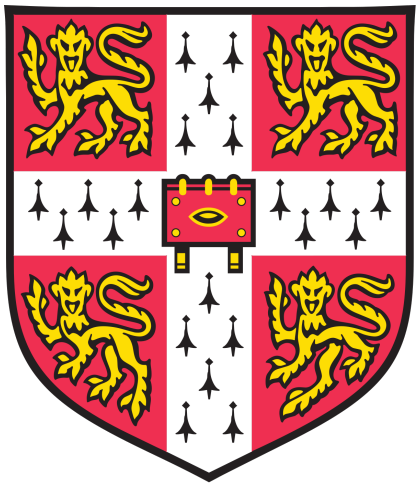
Sounds without Borders: Industry, Society and the Voice in *Giallo* Cinema



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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Prefatory Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

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Abstract

The Italian *giallo* film was a type of thriller that was produced in huge numbers between the early 1960s and the late 1980s. This thesis contributes to recent scholarly attempts to situate the *giallo* within its socio-cultural historical context but resists the critical tendency to read these films as passive and transparent reflections of social attitudes in post-war Italy. Rather, I attend concretely to the form of these films and, specifically, to their critically neglected sound designs. I argue that the *giallo*'s voice tracks were conditioned by the commercial imperatives of Italy's post-war popular film industry and that these commercial imperatives were in turn shaped by wider social, economic and political phenomena. By theorising the voice as a mediator between the *giallo* text and its industrial and social contexts, I show that these films both registered and reified social change. Chapter 1 demonstrates that the anonymous narrator of Mario Bava's *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (1963) adopts a range of sonorous modes throughout the film. Each of these sonorous modes invokes a specific set of intertexts which are vital to tracing both the *giallo*'s cultural origins and the increasingly globalised socio-cultural landscape from which it emerged. This chapter then shows that Dario Argento's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970) uses the model of the cinematic voice-over to explore the subjective experience of urban space in post-war Italy. The film suggests that by 1970 the ability to vocally 'narrate' and thus control space had become a fundamental assumption of the modern, cosmopolitan subject. Chapter 2 analyses Lucio Fulci's *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972) and Sergio Martino's *Torso* (1973). Both films draw on longstanding Italian cultural stereotypes to pitch the silence of the rural against the vocality of the urban. The films use silence and the voice as 'cartographic' tools to delineate the profound socio-economic divisions between Italy's rural South and its more urban North, but they also illustrate the *giallo*'s underlying affinities with its silent cinema ancestors and so challenge the assumed temporal borders between cinematic eras. Chapter 3 argues that Argento's *Tenebrae* (1982) and Fulci's *The New York Ripper* (1982) variously mimic the vocal aesthetics of television. These films lay bare both the increasing dominance of the Italian cultural landscape by imported commercial television in the 1980s and the neoliberal economic project that underpinned that trend. Ultimately, they question the stability of the nation itself, precisely because the voice — now fractured across a global mediascape — is unable to signal national specificity.

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Acknowledgements

I can't resist summing up my experience of writing this thesis with a comparison; an obvious one, but one that strikes me as being very meaningful. On the one hand, in the following pages I give a lot of attention to the porosity, malleability and impermanence of cinematic and cultural borders. On the other, each of those pages reveals the debt I owe to those who have helped me maintain an open border around my work itself. I have benefited throughout my PhD from the conversations I have enjoyed with other scholars, as well as film critics and filmmakers, and the resulting work would not have come together without their feedback, guidance, support and patience.

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*

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The Introduction to this thesis features an abbreviated version of the following article:

Pollard, Damien. 2020. '"Can't You Hear Me?" Ideologies of the Voice in *Giallo* Cinema', *Screen*, 61.3: 385–402. *Screen* is published by the Oxford University Press.

Introduction: Border Disputes

'My voice comes and goes. For you, it comes from me. For me, it goes out from me. Between this coming from and going towards lie all the problems and astonishments of the dissociated voice.'
Steven Connor (2000: 3)

'The 1970s were an extraordinary time for Italian cinema. It became an industry.'
Sergio Martino, *giallo* director (quoted in Lachetti 2017: 236)[1]

'Films must be seen, not studied.'
Lucio Fulci, *giallo* director (quoted in Romagnoli 2015: 18)

The voice is best defined by how it negates borders rather than by its containment within them. Attempts to locate the voice within a certain ambit inevitably frustrate — the voice straddles categories and locations by its very nature. For example, it stems from the deep body, yet also from the mind; it belongs to both and yet to neither. It is a vehicle for the expression of thought, yet indexes emotion. It is as personal and unique as a fingerprint, yet automatically invokes sociality. It resounds in the mouth of the utterer, yet also the ear of a listener. The double-faced image of the Roman god Janus could be taken to allegorise the voice itself: characterised by a both/neither dialectic it is always projected in two directions at once. The voice is a diaphanous bridge that resounds across and between categories with which it establishes alliances but not

[1] All translations from Italian sources are my own, unless otherwise stated in the Bibliography below.

loyalties. It is always in-between, it is alchemically interstitial. In its elusive fluidity the voice conjoins disparate binaries — body/mind, self/other, individual/community, reason/emotion, language/sound — and it 'puts them into conversation'.

Giallo cinema also denies borders. It was an Italian phenomenon, yet used casts, crews, locations and finance from across Europe. It was viscerally audio-visual, yet literary in origin. It was a popular form produced by an industry seeking profit above all else, yet it was guided by an auteur with an arthouse disregard for commerciality. It was throwaway entertainment, yet continues to influence filmmaking today. It was indebted to horror, yet also to the thriller, the documentary and pornography. It claimed a narrative basis in ratiocination, yet in practice deferred to surreal and associative logic. *Giallo* cinema can best — can *only* — be understood in its transgression of the borders that typically delimit the study of cinema.

Italy itself experienced seismic shifts during the *giallo*'s lifecycle, from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. This period, which immediately followed the post-war 'economic miracle', saw the country's social borders enter a period of profound flux. The formerly insular, agricultural country rapidly but unevenly became one of Europe's industrial powerhouses. Deeply engrained regionalism was weakened due to massive internal migration. Extended, patriarchal family structures began to give way to smaller, nuclear models of cohabitation. Traditional social values faced off against the process of cultural liberalisation. Educational and religious establishments were opposed, increasingly openly, by the young. The extremes of the political spectrum widened. The *giallo* challenged cinematic borders as, in parallel, the country to which it (mostly) belonged was tempestuously reconsidering the borders and distinctions that defined its own social, cultural, economic and political makeup.

The voice, the *giallo*, post-war Italy. The three are united by a common volatility; each rests upon mobile foundations and defines itself through perpetual acts of straddling and negotiating borders. In truth, this thesis itself straddles borders. In the first instance, it aims to build upon the work of a small collection of scholars who have approached the *giallo* critically and to offer a comprehensive analysis of these films' auditory traits and tactics (thus-far almost entirely overlooked). At the same time, it works towards an understanding of how the major social shifts which Italy experienced from the 1960s to the 1980s were reified in and by the industrial practices of the country's commercial film industry. Finally, this study hopes to contribute a new theoretical model for listening to the cinematic voice, one that attends to its inherent interstitiality and that situates the voice in the 'gaps' from where it stages unending conversations between the diegetic and the extra-diegetic, the textual and the contextual. In a

sense, this thesis seeks to *harmonise* the three modes of border straddling detailed above; it seeks to trace the *resonance* that obtains when those border disputes invoked philosophically by the voice, cinematically by the *giallo* and historically by Italy's post-war development are attended together. This thesis embraces borders and hinterlands as productive spaces from which new cinematic, historiographic and philosophical vantage points may be attained and it contends that Lucio Fulci's claim, that *giallo* cinema exists to be seen and not studied, is misguided. These films demand to be studied as matrices of intersecting fault lines. They demand attention for what they reveal about the cultural consequences of Italy's profound post-war socio-economic transformation and for how they have intervened in that transformation. The *giallo*'s important historicity is at its most palpable in its voice tracks; formal elements that incorporate textually the commercial imperatives of Italy's film industry and, by extension, the socio-cultural milieu undergirding that industry. Tracing this intricate operation may, in turn, yield profound insights into the complex multivalence of the cinematic voice in general. These are insights that hold critical significance for the study of film sound far beyond the Italian context and, as such, Fulci errs on a second count: these films demand to be *heard* as much as seen.

Towards the *Giallo*'s Socio-Cultural Resonance: Italy from Post-War to Postmodern

A vocal utterance gains currency through its distinction from the soundscape that anticipates it, the ambient cacophony from which it emerges and with which it automatically puts itself into relation. Similarly, perhaps, *giallo* cinema is bound to the complex socio-cultural and economic conditions from which it emerged. As this thesis undertakes to trace the concrete, material terms of the *giallo*'s contextual imbrications, a brief outline of Italian history following the Second World War is necessary.

Italy's history from the mid-1940s to the 1980s is characterised by, on the one hand, the dramatic expansion of industrialised, consumption-driven modernity, and on the other, by social and geographical divergence in how this modernity was experienced. The Second World War left Italy physically damaged and socially divided. Allied bombing and the slow liberation of the peninsula had ensured the former, while the divide between Fascist and anti-Fascist factions persisted long after the fighting had ceased. The anti-Fascist partisan movement had been instrumental in the eventual fall of Mussolini's government and the ultimate expulsion of

Nazi forces and it became legendary in the immediate aftermath of the war. Importantly, communist groups figured prominently in the partisan movement, and the *Partito Communista Italiano* (PCI) did an effective job of claiming the partisan narrative as its own as the country moved into the post-war moment (other groups, including the Catholic Church, had also been instrumental). The PCI became one of Italy's three major post-war political parties, and attracted the major part of the country's working-class vote while the conservative *Democrazia Cristiana* party (DC) drew the backing of the country's employer class (the *Partito Socialista Italiano* [PSI] comprised the third party). The PCI and the DC's competing claims for power in Italy came to a head in 1948 with the country's first free elections after Fascism, and in the run up to the election the outcome appeared highly uncertain. Intervention from the United States proved decisive: since 1947 America had been channelling vast amounts of capital into Italy as part of the Marshall Aid programme for European reconstruction, an attempt both to shore up capitalist democracy across Western Europe and, more pragmatically, to kick-start the continent's ability to trade with the US. The US made it clear that aid would cease to flow to Italy in the case of a communist victory and though the exact degree of influence that this threat exerted is impossible to judge precisely, its goal was realised. The capitalist DC won the election and remained in power (often in coalitions of various forms) until the 1990s. The PCI, though largely excluded from national government (excepting their partial admission during the 'historic compromise' of the 1970s), remained powerful in many regions of the centre and North of the country.

The 1948 election had significant economic as well as political consequences. In Paul Ginsborg's words:

> Italy in the mid-1950s was still, in many respects, an under-developed country […] Most Italians still earned their living, if they earned it at all […] in small, technologically backward, labour-intensive firms, in the public administration, in a great proliferation of small shops and trades, in agriculture. (1990: 210)

Italy's social and economic landscape soon experienced seismic change, however: 'The years 1958–63 saw the beginning of a social revolution [in which] Italy ceased to be a peasant

country and became one of the major industrial nations of the West' (ibid: 212).[2] This period, known as the 'economic miracle' or simply '*il boom*', was the result of a complex interaction of domestic and international variables. The country's heavy industry infrastructure had been improving since the late 1940s thanks to American aid money, and industry was able to leverage its expanding resources thanks to relatively low labour costs, the removal of protectionism and a significant growth in international trade throughout the 1950s. Italy quickly became a leading player in heavy industry, petrochemicals and the production of consumer goods (Fiat cars, Olivetti typewriters and Smeg refrigerators are notable examples).

The rapid increase in Italy's national prosperity translated into a marked, but uneven, increase in standards of living. Most Italians experienced a significant increase in per capita income, which grew faster from 1950 to 1970 than in any other European country (Ginsborg 1990: 239). Expenditure on automobiles, white goods, televisions and leisure activities all increased as the horizon of consumption expanded to include luxury goods alongside necessities. In concert with these material advances, social mores began to change as women and young people assumed more personal freedom and patriarchal family models came under threat. However, the social benefits of industrial-consumerist modernity were tempered by its inconsistencies. First, the state did not match its economic stimulus with significant investment in infrastructure, which meant that civic resources languished while personal consumption grew, and the result was an increasing atomisation of Italian society. Second, 'the "miracle" heightened the already grave disequilibrium between [Italy's] North and South', the latter of which was still predominantly agricultural and still bore the traces of its feudal history (Ginsborg 1990: 216). Italy's industrial base was concentrated in the North of the country and the benefits of the miracle predominantly accrued to the workforce in those regions, and in Rome. The South, though it too underwent an increase in industrial production, experienced a significantly attenuated version of the miracle's socio-economic benefits. Consequently, there was massive internal migration from the South to the North of Italy in the late 1950s and 1960s, as unemployed southern workers moved to cities including Milan, Turin and Rome in search of work. Third, and connected to this internal migration, in the face of modernisation the influence of the Church — including attendance at services and recruitment to the Priesthood — declined significantly (ibid: 245).

[2] Due to internal demand, Italy's economy had actually been growing, though at a slower rate, since 1950 (Ginsborg 1990: 214).

The 'boom' was a socially transformative period in Italian history, a period that opened the formerly insular country up to the wider world but which also exposed latent domestic fault lines. Indeed, the legacy of the 'miracle' was characterised by turbulence. The state's continued reluctance to match economic development with reform of its ailing schools and universities led, in part, to widespread unrest amongst students. In the late 1960s this unrest spilled over into outright revolt as Italy became embroiled in the international 1968 protest movement.[3] University occupations began in 1967 in Trento and quickly spread across the country, leading to occasionally violent clashes between protestors and police. Student protestors soon began to interact with factory workers, and by the 'hot autumn' of 1969 the protests had expanded to include (often fractious) factory occupations. Unlike in other countries, in Italy the tail of the 1960s' protests extended well into the 1970s (see Downing 2001: 267). Notably, the failure of the PCI to play a leading role in the 1968 movement combined with an international economic downturn in the early 1970s served to trigger a pervasive sense of disillusionment in politically active students and young workers. Many on the left moved toward 'autonomism', the formation of groups that operated independently of the institutional left (the PCI and the unions) and, in March 1977, clashed violently with police across the country (see Lumley 1990: 28–38; Pollard 2021).

