a certain degree, *In Bocca Al Lupo* and *In A Hundred* as well. Author Nino Ricci wrote this about the film:

Enigmatico is an innovative look at the lives and work of Canadian artists of Italian origin. Interweaving poetry, painting, photography, music and sculpture, it explores the relationship between the immigrant experience and the creative process, broaching on issues of identity and culture that go to the core of what it means to be Canadian. [...] Filmed both in Italy and in Canada, *Enigmatico* moves between two worlds of its subjects with a rhythm that captures a sense both of celebration and of loss. Marking the contribution of a new generation of Canadian artists, it helps to point the way toward the future of Canadian culture. (Ricci, "Enigmatico Review," Video Jacket Back Cover)

One final filmmaker that should be included is Josephine Massarella. Her experimental works defy any ethnic association at all. Though it is possible to argue that she has assimilated her Canadian world, this observation is probably too simplistic. Massarella is clearly an artist very consciously working within a feminist mode and her works range from *Eve's Station* (2001), *Green Dream* (1994), *Interference* (1990), *No 5 Reversal* (1989) and *One Woman Waiting* (1984). In *One Woman Waiting*

"Massarella uses the fixed camera shot in her enigmatic film of a symbolic encounter between two women in a beautifully shot desert location" (Massarella, "Press Release." 1). Amongst those listed, Massarella's works continue to build from a gender base. *Green Dream* extends itself to concerns about the environment and the responsibility society should have. Massarella mixes experimental, documentary, and dramatic fiction with social and political concerns that speak with a voice that is female.

Conclusion

The films and videos that have been briefly discussed are all quite unique and distinct. The Canadians who made them are full of creative ideas and have a deep hunger for story and culture. As these film and videos demonstrate, there are a variety of realities that Canadian artists of Italian heritage bring to light. They construct within an environment where postcolonialism intersects with the Italian immigrant experience, gender, class, race, and ethnicity. They live in complex worlds in-between them. This brings us back to Bhabha and Anderson:

From that place of the 'meanwhile,' where cultural homogeneity and democratic anonymity make their claims on the national community, there emerges a more instantaneous and subaltern voice of the people, a minority discourse that speaks betwixt and between times and places. (Bhabha, "DissemiNation," 309)

By using a variety of genres and contexts, distinct spaces are created where various concerns and identities are constructed. These include multicultural and multilingual realities, gendered explorations in both the public and private spheres, embodied experiences both real and imaginary, relationships between their ancestral heritage and their adopted country, experiences with assimilation, challenges with integration, and relationships to the state. The possible meanings and messages communicated through these works are far more valuable and dynamic than the limitations and silences often imposed by the negative "mainstream stereotype." This research supports a feminist and anti-racist stance. This is especially important in the effort to build a substantive and critical Canadian multiculturalism where "diversity can only be meaningful within the construct of social justice and equity" (Tator, *Challenging Racism*, 261). For Italian Canadians this social justice and equity is still absent.

Although the overwhelming albatross of the financially rewarding negative Italian stereotype (as observed by Bagnell, *Canadese*, 1989; Baldassarre, "Hunks and Hoodlums", 1994; Bonanno, "From Corleone,"

2001; Elliot, "Marketing," 1999; Harney, *From the Shores*, 1993; L'Orfano, "...Let's Kiss *The Godfather*," 2002; LaGumina, *WOP!*, 1999; Lawton, "The Mafia," 2002; Sturino, "Italians," 1999), sold by Hollywood conglomerates and their Canadian affiliates, continues to be a formidable opponent, these films and videos from the margins, produced by Canadian women of Italian heritage, have begun to challenge successfully the symbolic space of the "imagined community" of Canada (Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1983). This bodes extremely well for the national cinemas in both Canada and the United States that are being challenged to make room for Italian Canadian and Italian American representations that go beyond the one-dimensional negative paradigm.

Valuing and writing about the film and video works of Italian Canadian women is an "act of concrete reclamation"(hooks, *Art on Mind*, iv) that will help broaden and transform Canadian national cinema. More importantly, the language in, and meaning of 'Canada' will continue to be challenged so that it might reflect more equitably what Trudeau envisioned almost thirty-three years ago;

We are free to be ourselves. But this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively. If freedom of choice is in danger for some ethnic groups, it is in danger for all. (Trudeau, *Hansard*, 8545.)

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