Militant left-wing groups such as *Lotta continua* (Continuous Struggle) and *Brigate rosse* (the Red Brigades) responded to the 1968 movement's failure to effect radical change by adopting insurgent and ultimately terroristic methods. Factions on the extreme right were also adopting terror tactics at this time in an attempt to unsettle Italian society and pave the way for a return to fascism, and the distinction between left- and right-wing terror attacks was often unclear (see Glynn, Lombardi, and O'Leary 2012). The years from 1969 (the date of a far-right bombing in Piazza Fontana in Milan that killed seventeen and injured dozens more) until the early 1980s have subsequently become known as the *anni di piombo* (the 'years of lead') due to the frequency of terror attacks during the period. Alan O'Leary writes that, 'According to official Ministry for the Interior figures, over 14,000 terrorist attacks were committed in Italy in the years between 1969 and 1983, resulting in 374 deaths and more than 1170 injuries' (2010: 244). Perhaps the most iconic of these acts was the Red Brigades' kidnapping and murder of the DC Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978, images of whose incarceration were

[3] Alongside their complaints about Italy's education system, many of the protestors were also hostile to the materialism and individualism that characterised the country's post-boom society (Ginsborg 1990: 300).

distributed by national media outlets, as were the images of his lifeless body being retrieved from the boot of a car in Rome.

The destruction and ultimate futility of the 'long 1968' led many to abandon the project of collective action and the 1980s saw an increasing withdrawal of Italian life into the private sphere, a phenomenon known as the *riflusso* ('reflux'). This reflux coincided with a period of significant economic deregulation, and ushered Italy towards a second socio-economic watershed, which Ginsborg argues was as significant as the economic miracle of 1958–63. The 1980s marked Italy's adoption of an individualistic, neoliberal socio-economic paradigm, the benefits of which were again concentrated in the North of the country, and which served to exacerbate socio-economic divisions and wealth inequality by concentrating opportunity in the hands of wealthy, speculative entrepreneurs (Ginsborg 2001: ix). The 1980s were also a period in which wholesale media deregulation flooded Italy with a chaotic mass of media products from around the world, engendering an audio-visual maelstrom that made manifest the country's implication in both globalisation and the cultural schizophrenia of postmodernism. From the post-war moment to the postmodern moment, then, Italy's history is characterised by virtually continuous, often abrupt and often uneven change. Suspended between optimism and fear, Italian society from the mid-1940s to the late 1980s presented a turbulent milieu and complex point of origin for the country's cultural output, including its cinema.[4]

Finally, a very brief account of Italy's post-war film industry is also necessary. Italian neorealism, which gained prominence immediately following the war, was characterised by a pioneering and intimate harmony of form, content and politics. Documentary-style filming that privileged non-professional actors, location shooting in cities that still bore the traces of wartime destruction, and narratives that tended towards aimlessness and stasis served the goal of socio-political reflection. Neorealism urged audiences simply to witness Italy at a moment of flux and uncertainty, and to consider carefully its options for the future. The form was also a break with the escapism and bombast of much Fascist filmmaking, though many neorealist directors had produced Fascist films and indeed the antecedents of neorealist form can be traced in those earlier works.[5] Neorealism was short-lived, and by the mid-1950s had given rise to an auteur-led art cinema that reflected on Italy's accelerating modernity with approaches ranging

[4] Specific elements of this cursory outline will be elaborated throughout the following chapters. For monograph-length studies of Italy's recent history see Ginsborg 1990 & 2001; Silveri 2019. For an extremely detailed study of the period from 1968 to 1980 see Lumley 1990.

[5] For an in-depth account of the continuity between Fascist filmmaking and neorealism see Leavitt 2020.

from the oneiric (Federico Fellini) to the existential (Michelangelo Antonioni), historical (Bernardo Bertolucci, Luchino Visconti) and allegorical-political (Pier Paolo Pasolini).[6] From the 1950s until the early 1980s Italy was also an extremely prolific producer of popular, formulaic *filone* cinema which is discussed in depth below and included the *giallo* as well as the Spaghetti Western, comedy and police drama. Foreign films, particularly American, were also a constant presence on Italian cinema screens throughout this period (and remain so).

Italy's huge cinematic output was matched, at least initially, by its domestic consumption. In 1955, for example, Italy had 10,570 operational cinemas, twice the number found in the UK (Forgacs and Gundle 2007: 147), and in 1972 Italy recorded 553.6 million cinema admissions to the UK's 156.6 million (the two countries had similarly sized populations across this period [Thrower 2017:110]). Not only did Italian consumption of cinema far outstrip that of other European countries, it initially outstripped other forms of cultural consumption within Italy. In 1960, Italians spent 120,987 billion lire on cinema admissions, compared to 8,191 billion lire on theatre and 14,289 billion lire on sport (Gundle 1990: 201). From the mid-1970s expenditure on television and radio accelerated at a far greater rate and cinema attendance went into decline: although cinema's revenues went up throughout the 1970s, ticket sales had been dropping steadily since 1955. In 1955, 819 million tickets had been sold. Ticket sales then fell to 662 million by 1965, and eventually 163 million by 1983 as television became a ubiquitous feature of the Italian household (ibid: 203). Italian cinema must also be understood, then, in relation to a wider media landscape. In the second half of the twentieth century, Italian cinema was a dying leviathan, slowly but steadily descending from a state of plenty into a state of crisis as its socio-cultural foundations shifted. At a very broad level, this trend illustrates that Italy's post-war film industry experienced an evolutionary turbulence interwoven with that of Italian society more widely. At many specific levels, the complex historical contingencies of Italy's post-war film industry and the wider socio-cultural/economic trends which underlay those contingencies resonate profoundly in the *giallo*. Given this resonance, when read historically the *giallo* does not simply reflect social change, but stands as a crucible within which socio-cultural change was realised.

[6] Of course, these illustrative labels are reductive; many of these directors experimented with many approaches to form and most had previously worked under the umbrella of neorealism. Further, the filmmakers noted here represent only some of Italy's most critically celebrated auteurs and this list is by no means definitive.

Filone Cinema and the *Giallo*

The *Filone*

The *filone* (pl. *filoni*) has no direct equivalent in Anglophone cinema; it is often likened to the notion of the sub-genre, but such a translation/definition obfuscates the specific, and important, industrial operation that this type of cinema performs. The word *filone* literally translates variously as 'vein' or 'seam' but in the cinematic context is better rendered as 'formula' (Wagstaff 1992: 248). Mikel Koven has tied the cinematic use of the term to the Italian idioms '*sullo stesso filone*' ('in the tradition of') and '*seguire il filone*' ('to follow in the tradition of') to flag the term's derivative implications (2006: 5). A cinematic *filone* denotes a body of texts that replicate the formula of a successful film — sometimes domestic, sometimes foreign — to capitalise quickly on its perceived popularity and financial success. As *giallo* writer and director Luigi Cozzi summarised in the early 1980s, 'In Italy […] when you bring a script to a producer, the first question he asks is not "what is your film like?" but "what *film* is your film like?"' (quoted in Church 2015: 11. Original emphasis). *Filone* cinema thus falls under the wider rubric of 'exploitation' cinema. Each *filone* typically survived for between seven and ten years before exhausting its commercial potential and either dying out or forming new *filoni* through evolution and hybridisation (Di Chiara 2016: 33; see also Kannas 2017).[7] Paolo Albiero and Giacomo Cacciatore summarise:

> *Filoni*, typically circumscribed to a precise time period, could run their course in a few films or in hundreds. Each *filone* shared a series of characteristic elements that defined it specifically — or typically — and attested to the work belonging to a specific context: an historical-geographic setting; thematic and narrative features; often even a particular cinematographic language […] *Filoni* were often born from the sensational, and sometimes surprising, success of a single film. To ride the wave of this success, variations — more or less imaginative — emerged. For

[7] Although the term *filone* is still in use in contemporary Italian cinema, it is used here in reference to what one might term the 'golden age' of *filone* cinema which ran from around 1950 until the late 1980s (see Tortaro 2011), at which point the explosion of commercial television in Italy rendered this type of filmmaking largely redundant.

> the same reason, these films were also made very quickly. (2015: 14)

Austin Fisher has similarly framed *filone* film production in terms of a twofold aim: 'firstly, to create speculations in an attempt to predict where the next cycle might lie, informed by previous patterns; and secondly, to exploit the short-lived favourable market conditions of profitable cycles' (2019: 17). The major post-war *filoni* produced (at least in part) in Italy include: the *peplum* sword-and-sandal epic (1950s and 1960s); the Italian-style comedy (1950s to 1980s); the gothic horror (1960s); the spy caper (1960s); the Spaghetti Western (1960s and 1970s); the *giallo* (1960s to 1980s); the *poliziottesco* police drama (1970s); the zombie horror (1970s and 1980s) and the cannibal horror (1970s and 1980s).[8] As this list might suggest, *filoni* resist assimilation into the sort of Anglophone notion of genre analysed by Rick Altman. Altman's *Film/Genre* theorises genre as the result of a four-way intersection of perspectives and interests: a given genre is defined by a relatively rigid set of shared textual characteristics that are shaped by the commercial decisions made by producers and exhibitors, the aesthetic decisions made by filmmakers, the interpretive decisions made by critics and by texts' audience reception. These factors exert force on each other, and genres result from their (temporary) equilibrium at certain points in time (Altman 1999).[9] Paradoxically, *filone* cinema appears to designate an object both more closed and more nebulous than genre. On the one hand, the overwhelming commercial impetus behind most *filone* production means that these films tended to respond more-or-less singularly to the imperatives of their production and distribution. On the other hand, the *filone*'s need to chase trends in pursuit of continued sales meant that the textual characteristics which seem to define a given *filone* tended towards a permanent state of fluidity as new 'selling points' were incorporated and neighbouring *filone* cross-pollinated. What these two factors make clear is that texts produced under the *filone* model bore an intimate relationship to their industrial contexts, and carried that context directly into their form.[10]

[8] This list is not exhaustive (see Tortaro 2011).

[9] Although beyond the scope of this summary, Altman lays emphasis on the combination of semantic and syntactic elements that comprise a genre. In his view, genre results from a recognised set of formal traits being arranged to express certain societal or ideological meanings (see Altman 1999).

[10] See Kannas 2017 for a full and incisive discussion of the *filone*'s relationship to both genre and notions of hybridity.

The industry that produced *filone* films was one populated by small and often short-lived production companies. Though major Italian producers like Galatea turned out films in several *filoni*, it was medium-sized companies like Seda Spettacoli, Dania Film and Fulvia Film that undertook most *filone* production, along with small, fly-by-night operators. Again, Albiero and Cacciatore summarise:

> The key figures of this celluloid underworld were improvised producers, dazzled by the lure of easy money and the possibility of breaking in to the golden world of entertainment, and who left the most varied professions to do so. Hence, there were swarms of small production companies with a few thousand lire in share capital and lifespans as short as a single film, shamelessly imitating the most popular narratives. (2015: 14)

Producers were also lured into the *filone* market by the promise of generous subsidies from the Italian government that promised to protect them from financial risks and that meant the breakeven point on box office returns was seductively low. (Such laws had been in place to protect and nurture the Italian film industry since the Fascist period [Baschiera and Di Chiara 2011].) Further, a substantial quantity of *filone* films were made as transnational coproductions. According to this model, production companies from two or more countries (typically European) with appropriate legal frameworks in place would share the financial burden of a given film in exchange for exclusive distribution rights in their respective home markets and a stipulated share of sales to other territories. This arrangement was pervasive because — as was the intention — it allowed small, fragile European industries to share risk and pool resources in response to competition from foreign producers (which typically meant Hollywood). Stefano Baschiera and Francesco Di Chiara estimate that this sort of coproduction arrangement was responsible for financing sixty percent of Italy's total cinematic production in the 1960s (2011: 33), while Christopher Wagstaff claims coproductions accounted for seventy-five percent of the 182 films produced by Italian companies in 1965 (2013: 33). Crucially, as part of these arrangements producers could take advantage of the financial incentives available in each producer's home nation, and this allowed *filone* producers to cover most or all of their costs before the film was even sold to distributors and released (see

Baschiera and Di Chiara 2011; Betz 2009: 47–92; Shipka 2011: 11–14).[11] Even a short and limited theatrical release thus became a profitable outcome, and the ground was laid for a cinematic gold rush; with cheap, sellable films rendered lucrative virtually irrespective of their artistic merits, they were made in their thousands (see interview with Ian McCulloch in Thrower 2017: 17). Ultimately, the *filone* system's extensive recourse to sources of income other than distribution sales and box office receipts means that 'Whether the Italian man in the street really wanted to be fed what it suited the industry to provide is a much-debated question in Italy' (Wagstaff 1992: 255).

The question of audience reception is further complicated by the exhibition paradigm associated with *filone* film production. Cozzi estimates that in 1970 Italy had around 30,000 cinemas, most of which were privately owned; the biggest chains had at most ten theatres. These venues could be divided into first, second and third-run cinemas (known in Italian as *prima, seconda* and *terza visione* cinemas). The first-run theatres were mostly found in cities, featured luxurious decors and were expensive to attend. They tended to screen high-budget and prestige films, both Italian and foreign in origin. Second-run theatres were cheaper, and would screen prestige films after they had finished their first run as well as some films destined purely for the second-run circuit. Cozzi estimates that in the 1970s Rome and Milan each had around a hundred cinemas, of which around twelve would be first-run venues, twenty-five to thirty would be second-run venues and the remainder third-run venues (interview with author 2019). Third-run cinemas, which predominated in rural areas as well as working-class urban zones, screened high-budget films long after their original release and low-budget *filone* films which were exhibited solely in these venues (Koven 2006: 27).[12] Christopher Wagstaff writes that the typical mode of spectatorship in third-run theatres bore little resemblance to the norms of mainstream, twenty-first century cinema spectatorship in Europe, and was in fact a forerunner of television spectatorship. The viewer (typically male) might arrive at the cinema after dinner without knowing what was showing, arrive after the film had started, drink heavily, give more attention to conversations with friends than the screen, and only pay attention to the film during high-impact set pieces that were designed to impress independently from the films

[11] According to Cozzi, many producers would establish 'fake' coproduction alliances with companies in other countries and collect subsidies from both without genuine collaboration taking place (interview with author 2019).

[12] Some higher profile *filone* films were released in first-run theatres, however, such as Leone's Westerns and Argento's *gialli*, along with some lower-budget *gialli* directed by Bava, Fulci, Martino and others (see Kannas 2020: 42–43).

in which they featured (such as shootouts in the Western, murders in the *giallo* and sex scenes in the sex-comedy [see Koven 2006: 123–39]). Cozzi's recollection of Roman cinemas in the 1970s accords with this description; he has spoken of the Giulio Cesare cinema in Rome which was known for being rowdy. Cozzi claims that the cigarette smoke was sometimes so thick that the screen was almost totally obscured, and that audience members would occasionally bring in musical instruments to play during scenes of sex or violence. In his words, 'the audience was a spectacle by itself' (interview with author 2019).[13] Wagstaff argues that this context directly shaped the formal qualities of *filoni* produced for the third-run market. He explains:

> The viewer was being offered either one or a combination of three pay-offs: laughter, thrill, titillation. They are, as it were, three physiological responses, provoked not by whole films, but by items or moments in films. Italian formula cinema simply juggled with plot items to produce the required recipe. (1992: 253)

These films were consumed by an audience in a distracted state and in a predominantly social environment for which the film was often little more than a backdrop. Additionally, *terza visione* cinemas typically had only one screen which made 'voting with one's feet' untenable, and films would often travel around the third-run circuit very sluggishly (ibid: 251). Together, *filone* cinema's financing, production and exhibition models acted to widen the gap between the actions of producers and the specific responses of audiences. Funded largely with government money and often exhibited to a distracted audience, *filone* cinema does not necessarily evidence strong links between production practices and audience responses. Rather, *filoni* manifest concretely the commercial imperatives operative within the industry that produced them; the urge to provide a serviceable text cut to a recognised formula and to use that text to access a range of revenue streams. In other words, when read historically, *filone* films tend to index foremost, and quite overtly, the industrial origins within which they were created. As Wagstaff argues, 'small-scale *terza visione* "commercial" successes may be a response more to the needs of the industry than to the spontaneous preferences of the public' (ibid: 253).

[13] Cozzi was keen to stress that not *all* third-run cinemas fitted this model however.

The small-scale industrial practice that underpinned the bulk of *filone* production also meant that such films tended to be made according to an artisanal model. Producers would typically hire little-known writers and directors to turn out films to order, a model distinct from the auteurist paradigm that dominated post-war art cinema in Italy and beyond. Though several *filone* directors have been 'reclaimed' as auteurs or 'cult auteurs' after the fact (including Sergio Corbucci, Mario Bava, Lucio Fulci, Umberto Lenzi and Ruggero Deodato, most of whom operated across multiple *filoni*), many took pride in their artisanal status. Indeed, Lucio Fulci once asked, 'do I consider myself an artist or an artisan? An artisan, definitely' (quoted in Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 14). Mario Bava has spoken similarly: 'I am a craftsman, a romantic craftsman like those who have disappeared. I make films like I was making chairs' (quoted in Pezzotta 1997: 9). To be clear, a small number of *filone* directors — for a variety of reasons — did work in a mode much closer to that of the arthouse auteur. Key among these are Sergio Leone and Dario Argento (the latter the leading figure in the history of the *giallo*). These directors stand as important exceptions to the dominant trends within *filone* production practice, and Argento's exceptionalism will be discussed further below. Even though many other *filone* practitioners crafted their own distinctive aesthetics, however, it remains that a good director in the *filone* paradigm — one who found consistent work and could sustain a living — was foremost one who reliably replicated the formula(s) necessitated by commercial exigency rather than one who broke aesthetic moulds. In Fisher's words, a critical perspective which treats individual *filone* texts as the standalone works of auteurs is broadly untenable for 'films whose internal logic and material industrial conditions operated according to a different set of rules' (2019: 61). For the bulk of *filone* directors it was a matter of fulfilling a brief (implicit or explicit), and placing the film's industrial imperatives before any personal aspirations to individual expression.

Taken together, the above issues make manifest the close entwinement of *filone* texts and the specific industrial preconditions that bore them. Of course, the audience appeal of a *filone* or a film within it needed to be sufficient to generate a certain number of ticket sales over the short and medium term, and the artistic achievements of the films themselves needed to be adequate to sustain that audience appeal, but the 'centre of gravity' in *filone* filmmaking was typically located closer to the films' production conditions than to their creative constitutions or audience responses. At the simplest level, *filone* texts were objects produced for profit, commercially conceived and commercially manufactured. They are distinct from the art films that they bloomed alongside, expressively idiosyncratic texts that often garnered

awards at international festivals while making financial losses (indeed, the profitability of the *filone* system in post-war Italy effectively bankrolled the country's entire film industry [Koven 2006: 11–12]).[14] The commercial imperatives underpinning *filone* films rise to prominence in the texts themselves in the multiple, profound ways in which they work to organise form; industrial context is tightly woven into the fabric of *filone* cinema. By extension, the *filone* film is formally inseparable from the wider economic, social, cultural and even political milieus which undergird its commercial preconditions. In short, *filoni* proclaim their historicity by always already and concretely gesturing back to the industry which made them.

The *Giallo*

After the Spaghetti Western, the *giallo* (pl. *gialli*) was Italy's second most prolific post-war *filone*.[15] It takes its name — 'yellow' — from the yellow-covered paperback detective novels (translated from English and German in the first instances) that had been published in Italy by Mondadori since 1929 and which served as its initial inspiration. Once it had migrated onto film, the cinematic *giallo* became an altogether darker object, frequently combining explosive violence and outlandish mystery narratives with highly stylised visual and aural aesthetics. Influences deriving from the films of Alfred Hitchcock, West German *krimi* crime films, the anti-realist aesthetics of German expressionism and *fumetti* comic books are all variously detectable across the *giallo* corpus.[16] The hybridity and opportunistic formal speculations of the *filone* production system render the *giallo*'s definitive limits blurry and unstable, but these films almost always feature an amateur detective investigating a murder or series of murders in which they are somehow implicated. By default, *gialli* are set in the present, graphically violent, highly sexualised and stylistically striking, with elaborate camerawork, crash zooms, baroque colour palettes and jarring music being de rigueur. Notably, *giallo* protagonists tend to be people out of place, foreigners in Italy or Italians abroad (Needham 2002), and Baschiera and Di Chiara outline how the internationalism of *giallo* coproduction (which was virtually ubiquitous) was distinct in leading to a consistently international aesthetic *within* the texts

[14] It is important to note here that most technical and creative personnel in Italy's post-war film industry worked across both art and *filone* cinema in their careers (Bayman and Rigoletto 2013:13).

[15] Wagstaff estimates that around 450 Westerns were produced by Italian companies between 1964 and 1978 (1992: 246). Peter Bondanella estimates that 'several hundred' *gialli* were made in the 1960s and 1970s (2009: 373), and Danny Shipka suggests it was 'more than 250' (2011: 71).

[16] Though beyond the scope of this summary, on the influence of *fumetti* see Hunt 2016. On the influence of the *krimi* see Koven 2006: 5; Sanjek 1994.

(2011: 34). Here, the *giallo* takes a different path to both its art and *filone* cinema contemporaries as *gialli* were often set within 'realistic' international settings, unlike the international but mythical settings of the Western and *peplum*, or the typically more nationally circumscribed settings of art cinema. As Mikel Koven explains, 'these films recognise the "jet-set" aesthetic, the involvement and interest in other parts of Europe' (2006: 47).

As with all *filone*, absolute definitions of the *giallo* are elusive as it frequently intersected both other *filone* and more widespread genres to form hybrid texts (particularly the closely related horror and *poliziottesco filoni*, but also science-fiction and even soft-core pornography). *Gialli* also tended to differ in how they pick and choose from the *filone*'s dominant traits, with the result that the edges of the *giallo* corpus are blurry and often difficult to delineate. Claudio Bartolini has ventured the following four-pointed definition which remains amongst the most robust attempts to encapsulate of the fundamental core of these films: a *giallo* must convey suspense in both its narrative and its staging; proceed according to an essentially rational base (the presence of supernatural agents marks a move into the horror *filone*); take a crime as the fulcrum of its narrative; and ensure the dominance of these three qualities over any other characteristics that may be present, for example they cannot be overpowered by presence of comedy (2017: 20).

The openness of the *giallo*'s formal parameters means that attempts to date its lifecycle are similarly problematic. The evolution of the *giallo*, and the debates surrounding this topic, are discussed throughout this thesis. This study itself adheres to a critically established chronology by which the first *giallo* is identified as Mario Bava's 1963 *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (*La ragazza che sapeva troppo*) and the *filone*'s endpoint is dated (more nebulously) to the late 1980s. Finally, it should also be noted that the term *giallo* signifies slightly differently in Italian and in English. In the Anglophone context, it refers to the relatively narrow set of cinematic texts outlined above, while in Italian it refers to all crime and mystery literature, television and cinema much more broadly (see Hutchings 2016). This thesis uses the term according to its Anglophone signification, but it should be noted that the *filone* to which this usage refers is nonetheless recognised as distinct in the Italian context, in which it is sometimes referred to as the *giallo all'italiana* (see Sabelli 2013: 15).

Giallo Scholarship

The critical literature on the *giallo* has grown significantly since the mid-2000s in both Italian and English, and builds upon a foundation established in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The

evolution of this research can be divided into three phases, the first of which began in the late 1980s with the publication in Italy of a small number of short monographs on Dario Argento. Notable amongst these are Fabio Giovannini's *Dario Argento. Il brivido, il sangue, il thrilling* (*Dario Argento: The Shiver, the Blood, the Thrill*, 1986) and Roberto Pugliese's *Dario Argento* (1987, reissued 1996).[17] Both books mix biographies of Argento with journalistic interviews, summaries of his plots and sporadic analysis of his oeuvre. These texts are significant in the critical attention they grant to Argento, who had not previously been subjected to monograph-length studies. In attending so closely to Argento himself, however, these texts overlook the significance of the *giallo filone* per se, the proliferation of which Argento had inspired and with which he has remained intimately associated. Even though Pugliese highlights the artisanal nature of film production and the influence of both genre and earlier horror *filone* directors on Argento's career (1996: 27), he and Giovannini both seek to isolate and extract Argento from his commercial context and frame him as an auteur: Pugliese describes him as 'the Godard of the *giallo*' (ibid: 23). As such, although these writers break ground in dwelling attentively on a *giallo* director, the wider *giallo* frame goes un-theorised.

Maitland McDonagh's pioneering study of Dario Argento, *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds* (1991), similarly surveys Argento's work up to the time of its publication. McDonagh dwells particularly on the oneiric nature of Argento's narratives and his 'aggressively inappropriate juxtapositions […] twisted logic, rhapsodic violence, stylized excess' (2010: 4). Although she surveys Argento's work in depth (and was the first critic to do so in English), McDonagh replicates the sort of scattershot methodology used by Pugliese and Giovannini. She catalogues points of interest in each of Argento's films but puts forward few sustained or substantiated arguments about either his work or the *giallo* itself and so forecloses her ability to assume an incisive scholarly position on either front. Her focus is also highly ocular-centric. She dwells at length on Argento's 'fetishistic and fetishized visual vocabulary' (ibid: 173) but only briefly mentions music and his use of dubbing (a standard industry practice at the time — see below) and develops neither area of enquiry (ibid: 234). While her research has been vital in bringing Argento's work, and thus the *giallo*, into play within English-language critical discourse, in her fragmentary approach and visual focus she establishes two limiting trends which characterise and restrict *giallo* scholarship until the mid-2000s. She also joins Pugliese and Giovannini in stating that 'first and foremost […] this is an *auteur* study' (ibid: 4. Original

[17] Dates given in this review refer to original years of publication. Many of the texts discussed have since been reissued.

emphasis). She notes the limitations of this approach herself: 'The importance of generic conventions and the production practices of the Italian film industry can't be discounted' (ibid: 7). McDonagh declines to dwell on these complicating factors, however. Her methodology thus forecloses sustained consideration of how Argento's work intersects and operates within its wider industrial and social contexts, and what it reveals about those contexts themselves.

Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds was followed by Leon Hunt's article 'A (Sadistic) Night at the *Opera*' (1992). Hunt is primarily occupied with manifestations of the gaze in Argento's work and how it shapes the relationship between gender and (aestheticised) violence in his films. He argues that, while Argento's cinema cannot be read as progressive, it does offer 'vacillating positions of identification' which complicate its representations of both gender and violence (1992: 74). Hunt builds on the foundation laid by McDonagh by staking bolder claims about Argento's work. By applying critical pressure to defined topics (the gaze and gender) he demonstrates the *giallo*'s receptivity to formal and socio-cultural analyses that go beyond pure stylistic description and that reveal the layers of interpretation and nuance that the *giallo* might offer. By taking both Argento and the gaze as his organising concerns, however, Hunt cemented his predecessors' fetishisation of both this director and his visual style. Together, the above texts are representative of the first phase of *giallo* criticism: a small collection of disparate studies that critically approach the *giallo* through the work of Dario Argento, and that are wedded to a methodology of visually orientated close reading. The *giallo*'s existence as a wider cinematic phenomenon and its industrial preconditions go un-investigated, as does its use of sound.

The second phase of *giallo* scholarship began in the mid-1990s. This phase saw the scholarly conversation around the *giallo* widen to include directors other than Dario Argento, and it involved both more sustained thematic analysis of *giallo* texts and significantly more targeted research into texts' industrial contexts. These two avenues of investigation, however, were rarely combined. In Italian, Alberto Pezzotta's *Mario Bava* (1995) was a significant corrective the scholarly preoccupation with Argento. This move is significant, even if Pezzotta's text replicates the scattershot form of Pugliese and Giovannini's work on Argento by mixing archival interviews (Bava died in 1980) with biography and brief considerations of his wide oeuvre (unlike Argento, Bava worked in many *filoni*). Pezzotta is attuned to the problematic relationship between *filoni* and the practice of film criticism, claiming that Bava's scholarly relegation to the status of a footnote in the history of Italian cinema was because he shot films 'intended for popular consumption' (1997: 12). Although, like the 'first phase'

scholars above, Pezzotta combats this critical oversight by trying to reframe Bava as an overlooked auteur and hence is complicit in the assumption that *filoni* in themselves are unworthy of sustained study, his work is a significant marker of the widening interest in *filone* filmmakers in the mid-1990s.

Like the writers he follows, Pezzotta neglects to investigate in depth the commercial specificity of Bava's films, despite including several interviews in his monograph in which Bava stresses the artisanal nature of his work. However, a body of English-language literature that emerged between the end of the 1990s and the middle of the 2000s exhibited a turn towards the commercial and widened the range of *giallo* directors who were given critical attention. Three similar studies from this period may be considered together: Stephen Thrower's *Beyond Terror: The Films of Lucio Fulci* (1999, revised 2017); Troy Howarth's *The Haunted World of Mario Bava* (2002, revised 2014) and Alan Jones's *Profondo Argento* (2004, revised as *Dario Argento: The Man, the Myths & the Magic* in 2016).[18] All three books combine initial biographical information with film-by-film accounts of each director's work and interviews with the directors and their collaborators. Although analysis in all three books is typically superficial and limited to the brief identification of each work's overriding themes and stylistic qualities, these works remain valuable components of the *giallo* literature today. They represent rich archives of interviews, production details (which in many cases are highly obscure) and images from the sets and promotional materials of the films discussed. The consideration given in all three works to the collaborators and industrial factors involved in each film importantly works to loosen the idea that the *giallo* director can be identified as an isolated creative force in the auteur mould. Indeed, Thrower and Howarth are explicit in claiming that their directors cannot be understood in these terms. Although the single director, film-by-film, structures that the writers employ tend to work against these claims, these publications crucially move to position individual *gialli* within wider contingencies of collaboration and commercial imperatives. Unfortunately, these writers decline to trace or theorise the relationships between individual films' formal/aesthetic constitutions and their commercial backgrounds, in essence opting to present the latter information as unannotated datasets.

A significant step towards thinking the textual and contextual aspects of the *giallo* in tandem was Gary Needham's 2002 article 'Playing with Genre: An Introduction to the Italian

[18] Tim Lucas's 1100-page *Mario Bava: All the Colours of the Dark* (2007) sits alongside these works and holds a similar value but emerged once the third phase of *giallo* scholarship was underway. Journalistic and fan-authored books on each of these directors have proliferated in the last twenty years, but typically lack scholarly rigour and hence have done little to steer the overall trajectory of *giallo* studies.

Giallo' which appeared in the online journal *Kinoeye* (as part of a special issue on Argento). Needham establishes the *giallo*'s history as a literary category and its move into film, as well as positioning it within the notion of the *filone* and outlining its governing narrative, thematic and stylistic characteristics. While such details had been glossed by earlier writers (going back to McDonagh), Needham was the first to subject them to systematic consideration and to link those characteristics to contextual events and trends at work in Italy at the time. His importance to this critical turn, and the thoroughness with which he dissects the anatomy of the *giallo filone*, is evidenced by the frequency with which this article continues to be cited. He ends by noting the pattern traced in this review:

> Criticism tends to gather around auteur directors or singular examples. However, if we can understand the *giallo* discursively, we may begin to make interesting connections between its textual, industrial and cultural features. Such a strategy would allow us to open the *giallo* up rather than close it down. (2002)

To a great degree, the third phase of *giallo* scholarship, running from around 2006 to the present, represents an attempt to answer Needham's call. His article was followed, and explicitly built upon, by Mikel Koven's landmark *La Dolce Morte: Vernacular Cinema and the Italian Giallo Film* (2006). Koven (a folklorist) argues that the *giallo* should be understood as a 'vernacular' cinematic form, a self-perpetuating model comprised of culturally specific narrative and stylistic components which can only be correctly read by members of a certain cultural group. He argues that the *giallo* must be understood as a vernacular form circulating predominantly among young, blue-collar Italian men and that it may seem bizarre or unintelligible to viewers outside of that specific context. He suggests that the *giallo* should be approached via an almost anthropological methodology which reads it as part of a popular discourse rather than trying the 'save' it by elevating it into the arthouse (ibid: 19–22). He draws particular attention to the *giallo*'s *terza visione* exhibition context and ultimately argues that these films express a deep ambivalence towards Italy's experience of a modernity characterised by easy international travel, the instability of 'the nation', increased consumerism, increased industrialisation and an increasing divide between Italy's industrial North and rural South (ibid: 16). Koven goes further than Needham in effectively linking the

giallo to wider contemporary socio-political debates and convincingly uses the notion of the vernacular to show that these texts, as popular products that fixate on Italy's present moment, can only be understood through the dialogue they stage with contextual factors. *La Dolce Morte* is let down by its second half, which lapses into extensive and mechanical exercises in listing the *giallo*'s key tropes and the ways in which these are contravened by certain films. Nonetheless, like Needham's article, *La Dolce Morte* has proved catalytic for a critical turn towards historicism; a rethinking of the *giallo* as a richly historicised cultural form that indexes and speaks to the profound reshaping of Italy's socio-cultural landscape.

Since the publication of Koven's book, historicising interpretations of the *giallo* as *filone* have slowly come to proliferate. Danny Shipka's *Perverse Titillation: The Exploitation Cinema of Italy, Spain and France 1960–1980* (2011) provides a typical example of recent scholarship.[19] Shipka thoroughly constellates the *giallo* with other popular genres from Italy and beyond and, like Koven, argues that these films can only be understood if one considers their original contexts of production and reception. He also does a masterful job of collating raw data on the *giallo*, cataloguing a huge number of titles and providing synopses, paratextual images and production details, and makes some intriguing claims about the specifically Italian social issues that the *giallo* seems to express recurrently. He writes, for example, that 'new social concerns involving a rising crime rate, sexual violence, and globalization created an atmosphere of fear in Italy, resulting in a variety of violent plots that played out in gialli' (2011: 80). These sorts of conjectures are fascinating in their implications but are flawed in their highly presumptuous nature. Shipka assumes an automatic correlation between textual theme and social context without interrogating whether that assumption is valid within the production and exhibition contexts in which these films circulated, and without considering how the reception of these films may have differed between and within audiences. His assumption of a text's social reflectivity unfortunately remains common in much recent writing on the *giallo* (eg Bini 2011).

During this period, Italian-language scholarship has also given increasing consideration to the *giallo* per se and to its underlying economic drivers. Notably, a collection of short essays on Dario Argento titled *Argento vivo. Il cinema di Dario Argento tra genere e autorialità* (*Argento vivo/Quicksilver: The Cinema of Dario Argento Between Genre and Authorship*)[20] was edited by Vito Zagarrio and released in 2008. Although the volume

[19] Xavier Mendik's *Bodies of Desire and Bodies in Distress* (2015) provides another.

[20] The title is a pun in Italian.

maintains a singular focus on Argento, it manages to break new scholarly ground since most of its sixty-one short essays discuss the director's career in relation to industrial factors including financing, his films' box office performances, his relationships with film critics, actors, collaborators and fans, and the wider social significance of his work. Each chapter is short and restricted in scope, but the collection marks a significant reorientation of Argento scholarship towards an emphasis on the contextual factors that shape *giallo* form, even in the work of its most privileged practitioner. Stefano Baschiera and Russ Hunter's English-language edited collection *Italian Horror Cinema* (2016b) moves to historicise the *giallo* and its neighbouring horror-based *filoni* more broadly. The collection features articles on transnationalism, the popularity of exploitation filmmaking in Italy, the difficult issue of auteurship as it applies to Bava and Argento, the links between the *giallo* and other popular entertainment media of the 1960s, ecological approaches to the *giallo*'s mise-en-scene and its constructions of the Italian South. The articles are focused, detailed and convincing; the anthology format here allows for each author to narrow their field of investigation around an incisive focal point and the collection approaches a new set of historically specific and increasingly politicised issues, adding a significant new depth to *giallo* scholarship as well as outlining the *giallo*'s symbiosis with other *filone*. Regrettably, the edited collection format means that the extent of each brief chapter's investigation is limited, and there is still little mention of sound (one chapter looks at Argento's musical collaborations but does not touch upon diegetic sound design). Indeed, *giallo* scholarship up to the present moment remains ocular-centric.

Stefano Baschiera and Francesco Di Chiara's article 'Once Upon a Time in Italy: Transnational Features of Genre Production' (2011) provides something of a corrective to the brevity of Zagarrio's collection and to the speculative nature of Shipka's historicism. The article argues that the *giallo* can be best understood in terms of its international historicity since it was heavily dependent on coproduction arrangements between companies located around Europe. While this was true of most Italian *filoni* from the 1950s to the 1980s, Baschiera and Di Chiara argue that the *giallo* is unique in how 'this internationalization of the production is mirrored in the narrative of these works' (2011: 34). The authors argue that the *giallo*'s thematic interest in international modernity is less a reflection of social attitudes than a consequence of Italy's increasingly international film industry and economy. Thus, where many scholars seek to explain the *giallo* by presuming that it reflects its ambient social environment, Baschiera and Di Chiara's vital contribution to scholarship is to look inwards

with an account of how the production processes and commercial structures that gave rise to the *giallo* embedded the changing social landscape of Italy and Europe into the very materiality of the films themselves.

The pivot towards an industrial historicism is taken further by Austin Fisher in his monograph *Blood in the Streets: Histories of Violence in Italian Crime Cinema* (2018). Fisher's overall contention is that Italy's divisive wartime history — which, in the interest of reconciliation, was largely subtracted from public discourse following the war itself — can be seen re-emerging during the 1970s in the various forms of crime film that Italy was producing during that period (including the *giallo*). He argues that the force exerted by Italy's wartime past on its 1970s present is most meaningfully manifested in the minor scene-setting details and throwaway lines of dialogue that refer to historical events. These details are called upon by the various crime-based *filoni*, Fisher claims, as a way of reiterating, and thus quickly and efficiently establishing, a recognised narrative backdrop. In his words, the *filone* system 'necessitated the efficient anticipation of [films'] target audiences' levels of prior knowledge. The decisions made to facilitate this shorthand construction of a story world tell us much about the assumed preoccupations of the "here and now"' (2019: 39). Fisher's insistence on anchoring the historicity of these films in the logic and conditions of their production rather than in assumptions about audience responses is powerful and convincing, and represents a sophisticated and thorough appraisal of the industry-text-audience complex as it applies to the films he studies. His work, however, is exclusively interested in how the exigencies of the *filone* model exerts influence on the dialogue and narratives of crime films, and overlooks the effect that the *filone* production context had on these films' audio-visual aesthetics. His analytical focus remains orientated to the surface of these texts, taking their material constitution as a given, and he overlooks how their historicity is even more profoundly integrated into their form at the level of their fundamental construction.

To date, the most sophisticated attempt to understand the depth of the *giallo*'s relationship to its wider contexts is Valentina Vitali's slightly earlier *Capital and Popular Cinema: The Dollars are Coming!* (2016), which contains a long chapter on the *giallo* (centred around Bava's *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*). Vitali opens with a claim that 'an under-theorised approach to the film industry's complex relation to a country's socio-economic fabric continue[s] to block our understanding of popular films' significance for the culture that produced them' and she suggests that the conditions under which a popular genre is produced can be read in the materiality of its constituent films (2016: 3). In the *giallo*'s case, she argues,

the dominant economic factor was the rise of speculative capital in Italian genre film production and in the country more widely. Penetrating deeper into her primary text than Fisher, Vitali goes on to contend that the cinema's economic preconditions leave their 'mark on the production of the films and, inevitably, on their aesthetics' (ibid: 61–62), and that 'a film inevitably stages the socio-economic conditions of its own production' (ibid: 158). She argues that *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s economic preconditions exerted tangible influence on a range of basic material details including the film's use of location, costume and camera angle. The rigour with which her work connects textual close reading to socio-economic context via precise and detailed commercial-historical research figures a clear advance on earlier attempts to historicise the *giallo* according to a model of presumed social reflection that rarely validates its claims so convincingly.

As Vitali argues, 'The assumption that contemporary, local issues can be seen to be addressed somehow in films rests on the highly problematic tenet that films reflect, stage or at any rate respond to historical reality more or less like for like' (2016: 26). As significant as such an approach has been to *giallo* scholarship, to read the *giallo*'s historicity solely in socially reflective terms overlooks the network of industrial factors that orchestrated *filone* film production and shaped these films' formal qualities. These are factors that may have been rooted in entirely different aspects of social reality, aspects which may not be immediately apparent to the teleological historical gaze. Thus, presupposing the film text as a straightforward reflection of the society in which it was produced risks disavowing the multiplicity of commercial imperatives that determine the nature of that text, the pragmatic and ideological priorities bound up in those imperatives, and the possible conflicts that may exist between different imperatives. As the most recent *giallo* scholarship demonstrates, any attempt to effectively locate these films within the turbulent social milieu from which they emerged must account thoroughly for the concrete relationships that the *giallo* establishes between its forms and its contexts, and must acknowledge the presence, within the text, of its industrial determinates. It is the contention of this thesis that the *giallo*'s 'industrial historicity' can be read most profoundly if the persistent ocular-centrism of existing scholarship is abandoned and attention is directed to these films' sound designs — specifically, their use of the voice.

The Voice in Cinema and Culture

In general, literature on the voice in film is scant, although it is an expanding field. The following literature review details the key texts in this body of research, as well as some of the broader philosophical treatments of the voice upon which both that literature and this thesis draw. Research into the cinematic voice has grown out of a small number of seminal formalist studies conducted in the 1980s, and has since expanded to consider explicitly the political significance that can accrue to the voice in film, particularly surrounding issues of gender, labour and transnationalism. To date, there have been few sustained attempts to understand or theorise the voice in relation to film history. This lacuna is perhaps surprising, since the arrival of sound and voice in cinema was granted considerable significance by early film theorists. After observing two decades of sound cinema, Béla Balázs wrote that 'The art of the silent film is dead, but its place was taken by the mere technique of the sound film which in twenty years has not risen and evolved into an art' (1970: 194–95). Similarly, Siegfried Kracauer lamented that 'Dialogue films either reproduce theatrical plays or convey plots in theatrical fashion' (1985: 128). For these theorists, the assimilation of the voice into the film text has both historical and ontological significance for cinema as a medium, but scholarship has only recently begun to consider how the roles played by the voice in certain bodies of films might actively endow those films with the traces of their specific, local historical situations. As this review will highlight, similar work has been undertaken in relation to other auditory media and demonstrates how such enquiry can deepen scholarly knowledge of both those media and the voice itself.[21]

Michel Chion's *The Voice in Cinema* (1982, English translation 1999) stands as the foundational text on the cinematic voice, and has been pivotal in highlighting the structural importance of the voice to the 'vococentric' and 'verbocentric' sound film (1999: 5–6). Chion adopts a formalist mode of analysis which categorises the various forms that the voice may take in film. Prime amongst these is his theory of the *acousmêtre*, the voice without a visible source on screen that floats unbounded in the liminal space between screen and proscenium, suggesting malevolence and possessing the ominous powers of omnipresence, panopticism, omniscience and omnipotence (ibid: 17–47). Chion also identifies the 'I-voice', through which the voice of a diegetic character may narrate past events during a flashback (ibid: 49–54), and

[21] This review omits discussion of research on film sound in general, a relatively small body of work with which this thesis will remain in contact.

the ‘screaming point’, the point at which a film’s plot lines converge to extract a scream from a female character (ibid: 75–79). The enduring value of Chion’s work is his careful anatomisation; he insightfully dissects the cinematic voice according to the operations it performs and draws from several examples while offering paradigms that may be applied to cinema of all forms and periods (as well as to other sound media). The universality of his analysis has also attracted criticism from scholars who argue that his understanding of the voice is overly simplistic and consequently superficial (see Silverman below, for example). In his formalist approach, Chion also declines to consider the voice in terms of its ontology beyond the context of cinema. Despite his reluctance to complicate his own notions, Chion offers a toolkit of pragmatic concepts which continue to function as key theoretical vectors through which broader philosophies of voice can be channelled and applied to film texts.

In ‘The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space’ (1980), written around the same time as Chion’s book, Mary Ann Doane undertakes a more ideologically attuned analysis of voice in classical cinema and focuses specifically on the voice’s implication in cinematic representations of gender. She describes the necessary fusion of image and sound that classical cinema must enact to suture the spectator into the ‘body *of* the film’ which is ‘organically’ unified (1980: 35. Original emphasis). She goes on to state that the immersive sonority of classical cinema ‘work[s] to sustain the narcissistic pleasure derived from the image of a certain unity, cohesion and, hence, an identity grounded by the spectator's fantasmatic relation to his/her own body’ (ibid: 45). She ends by discussing the possibility of challenging this phallic fantasmatic model of soundscape through of ‘a political erotics of the voice’, that plays to different notions of embodiment but warns it may simply work to reinforce woman’s otherness to patriarchal hegemony (ibid: 50). For Doane (unlike Chion) it is not simply a matter of cinema’s form or materiality, but of how form both reflects and shapes wider, more profound notions of human subjectivity and gender politics which circulate extra-diegetically. Unfortunately, however, she does not move beyond classical Hollywood and (briefly) European arthouse schemas to ask whether other cinematic histories may offer alternative configurations of voice and body with diverse political implications.

Doane’s gendered reading of the voice in film is picked up to great effect by Kaja Silverman in *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (1988). Silverman is heavily critical of Chion’s work on the gendering of sound (which ‘seems motivated primarily by the search for poetic props’ [1988: 49]), and builds on Laura Mulvey’s work on cinematic spectatorship by arguing that the cinematic spectacle poses a threat to the

male viewing subject as it functions as a constant reminder of lack (ibid: 2). For Silverman, cinema combats this risk with three tactics. First, the creation of 'recessed' diegetic spaces to which the female voice is confined and which 'equates diegetic interiority with discursive impotence and lack of control' in opposition to male voices that remain exterior and allied to fantasies of discursive authority (ibid: 45–54). Second, the woman is made to talk incessantly about herself, creating a fantasmatic psychic space to which she is then likewise confined (ibid: 59). Third, her voice is overtly embodied through accent, timbre or 'grain', which 'involves the submersion of the female voice in the female body, and results in linguistic incapacity and a general vulnerability' (ibid: 61). Silverman's work represents a landmark exploration of the stakes involved in the cinematic voice and the deep significance bound up in the seemingly neutral process of cinematic enunciation. The clarity and focus of her writing and the systematic nature of her argument present film scholarship with a framework for understanding the subtle power hierarchies at work in vocal communication, a powerful contribution to theories of both voice and film sound. Silverman's work is flawed only by her decision to follow Mulvey in approaching the cinematic spectacle from the perspective of the male spectator, leaving open questions as to whether the female viewer-auditor may hear the vocal structures of cinema differently and how other aspects of a viewer's subjectivity (along lines of race, sexuality and physical ability, for example) may inflect the audience-soundtrack relationship.

More recently, there have been attempts to understand how the technicalities of film sound intersect concerns rooted in the historical context surrounding national cinematic traditions. A standout case is Mark Betz's *Beyond the Subtitle: Remapping European Art Cinema* (2009), which devotes a chapter to considering the debates engendered by art cinema around the uses of subtitling and dubbing. Betz convincingly argues that this tension opens onto important extra-diegetic issues, 'tied as they are to the political, economic, and ideological dimensions of that cinema' (2009: 31). He explains that art cinema gained prominence at a time when European integration was expanding and flows of international capital were creating an increasingly globalised world. During this period, 'The voice/celebrity (of the actor, but also of the director) emerges in the coproduced European art film as a means towards imaginary nation building' (ibid: 32). By drawing on thorough historical research Betz shows that the 'dialogue tracks of art films are thus a rich site of contestation and are symptomatic of larger economic, political, and cultural forces in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s' (ibid: 52). Interestingly, Betz notes that these issues are often absent from discussions of popular cinema

given that such films are seen to be authorless and so lacking the unified artistic vision that dubbing or subtitling might corrupt, a position he seems to uncritically accept (ibid: 69). He therefore does not consider the possibility that films outside the art film paradigm may intersect the same set of issues from alternative perspectives with alternative results. The result is a book that convincingly and crucially demonstrates that the voice, in its very materiality, puts the film text into tangible and substantial dialogue with a range of extra-diegetic and historically pertinent issues, and it complements the more theory-driven concerns expressed by Doane and Silverman. Betz's work, however, begs to be rethought in terms of popular, genre or, indeed, *filone* cinema.

Betz's scholarship is complemented by Antonella Sisto's *Italian Film Sound: Listening to the Screen* (2014), a polemic analysis of the continued and uncritical use of voice dubbing — a largely Fascist intervention into film practice (see below) — by the Italian film industry following the fall of Mussolini's government. For Sisto, post-war dubbing remains a 'cultural and semiotic violence' that manifests 'the sonicscape of the nation's fascist repressed unconscious' (ibid: 9–10). Her argument is powerful and her research is thorough, but her polemic approach precludes her from considering factors at play in the continuation of dubbing other than its Fascist origins (such as those analysed by Betz) and how these may inflect or complicate her account. She also stops short of considering the consequences of this continuity for post-war filmmaking. What it means for neorealist and art cinema to carry the echo of Fascist praxis in their dubbed voices is a question that goes frustratingly unaddressed. Furthermore, like Betz, Sisto seems unconcerned with asking whether Italy's tradition of *filone* filmmaking offers anything unique to the cinematic voice's historical resonance in that country. Nonetheless, Betz and Sisto produce a critical perspective, still embryonic, within which the voice in Italian cinema coalesces into a textual node where form, industry and socio-political issues of past and present converge and, perhaps, begin to talk to each other.

Interest in the cinematic voice permeates the burgeoning field of translation studies. This is a body of work less interested in the voice per se than the speech to which it gives support. Monographs and essays by Antje Ascheid (1997), Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (2006), Nataša Ďurovičová (2010), Charlotte Bosseaux (2015) and Tessa Dwyer (2017), and Tom Whittaker and Sarah Wright's edited collection *Locating the Voice in Film: Critical Approaches and Global Practices* (2017) demonstrate an increasing critical preoccupation with the cinematic voice's geopolitical dimensions. Shohat and Stam argue, for instance, that 'if all languages are created equal, some are made "more equal than others"' and that decisions

surrounding which films are dubbed or subtitled into which languages reinforce and shape global cultural hierarchies (2006: 107). Similarly, Ďurovičová is interested in the importance of cinematic speech in reinforcing extra-diegetic national boundaries and the fact that cinematic translation 'immediately became a matter of a specific set of transnational power relationships, and in many cases subject to explicitly political negotiations' (2010: 94–95). Whittaker and Wright open their collection of essays by stating that 'The place of the voice thus alerts us to the geopolitical dimensions of cinema, or rather, the presence of film in space' (2017: 1). This body of scholarship figures an important complement to the work of Betz and Sisto by demonstrating the myriad ways in which industrial concerns might lead the voice to weave historically specific social, cultural and political concerns into the cinematic text. However, and again like Betz and Sisto, by reading the voice principally in terms of speech and language, these studies approach the voice somewhat reductively and neglect to consider how its non-verbal aspects may inflect their arguments, whether by reinforcing the operations performed by speech or by enacting alternative signifying practices.

Research into the cinematic voice sits alongside a small number of philosophical texts that treat the voice in general and are more attentive to the voice's non-linguistic attributes. Prime amongst these is Mladen Dolar's *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006). Dolar's Lacanian psychoanalytical approach understands the voice principally in terms of what it is not, discussing it via a series of 'neither A nor B' propositions that efficiently delineate the voice's inherent elusiveness and unravel the intricacy of Lacan's theory. He begins by establishing the voice as that which 'does not contribute to making sense' (2006: 14–15). Drawing on a wide range of thought from Plato to Derrida, Dolar charts how the voice's elusiveness grants it the power to intervene in fields as diverse as linguistics, metaphysics, physics, ethics and politics because, put simply, it mutually implicates the myriad ontological categories that it simultaneously touches. Dolar's work is therefore crucial in establishing the voice's inherently interstitial nature. Negative definitions of the voice structure a discussion which, unlike the film theory discussed above, is concerned with how the voice constitutes human subjectivity and sociality at a universal level. Dolar attributes to the voice political and ethical stakes that reach across history and society, but he is disappointingly reticent to discuss cinema. Although he does touch upon Chion's notion of the *acousmêtre* and fleetingly refers to Silverman, Dolar explores his ideas with a long, final analysis of Kafka's literature and offers no similar examination of film (or radio). He therefore misses an opportunity to consider the unique

concerns around the recorded voice and to instigate a productive dialogue between film sound studies and his own philosophy.

Dolar's work sits alongside Adriana Cavarero's *For More than One Voice* (2003, English translation 2005). Cavarero charts the history of thinking on voice from the classical period up to the work of Hannah Arendt and argues that western philosophy understands the voice according to a fundamental separation of logos (thought or language) and phonos (sound). Through this division, the unique, sonorous and relational elements of the voice have become fully subordinated to the depersonalised, semantic content that it transmits. Like Silverman and Doane, Cavarero draws attention to the gender politics bound up in the voice and outlines the historical division of male, cognitive logos from female, corporeal (and frivolous) phonos. She proposes a new politics based on the plurality and uniqueness intrinsic to the vocal by arguing that a politics that rebalances vocal logos and phonos (language and sonority) is one that avoids the tyranny of dehumanising schemata. Cavarero, then, sustains a more positivist interpretation of the voice than Dolar by understanding it through the sort of attention to sonority that he is careful to mitigate. Like Dolar, however, Cavarero resists applying her arguments to cinema. It is also unfortunate from the perspective of this thesis that, despite being active in Italian political struggles of the 1970s and 1980s, Cavarero does not apply her analysis of the voice to that context. Her work thus presents a range of expansive and important ideas with socio-culturally significant stakes, but begs to be put into relation with both cinema and, strangely, its own post-war Italian context.

Film studies has yet to bring philosophical approaches to the voice into sustained contact with film theory or history. Jacob Smith's *Vocal Tracks: Performance and Sound Media* (2008), however, charts the ways in which sound recording technology has affected various modes of vocal performance including song, recorded comedy, erotic recordings and prank phone calls. Smith argues that film theory tends to either 'ignore the ways in which film texts function in larger cultural and social contexts' or else lose sight of the subjective significance of the individual's voice (2008: 4). He goes on to trace direct causal links between technology and performance, such as the opportunity that was offered by the invention of high-fidelity microphones, radios and record players for the soft, delicate singing style of 'crooners' to gain prominence. Smith moves from charting this technology-performance dynamic to identifying the wider social tensions and even ontological insights it reveals. For example, the same recording fidelity that allowed crooning to prosper also popularised the African-

American rasp, and he discusses this fact in relation to race politics in the USA during the mid-twentieth century. He summarises:

> modern sound media have offered texts that need to be heard from […] multiple positions, since the voice is always saying so many things at once — speaking of culture, identity, technology, and performance with the same fragile, complex, and beautiful tones. (2008: 249)

Smith identifies how research into the recorded voice reveals the voice as a knot of disparate extra-textual forces and the specificity of those forces to certain media and contexts. It follows that cinema speaks its own truths of the voice, its ontology and its various social significances, but Smith's interest in sound-only media forecloses such an investigation and it remains to be taken up elsewhere.

This review illustrates that the voice can be, and has been, thought within myriad frames both textual and contextual: aesthetic-formal; technical-technological; political-ideological; historical-national; philosophical-ontological. In truth, the voice in film always already touches upon every one of these valences. Cinema thus provides a unique matrix of interstices within which the voice resonates; ever irreducibly *between*, it spins an aural web without beginning or end, dynamically mediating, enjoining, overlapping and reconfiguring these categories (and doubtless many more). A systematic attempt to account for the cinematic voice's myriad valences with a single grand theory would thus disavow or contradict the voice's own elusiveness and would present a self-defeating methodology. Rather, the cinematic voice should be traced in its fluidity, pursued through the ever-evolving and always unfolding network of interstices within which it resounds, facilitating conversations between the texts and contexts that it exceeds and overreaches. These are conversations through which the voice might reveal profound imbrications of text and context, and through which it might also profoundly reveal itself.

Listening to the *Giallo*: Method and Argumentation

The understanding of the cinematic voice outlined above is generative of this thesis's methodology. With a few noted exceptions, *giallo* scholarship since the mid-2000s remains beset by 'social reflectionist' approaches that are undermined by a circular methodology: X attribute of a film is said to reflect Y social attitude, while Y social attitude is assumed on the basis of X attribute (see Wagstaff 2013). This issue is further complicated by the approach's failure to account for interpretative heterogeneity within these films' original audiences (however the term 'original' may itself be defined). Thematically anchored statements claiming that 'a filmic text tends to mirror attitudes and sentiments that are already there consciously and/or unconsciously […] They tell us about the people who created them and the society that enjoyed them' (Brizio-Skov 2011: 3), alluring as they may be, are both untenably general and virtually impossible to substantiate. A more tangible route towards uncovering *filone* cinema's social significance is a commercial historicism. In the early 1980s Christopher Frayling was already arguing that Spaghetti Westerns were best read in relation to contemporary changes in production practice and that 'in addition to looking at the *social* context, the […] *production context* must also be borne in mind' (1998 [1981]: 57. Original emphasis). Frayling's lead was not picked up by *giallo* scholars until the 2010s however, when Vitali, amongst a few others, began to 'open up a film's text to forces and domains that although habitually conceptualised as being outside the text, are, in reality, directly or indirectly, moulding it as an aesthetic object' (2016: 166). This project is currently embryonic and is constrained by its unquestioning perpetuation of *giallo* scholarship's visual focus.

Although hitherto completely overlooked by *giallo* scholars, the voice represents the formal structure through which the entry of context into text is most palpable. The voice serves, in the same breath, aesthetic and commercial, textual and contextual exigencies. At once a cornerstone of a film's acoustic form and a precise, tangible product of the sound studio, the voice always already stages a conversation between the cinematic text and its industrial context. It always stands as an audible marker of a film's material historicity and the text-context relationship that it mediates is dynamic rather than fixed. Rather than making a 'statement' about the imbrication of text and context like an inanimate object, the voice's aural modulation stages an ongoing 'negotiation' between the two. The voice does not testify to the relationality of text and context(s), but their inter-relationality.

The voice is the most explicitly commercial element of *giallo* form. *Giallo* cinema's reliance on dubbing (discussed in depth below) meant that directors and screen actors often had minimal involvement in the production of their films' voice tracks. What aesthetic control these creative players had was located almost purely at the visual, narrative and musical levels, while the voice was crafted by other professionals (dubbing directors, studio sound recordists, voice actors) in separate facilities after the filming and primary editing had been completed. Even Dario Argento, the most auteurist figure working in *giallo* cinema, claimed to be uninterested in diegetic sound design: he once told L. Andrew Cooper that, for him, 'Sound isn't as important as the image' (Cooper 2012: 153). In more depth, and offering an insight into Italy's post-war film industry overall, Alan Jones writes that:

> Once he's finished it's over to the dubbers. Nick Alexander [one of Argento's principal sound and dubbing editors] had to beg Dario to come to the studio to make decisions […] Dubbing is the least important part of the process for him, but […] that was the culture of the time. (Correspondence with author 2020)

Outsourced to a separate, and often uncredited, set of craftspeople, the *giallo*'s voice tracks bear the traces of the *filone*'s industrial foundations more overtly than any other of its formal components. In a sense, the voice in the *giallo* loosely accords with Kay Dickinson's description of the film/music mismatch. In *Off Key: When Film and Music Won't Work Together,* Dickinson argues that in the decades following the Second World War British and American film production increasingly adopted a post-Fordist model, 'a mode of production that favors increased decentralization and fragmentation' (2008: 5). As the creation of film music specifically came to be outsourced to increasingly alienated and increasingly precarious professionals, instances where film-music partnerships fall flat or in some sense 'don't work' came to open onto issues of work itself. Most fundamentally, Dickinson contends that 'What is usually happening in a mismatch is an unsuccessful effacement of labor. The failed expurgation of modes of production and their concomitant social and historical meanings significantly undermines the prospect of simple filmic absorption' (ibid: 39). The musical mismatch, then, is an instance in which textual integrity begins to unravel and the production processes that subtend the text (along with the wider economic paradigms that, in turn, subtend those production processes) rise uncomfortably to the surface. This thesis approaches the voice,

to a great degree, as Dickinson approaches the mismatch. The blunt pragmatism with which the *giallo*'s voice tracks were crafted often works against seamless representational coherence. The voice in the *giallo* is always somewhat mismatched (literally so, given these films' often loose use of dubbing) and thus always already contains the latent threat (or, perhaps, promise) that it will introject these films' production contexts into the texts themselves. *Giallo* scholarship's failure to account for sound design is thus both surprising and in urgent need of correction if the material historicity of these texts is to be comprehensively interrogated. This thesis undertakes to perform this correction by scrutinising the multivalence of the voice in *giallo* cinema. Crucially, this analysis will reframe the *giallo*'s social context not as an external factor reflected passively by the text, but as an internal and material factor which the text actively engages and assimilates. By using the voice to bring context in from the textual margins, this thesis will demonstrate that the *giallo* represents a crucible within which ambient and often nebulous social phenomena achieved concrete form.

In summary, this thesis seeks to make three contributions to *giallo* scholarship, Italian studies, and the study of film sound:

1. It will correct *giallo* scholarship's near-total disavowal of these films' non-musical soundtracks, by subjecting those soundtracks to sustained formal and industrial analysis.
2. It will argue that the voice folds the *giallo*'s commercial — and by extension social, cultural, economic and political — contexts into the text at the material level, and that the *giallo* figures a forum which both registered and reified wider social issues.
3. It will argue for the 'doubleness' of the cinematic voice and establish the cinematic voice's defiance of closed borders, above all the border between text and context. It will argue that the cinematic voice mediates and renders audible the industrial — and by extension social, cultural, economic and political — milieu(s) from which a film emerges. This thesis therefore seeks to provide a theoretical and methodological perspective of value to film and cultural studies beyond the scope of *giallo*/Italian cinema research.

Chapter Summaries

This thesis pursues the above priorities across three chapters. Chapter 1 traces the *giallo*'s origins in Mario Bava's *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* and Dario Argento's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*. The former was, in many ways, the *filone*'s prototype, the latter its launchpad, and taken together the pair stand as key examples of 'early' *giallo* cinema. These films demonstrate that, from its earliest instances, the *giallo* is inextricably bound to its socio-cultural milieu through the voice's complex mediation of textual and contextual concerns. Bava's film situates the voice in a very specific interstice: the intertextual space between the novels, films and television programmes that fed into the *filone*'s genesis. *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* features an anonymous male voice-over, whose voice adopts a range of sonorous characteristics throughout the course of the film, from the impersonal, to the frantic, to the paternalistic. Chapter 1 argues that each of these sonorous modes invokes a particular set of intertexts which are vital to understanding and tracing the *giallo*'s cinematic origins. The narrator's initial, level tone gestures towards the impersonal omnipotence of the classically understood literary narrator, and works to tie the film to the popular novels which influenced it and upon which it sought to capitalise. His subsequent shift into a more emotionally charged tone (and, at the same time, a more fallible relationship to the diegesis) represents a shift in intertextual resonance by gesturing towards the films noir to which *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (and the *filone* it led to) is equally indebted. The narrator's later return to a more paternalistic tone, which accompanies a montage sequence laying bare the spectacular commodification of Rome in the early 1960s, in turn resonates with the voice-overs used in *Carosello* television adverts of the period. With each sonorous shift, the voice-over in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* weaves a new intertextual thread into the fabric of the film itself to situate the text profitably within its wider, increasingly international and increasingly multi-media cultural context. The voice in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* is consequently a key site at which the wider social fabric of post-boom Italy (and Rome in particular) can be *heard* passing through a state of significant flux. Argento's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* demands a slightly different critical approach. Chapter 1 explains that Argento's unique familial background insulated him from the commercial exigencies of the *filone* production system, and so his use of form does not index commercial imperatives in the same way that it does in the *gialli* of other directors. Rather, operating more like an arthouse auteur, Argento uses film form to intervene in and interpret post-boom Italy (and, again, Rome in particular). The unique

industrial context within which this film was produced must be recognised through a methodological shift; *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* asks to be read in terms of how its form interprets, rather than assimilates, elements of its contextual milieu. Although, unlike Bava, Argento does not employ voice-over narration directly, he uses precisely this cinematic vocal paradigm to articulate the film's entire approach to post-boom spatiality. *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* suggests that to possess the capacity for logocentric speech is to possess the power to determine which sides of the film's many vague spatial borders constitute the 'inside' and which sides constitute the 'outside', in the same way that the cinematic voice-over divides an inner diegetic world from an outer space of enunciation. Through the film's many meta-cinematic returns to this guiding formal rubric, Argento suggests that in an era increasingly industrialised, globalised and technologically developed, the ability to vocally control space has become a fundamental assumption of the urban subject. Both Bava and Argento therefore use the cinematic voice to structure their films' socio-cultural entanglements; Bava through the voice's ability to integrate multiple intertextual reference points, Argento through the voice's ability to meta-cinematically evince nebulous socio-spatial phenomena.

Chapter 2 looks at two *gialli* from the *filone*'s 'middle' or 'high' period, the first half of the 1970s, and focuses on the largely overlooked subset of rural *gialli* by taking Lucio Fulci's *Don't Torture a Duckling* (*Non si sevizia un paperino,* 1972) and Sergio Martino's *Torso* (*I corpi presentano tracce di violenza carnale*, 1973) as its primary texts. These films share a deep formal preoccupation with vocal silence, manifest in the form of fully or partially mute characters and in spaces in which characters, for a variety of reasons, decline utterance. Both films present vocal silence as a fundamental element of rural space and pitch the silence of the rural against the vocality of the urban. In *Don't Torture a Duckling*, silence pervades the fictional southern Italian village of Accendura and represents a negative phenomenon, in the sense that it never transcends the status of an emptiness. Silence is presented as a simple lack or deficiency of voice, as the rural South with which it is aligned is defined by the film in terms of the northern modernity (and vocality) that it lacks. In this way, silence and the voice become 'cartographic' tools with which the film delineates the profound socio-economic divide between Italy's rural South and its more urban North, a socio-economic divide that goes back to the days of Italy's unification. Chapter 2 argues that *Don't Torture a Duckling*'s concern with 'southern silence' is an industrially conditioned principle of the film's materiality. By appropriating both the southern rural landscape and stereotypical representations of archaic

southern superstition as passive, picturesque and purely visual props for the creation of a pre-determined southern ambience, the film betrays the fetishistic perspective of an urban cultural industry and reifies the cultural discourses underlying that fetishism. Unlike *Don't Torture a Duckling*, *Torso* betrays an interest in the positive autonomy of vocal silence because it is interested in the liminal border between vocal silence and the audible voice; the film's acoustic textuality suggests that the two be understood not as opposites but as interwoven points on a single vocal spectrum. This nuance intersects the film's simultaneous interest in spatial liminality: as the voice and vocal silence are presented as interwoven rather than polarised in *Torso*, so too are the North and South, and the urban and the rural. Tracing the film's positive definition of silence provides a path towards better understanding its industrial preconditions. Martino has made clear that vocal silence serves a positive narrative function in *giallo* cinema — a form of acoustic *presence* — because it is generative of suspense, and so the film's alignment of rural space with vocal silence ties the *giallo*'s formulaic constitution to wider issues of regional difference in Italy. Further, *Torso*'s recourse to vocal silence reveals the *giallo*'s underlying affinities with its silent cinema ancestors and so presents a challenge to the assumed temporal borders that separate cinematic eras; the film questions their mutual exclusion and asks, most profoundly, how the borders of the voice itself might be defined.

Chapter 3 looks at two 'late' *gialli* drawn from the early 1980s, when the *filone* was entering its final phase: Argento's *Tenebrae* (*Tenebre*, 1982) and Fulci's *The New York Ripper* (*Lo squartatore di New York*, 1982). Both films are unusual for *gialli* in taking New York as a setting (*Tenebrae* for a brief scene and *The New York Ripper* for its entirety), and clearly frame the city in terms of the neoliberal economics and cultural postmodernity of which it was a hub in the 1980s. Both films also employ the voice in ways that reach outwards from the films to the neoliberal and/or postmodern cultural matrices within which they circulate. *Tenebrae* employs the voice in a manner that introduces aesthetic paradigms drawn from commercial television, which had grown rapidly and unrestrainedly following significant media deregulation in Italy in the mid and late 1970s. In a very real sense, commercial television was how Italy was most overtly drawn into the international neoliberal project, and it figures as one of *Tenebrae*'s narrative fulcrums as the protagonist, a successful American novelist, tours Rome's media outlets to promote his new book. However, television figures an omnipresence in the film through the ubiquitous use of a distinctly televisual formal paradigm in which the image is guided by the voice. *Tenebrae* is a dialogue-heavy work in which the camera remains fixed on the source of diegetic speech, as is the case in both the chat show and television drama

formats which Italy imported from America and which Argento has cited as a key influence on the film's aesthetic. Periodically, however, Argento and his team depart from this televisual formal model, granting the camera an autonomy which more closely accords to classical theorisations of the cinematic. *Tenebrae* is highly aware that it occupies an industrial and media-cultural milieu in which television is becoming dominant, but it continues to insist upon cinema's aesthetic distinction within that milieu. Chapter 3 proceeds to demonstrate that *The New York Ripper* registers the influence of a global and television-dominated media landscape in an altogether more insidious manner. The chapter applies Jean Baudrillard's postmodern theorisation of the simulacrum — the copy of a copy that no longer refers to a foundational point of origin — to the realm of film sound, and argues that Fulci's film consistently assimilates recognisable voices drawn from an international media matrix. These 'vocal simulacra' include, most notably, the voice of Donald Duck which is adopted by the film's killer. More subtly they include a range of racially stereotyped voices that, in the film's English dub, replicate those found in American television programmes and films. The film's use of voice thus registers a moment in which self-perpetuating simulacra were coming to dominate cultural production. The chapter goes on to show that New York City was also becoming a ubiquitous media image across the world by the 1980s thanks to the global circulation of American television programmes. In a sense, *The New York Ripper*'s multiple dubs, each of which are equally 'at home' when paired with the image of New York, reveal that in an era of mediated cultural globalisation, the concept of the nation is becoming unstable, in large part because the voice is ceasing to function as a stable national marker. The chapter ends, however, by suggesting that the body, always already and immediately estranged from the voice to which it gives rise, might figure a repressed national signifier through which the film's national specificity may be read.

Sounding out the *Giallo*: Aldo Lado's *Short Night of Glass Dolls* (1971)

A case study might usefully draw together the various lines of interest discussed above. Aldo Lado's *Short Night of Glass Dolls* (*La corta notte delle bambole di vetro,* 1971) lays bare the complex entwinement of textual, commercial and social concerns that obtains across the *giallo*'s voice tracks, and it does so for the unlikely reason that its protagonist spends the entire

narrative present mute and motionless.[22] In the film, the body of Gregory Moore (Jean Sorel) — an American journalist based in communist Prague — is discovered in a church garden before being taken to the city's morgue. It soon becomes apparent, however, that Gregory is not dead, but has been paralysed and left unable to use any part of his body (including his vocal apparatus) despite being fully conscious and sensible of the world around him. The rest of the film alternates between Gregory's desperate (and futile) attempts to make hospital staff aware that he is still alive (they have suspicions that something unusual is afoot, as his body never achieves rigour mortis) and analeptic scenes through which he tries to piece together what has led him to this state. Gradually, it is revealed that Gregory has been zealously trying to track down his Czech girlfriend Mira (Barbara Bach) who has disappeared. His search, narrated through the extended flashbacks that make up the bulk of the film, eventually leads him to Club 99, a quasi-satanic sex cult made up of Prague's elderly social elite, who go to great lengths to silence those (young) people who threaten their grip on power. They have murdered Mira for her own investigations into their operations and likewise consign Gregory to his paralytic living death in the final flashback scene before killing him in the final shots.[23]

Although he is mute, Gregory is not silent; he talks extensively through a voice-over that articulates his inner speech for the audience's benefit. The film indicates that this voice-over represents a form of silent *voice*, rather than (or as well as) *thought*, in the repeated extreme close-ups of Gregory's stilled mouth that accompany it in the first instances of its usage. The content of Gregory's unspoken monologue also emphasises its vocality. Adriana Cavarero has described how 'the act of speaking is […] from the start the relation of unique beings that address themselves to one another' (2005: 29). Gregory's mute cry, 'You! Listen to me! Look at me! Can't you hear me? […] Don't leave me like this! Help me!' is a plea for this mutual recognition, an attempt at a phatic address directed outwards to the other characters. Gregory's diegetically *unheard* voice reveals that silence, as Mladen Dolar has argued, 'always functions as the negative of the voice, its shadow, its reverse, and thus something which can evoke the voice in its pure form' (2006: 152). By remapping Gregory's voice onto silence (a result of the *giallo*'s characteristic disregard for strict narrative and stylistic realism) *Short*

[22] For a slightly more elaborated version of this case study see Pollard 2020a.

[23] The film seems to owe a considerable intertextual debt in terms of both narrative and style to the 'Breakdown' episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955). The episode concerns a man who has been paralysed in a car accident, taken to hospital and presumed dead. As in Lado's film, the audience is privy to a voice-over of the man's thoughts as he tries to signal to hospital staff that he is alive. Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) suggests another intertext.

Night of Glass Dolls inverts the voice in the way that a photographic negative inverts a visual image, and as with a photographic negative, reveals details which would otherwise remain hidden. At the diegetic level, the contrast between Gregory's enforced silence and the film's cacophony of other voices illustrates the great ideological importance which the human voice may acquire as a vehicle of unity. The real interest of the voice in this film, however, is in the way that it fulfils the same role beyond the limits of the text. Even while the voice stands as a tool of socio-political unity within the film's diegesis, it can be heard serving the same purpose extra-diegetically by furthering the homogenising commercial ideology that underpinned the film's creation. *Short Night of Glass Dolls* was a collaboration between producers from three countries and was filmed in four using actors of many nationalities. It fell to the dubbed voice to neutralise these national differences and render the film a coherent product distributable across Europe. In Tessa Dwyer's words, 'dubbing draw[s] attention to means of production' (2017: 188). Through its stylised use of voice-over, the film clearly draws attention to the practice of voice dubbing at work in its own (post-)production, inevitably putting diegetic and extra-diegetic concerns with vocal homogeneity into conversation. This conversation allows one to hear, alongside the ideology that dominates the film's narrative, the ideology at work in the production of the film and, by extension, *giallo* cinema in general. This extra-diegetic ideology was internationalist in flavour and had the establishment of a single European identity as its logical consequence. While this project operated on a scale far wider than Europe's film industries (the Common Market, for example, was taking shape during the *giallo*'s 1970s heyday) many have understood the dubbed voices of coproduced films — of both *filone* and arthouse varieties — as both symptomatic and enabling of this goal. *Short Night of Glass Dolls* also points to a paradox in this use of the dubbed voice. As well as signalling the transnational imperatives bound up in the film's coproduction, the voice gestures towards Italian dubbing's Fascist origins. As this history shows, the technique may be used as a tool for *nationalism* as readily as internationalism, and *Short Night of Glass Dolls* reveals this ideological contradiction in a way that both informs the uncanniness with which the dubbed voice is often credited, and that unambiguously signals the interminable multivalence of the voice in *giallo* cinema.

Diegetically Speaking: The Ideology of Monotony

The overt representation of ideology and its relationship to voice in *Short Night of Glass Dolls* is striking. Politics at the state level forms one of the film's central obsessions, starting with its

setting. The search for exotic locations, newly accessible to both film crews and audiences in an age of rapidly increasing international mobility, is characteristic of the *giallo*. However, *Short Night to Glass Dolls* is possibly a unique case in being set (and partly shot) behind the Iron Curtain in Soviet-controlled Czechoslovakia.[24] The film was produced in the immediate wake of the Prague Spring and its brutal repression, and makes no bones about historicising this moment (in spite of Lado's claim that Prague was chosen as an allusion to Kafka [Lado 2012]): in the first flashback scene Gregory is reporting on details of a Cold War standoff; the narrative's dialogue is riven with references to 'the regime' and the 'oppression of the party'; Mira (who Gregory is trying to expatriate to London with him before her disappearance) must be 'smuggled' out of the country; and Gregory's colleague Jessica (Ingrid Thulin) is politely asked to alter a recent article by a member of Prague's social elite.[25]

This referential emphasis on the 'Big Brother' oppression of the Czechoslovakian-Soviet regime is twinned with its physical manifestation in the omnipresence of Prague's police force, who start to spy on Gregory via plain-clothes officers and are fronted by a belligerent Commissar (Piero Vida) who frequently appears wearing a long black trench coat reminiscent of the Gestapo and the Stasi (not to mention dozens of *giallo* villains who wear this type of coat, through which association he functions as a red herring for the film's killings). The film's politics get more surreal as the details of Club 99 are (literally) fleshed out and the geriatric, sex-crazed cultists are revealed as the real seat of socio-political power in the film. While the club seem an isolated group operating with a power distinct from that of the state, *Short Night of Glass Dolls* goes to some lengths to conflate the two. Even after it becomes clear to Gregory that Club 99 holds the key to Mira's disappearance, the Commissar, an overt figure of *state* apparatus, continues to hound and impede his investigation as if he were a henchman of the cult itself. According to the film's sensational textual logic, the cult thus figure metonymically as a microcosm of the vast state power at play in Czechoslovakia. This textual condensation becomes clear when their leaders finally tell Gregory that 'we will hold the reins of power in the world as long as there are people willing to be killed […] Our bitterest enemies are those

[24] The Prague in *Short Night of Glass Dolls* is a composite of location shots from Ljubljana, Zagreb and Prague itself (Bartolini 2017: 89–90).

[25] Andrew Syder reads the film's premise as a Kafka-esque political metaphor for the violent silencing of political dissidents in the Eastern Bloc (2007: 186–87).

who don't believe' and that they 'must enslave the free to preserve our powers. We need the young to keep us alive. They must become like us, they must think as we do'.[26]

The equation of speaking with power is more than metaphorical in the film. Lado provides the above exposition through a rapid series of surreal talking head shots in which the floating faces of various cultists appear against a black background and explain their malign aims to a feverish Gregory. These *talking heads* figure a conceptualisation of power that is centred purely on the voice; their bodies, seemingly irrelevant to the authority they wield and anyway shown to be withered and weak in the surrounding orgy scene, are excluded from the shots as if irrelevant, which inverts the presentation afforded to the powerless young woman who writhes on an altar in the middle of the orgy nude, fetishistically photographed and notably voiceless. To stress this voice-powerful/silent-powerless dynamic, a leading cultist's mouth is shown in extreme close-up as he explains the truth about Club 99; this choice of shot suggests that the mouth is a sort of origin point of the cultists' power (of course, the shot also forms a clear counterpoint to the extreme close-ups of Gregory's unmoving mouth in the morgue). The spurious surrealism of the orgy scene renders the actual words uttered by Club 99's members virtually irrelevant and points to Dolar's claim that 'all phenomena of totalitarianism tend to hinge overbearingly on the voice, which in a *quid pro quo* tends to replace the authority of the letter' (2006: 114. Original emphasis). The words that the cultists say matter far less than the para-linguistic sovereignty of the voice that utters them.

A brief observation that Dolar makes about the oratorical style of Stalin and subsequent Soviet leaders is enlightening: 'When the Stalinist leader makes a public speech, he reads in a monotonous voice […] The Stalinist ruler endeavors to efface himself and his voice; he is merely the executor of the text, just as he is the mere tool of the laws of history, not their creator' (2006: 117–18). As they explain themselves to Gregory, the cultists — perverse proxies of the Soviet-backed regime at play in early 1970s Czechoslovakia — share the same monotone, Stalinist drawl devoid of personal inflection. The cultists' acoustic homogeneity suggests that like Stalin they speak with one de-individualised, transcendental voice, a sort of single, material flow that stands in for the ideology it articulates. The monotone

[26] Here, *Short Night of Glass Dolls* has much in common with the very differently styled but contemporaneous Czech film *The Ear* (*Ucho,* Karel Kachyňa 1970). In the latter, also set in Prague, a senior communist politician returns home from an official party with his wife and discovers that their house has been bugged. Taken together the two films suggest that, for all the visual spectacle associated with totalitarian regimes (real or caricatured), it is the insidiousness and pervasiveness of the acoustic that enables the control of the individual by the forces of hegemony.

as an ideological mode of voice is significant here because, as Dolar implies and the 'mono-' prefix itself makes clear, it presupposes singularity, the unity which is fundamental to a politics that has no room for individual distinction: the Stalinist leader 'acts not in his own name but in the name of the proletariat, progress, the world revolution' (ibid: 118). The mise-en-scene of the orgy emphasises singularity. Naked, elderly and hazily photographed bodies surround Gregory in a writhing intermixing of flesh that troubles the separation of individuals (by blurring bodily borders and removing the social markers of clothing) and presents the cultists rather as a single body: the mono-body which speaks the monotone. Both the cultists' shared corporeality and their shared vocality point to an ideology that engulfs the individual. Gregory's unheard voice-over, however, is typically frantic and animated, that is, polytonal. The formal contrast of Gregory's voice to the cultists' monotony stands in for his aspiration to individuation (a reflection of his original goal of escaping from Prague and smuggling Mira out with him) and thus audibly marks him as a dissident. It therefore seems natural that the cult removes this problematic noise by silencing his voice, first through paralysis and eventually through death.

Gregory's silencing can be heard as a form of monotony in itself. During the first scene in the morgue a nurse (Franca Sciutto) tells the attending doctor (Daniele Dublino) what is known about the seemingly lifeless patient, gleaned from his passport: 'He was an American […] Gregory Moore, born in Springfield, Illinois, the sixth of December, 1935.' Dolar writes, 'We are social beings by the voice and through the voice […] Voices are the very texture of the social, as well as the intimate kernel of subjectivity' (2006: 14), but Gregory's position in the 'texture of the social' is here constituted by and through the voice of another. In the following scene in the morgue his voice-over is accompanied by a close-up of his face framed upside down, as if his very body, deprived of voice, has become disorientated and disjointed. More subtly, Gregory's voiceless 'corpse', unable to situate itself socially, oscillates between a variety of broad and marginal subjective positions according to the sounds which are projected onto it. Gregory's situation could perhaps be understood as a crisis of persona, when one considers that the Latin origin of the term equates to *per sona*, or roughly 'by sound' (Ihde 2007: 14, 167). Through the voice, one assumes an identity and the paralysed Gregory shifts identity as different sounds are associated with his silent and motionless body. In one clear instance, Gregory's overwhelming passivity naturally 'deconstruct[s] the figure of the traditional male protagonist' (Olney 2013: 125); his state mirrors that of a silent and almost catatonically drugged woman (Micaela Martin) who is molested (with horrifying nonchalance)

at a party during a flashback, and when he is killed on the operating table in the closing frames his friend and former lover Jessica screams from the gallery as the credits roll to lend Gregory her voice and provide him with his final cry.[27] In so doing, she invests his body with the non-linguistic femininity of the scream which has been described in depth by Michel Chion and Philip Brophy (Chion 1999: 76–78; Brophy 1999: 53). Gregory acquires a feminine *per sona* as he is penetrated by the scalpel: the malleability of his silent body allows for a sort of gender performance by proxy.

Gregory's silencing exposes him to several other instances of identity performance by proxy, which extend beyond issues of gender. In the opening scene, as the church gardener (Joza Seb) discovers his paralysed body, Gregory is aligned with a passing amputee (uncredited) who propels himself around the churchyard on a skateboard and is also seemingly mute and similarly ostracised from able-bodied society. At first, the audience is led to believe that the sound of the amputee driving himself forwards using two pads attached to his hands that make a dull, rhythmic 'bump-bump' sound is the sound of Gregory's heartbeat as the sound begins during a shot of the gardener pressing his ear to Gregory's chest. In this way, the mute amputee invests Gregory's inert body with his own marginal 'kernel of subjectivity'. Moments earlier, the gardener finds the body after being drawn to it by the crowing of a bird that likewise and more directly lends Gregory its voice to supply the cry which he cannot utter and align him with a sort of base, inhuman animality.[28] By modulating his persona between the feminine, the disabled and even the animal, the silencing of Gregory Moore's voice has quite literally *unmoored* his body, casting it adrift in a sea of social coordinates determined by the proxy-voices fleetingly lent to it. The challenge to Club 99's power that Gregory's investigation has threatened is solved precisely through the incorporation of his voice into the monotone of ideology: the absolute, pure monotone of silence. His identity is now fully pliable, and like the cultists he speaks not in his own name. Here *Short Night of Glass Dolls* reveals a cold truism that applies across various contexts, beyond as well as within the limits of the film's diegesis: ideology is what you speak when you say nothing.

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[27] Gregory's state also mirrors, in an uncanny intertextual echo, that of the female victims in Paolo Cavara's *giallo The Black Belly of the Tarantula* (*La tarantola dal ventre nero*) which was also released in 1971. In Cavara's film, the women are paralysed but left conscious by a killer who injects poison into their necks before murdering them.

[28] It is hard not to interpret the crow as, also, an allusion to Pasolini's *Hawks and Sparrows* (*Uccellacci e uccellini,* 1966), in which a talking crow espouses Gramscian philosophy as the protagonists journey through the Italian countryside. This allusion, then, further suggests an alignment between Gregory's silencing/re-voicing and ideological politics.

Extra-Diegetically Speaking: Coproduction and European Integration

The deeper value of *Short Night of Glass Dolls* to understanding the relationship between ideology and the voice in *giallo* cinema, and even in Italian cinema of this period more widely, is that the film's form interweaves diegetic and extra-diegetic issues of vocal ideology. As a starting point, it should be noted that the overlaying of Gregory's unheard voice onto the image of his motionless face creates immediate and significant disturbances at the level of the film's materiality. At the most basic level, it frustrates the viewer-auditor's expectation of what Chion calls *synchresis*: 'the forging of an immediate and necessary relationship between something one hears and something one sees', that is, a spatial and temporal synchronicity of a sound and its visible source (1994: 5). In declining to construct image and soundtrack as a seamless, interlocked dyad the film puts them into a divergent relationship that inevitably, if unwittingly, brings into focus the text's material heterogeneity (meant here simply as the fact that image and sound are separately recorded and reproduced). Rick Altman's description of the image/sound relationship as a mechanism of cinematic ventriloquism is particularly apt in this context; for Altman, 'the sound track is a ventriloquist who, by moving his dummy (the image) in time with the words he secretly speaks, creates the illusion that the words are produced by the dummy/image' (1980: 67). Of course, the immobilised image of Gregory Moore (specifically, the belaboured image of his unmoving mouth) is unable to fulfil its part of the synchronous bargain. Gregory is a broken puppet, his silenced voice floats freely and the soundtrack is exposed for the independent textual element that it is.

The materiality of the image/sound or mouth/voice schism goes deeper, since Gregory's face and voice do not even stem from the same actor: while the former is indexically traceable to Jean Sorel, the latter is taken from his uncredited voice doubles (North American in the English version of the film, Italian in the Italian) and added to the film via post-synchronisation long after Sorel's performance in front of the camera. Importantly, up until the 1980s the Italian film production system almost never recorded direct sound. For reasons of commercial expediency and historical habit (discussed below), filmmakers preferred to shoot silently and then dub *all* versions of a film's soundtrack in post-production (including the Italian). *Short Night of Glass Dolls* takes this process to the point of absurdity by dubbing one person's voice onto the redundant, inactive image of another's face without the vital pretence of lip synch serving to 'transfer the origin of the words, as perceived by the spectator/auditor, from sound "track" and loudspeaker to a character within the film's diegesis' (Altman 1980:

69). The stylistic treatment of Gregory's silenced voice in the morgue scenes therefore foregrounds the commercial imperatives of the 1970s Italian film industry by flagging up for the attentive viewer the film's, and the Italian film industry's, reliance on dubbing as a technical practice. Due to the looseness of dubbing synchronisation in the film's other scenes this awareness carries over into the film as a whole. In other words, the attuned audience member is reminded that in real terms the dubbed actor Jean Sorel is silent (and his voice doubles invisible) in *every* scene of the film.

The marked exposure of the voice dubbing process in *Short Night of Glass Dolls* reveals that Gregory's voice occupies an interstice between the diegetic character, and the extra-diegetic voice actor. It belongs totally to neither, yet is determined by both. This oscillation provides an opening through which the extra-diegetic conditions of Italy's filmmaking economy may make themselves heard within the diegesis. In commercial terms, the film's foregrounding of the filmmaking process itself has implications for its constitution as a commodity. Going back to Marx's account of commodity fetishism, the commodity can only exist through the disavowal of the labour which produces it: 'the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things' (1990: 164–65). Mary Ann Doane has specifically drawn attention to the imperative of disavowing the labour of soundtrack construction in narrative cinema: 'The effacement of work which characterises bourgeois ideology is highly successful with regard to the soundtrack' (1985: 54). For both Marx and Doane, then, bourgeois capitalism (generally, and in the specific terms of film production) is predicated on a similar imperative to those of the caricatured politics of Club 99: the disavowal of plurality (labour) put to the service of fetishising unity (the commodity). Consequently, as Gregory's dissident voice threatens the monotonous voice of Club 99, *Short Night of Glass Dolls*' avowal of dubbing, and the heterogeneity of image and sound it reveals, carries the possibility of troubling the capitalist ideology underpinning the film that mandates seamless, commodified bourgeois realism.

The centrality of the voice to the commodification of the *giallo* is difficult to overstate. By the time of *Short Night of Glass Dolls*' production, the use of dubbed voices in Italian popular cinema was driven in large part by international commercial imperatives. In the case of 1970s Italian filmmaking, the dubbed voice was central to the transnational coproduction paradigm at the heart of the industry's economic viability. As Mark Betz has detailed, national identity is destined to be a fluid topic in coproduced films of any type since the transnational

intermingling of cast, crew, financers and distributors often makes it impossible to label a coproduced film as being 'from' a single country (2009, 47–92; see also Baschiera and Hunter 2016a). Importantly, this was the case not just for the *giallo* but for other popular *filoni* and for much art cinema of the time and so the insights which the *giallo* affords have significance on a much broader scale. *Short Night of Glass Dolls* is an exemplary illustration of coproduced internationalism, being produced as an Italian/West German/Yugoslavian collaboration and utilising French, Italian, German, American, Swedish and Yugoslavian actors to tell a story about an American expat in Czechoslovakia. Lado's nationality seems to be the only factor determining the film's national identity as Italian, but even this reasoning is problematic: Lado was born in Fiume (now Rjelka and situated in Croatia), a town which was Italian at the time of his birth, Austro-Hungarian shortly before, Yugoslavian shortly after, and was passed between British, French, Hungarian and Croatian powers during the nineteenth century. Both *Short Night of Glass Dolls* and its writer/director have, to say the least, complex national identities. Though perhaps an extreme case, Lado's film is typical of the *giallo*'s trans-European industrial span and the manner in which the internationalism of the *filone*'s commercial basis finds reflection in a cosmopolitan mise-en-scene (see Baschiera and Di Chiara 2011). At the level of the voice, dubbing was central to the internationalisation of both production and aesthetic, as coproduced films (particularly those produced for overtly commercial ends, like the *giallo*) would be shot without sound and then dubbed, from the outset, into two or more 'original' languages so that the film was ready for simultaneous 'domestic' distribution in multiple markets, naturalising the international cast, characters and settings to each and so minimising issues of national difference. (The 88 Films 2016 UK DVD release of *Short Night of Glass Dolls* offers both English and Italian versions from the main menu, presenting the two as a pair of alternative 'original' versions.)

Speaking in the 1980s, filmmaker Jean-Marie Straub was vehement in arguing against the use of dubbing, and likened the technique to a sort of modern-day Esperanto with significant implications: 'only be accepting the dictatorship of dubbing can you use two or three stars from different countries in the same film […] The international aesthetic is an invention and weapon of the bourgeoisie […] Esperanto has always been the dream of the bourgeoisie' (Straub and Huillet 1985: 152–53). Straub's fixation on the idea of the bourgeois aesthetic is telling in the gesture it makes back to Marx (and Doane); of course, the increased commodification of the film text is precisely the cause served by the technique of coproduction-mandated dubbing, which expanded distribution markets and facilitated speculation in line with

capitalist priorities. Straub goes on to argue, 'Dubbing is not only a technique, it's also an ideology' (ibid: 150), and this comment echoes the 1967 Amalfi manifesto, signed by a group of Italian directors including Antonioni, Pasolini, Bertolucci and De Seta. These filmmakers concluded that dubbing and post-synchronised sound subjects films 'to manoeuvres and mystifications on the part of producers and distributors, whose final effect has an ideological character' (quoted in Nowell-Smith, 1968: 145). The recurrent concern with ideology here shows the deep significance with which dubbing was invested in European cinema of the 1960s and 1970s and provides an opening through which dubbing and the treatment of voice within the film's narrative may be thought, or heard, together. Like Club 99, European coproduction relied on everyone speaking with a sort of single, centralised voice to facilitate its territorial reach. However, it is important to note that for Straub this ideology is more specific than a paradigm privileging simple capital accumulation. His equation of the dubbed voice with Esperanto and a weaponised international aesthetic indicates a serious anxiety around dubbing's tendency to erase national specificity. This anxiety overlaps significantly with a wider maligning of the coproduced films as 'Euro-pudding', a critique that according to Betz, 'predicts the erosion of national cultures in the wake of globalization' (2009: 56–57). Interestingly, actor David Warbeck, who appeared in numerous Italian horror and thriller genre films of the 1970s and 1980s (although not *Short Night of Glass Dolls*) said, in an interview from the early 1990s, that 'my own impression is that the Italian film world is gearing up to become the film centre of Europe, the Common Market' (quoted in Palmerini and Mistretta 1996: 155). According to Warbeck's view, Italy's *filone* film industry was developing a niche for itself by creating products for a trans-European audience, crucially in parallel with the wider political-economic integration of Europe (and together with the *peplum* and Western, the *giallo* was a key waypoint on this trajectory). Warbeck's inside observation of the industry would seem to justify Straub's anxiety: *gialli* can be understood as films that both reflected and facilitated the bourgeois-capitalist dream of a single European identity, and their dubbed voices can be understood as tools of a transnational, capitalist ideology that seeks to homogenise people so that it may better consolidate and expand its potential markets.

Historically Speaking: The Aural Fasces

James Gracey speaks for many *giallo* viewers when he writes that, although distracting, dubbing 'if anything […] adds an uncanny and slightly creepy sheen to proceedings' (2010: 22). This uncanniness, often noted by *giallo* fans, is frequently explained as the oneiric effect

of loose lip synchronisation, but there may be a more profound operation at play. Quite simply, while, on the one hand, dubbing performs a neutralisation of national difference, on the other the national *specificity* of each dub simultaneously does the opposite, and represents a refusal to engage with the fact of linguistic or vocal difference. In other words, the national-linguistic specificity of the dubbed voice insists upon the national specificity of an audience as, at the same time, it seeks to present all European nations as interchangeable and their cultural borders as fundamentally porous. Coproduced cinema's dubbed voices produce a formal contradiction. Dwyer writes that dubbing paradoxically 'halts or suspends media flows, momentarily grounding them within concrete localities and contexts' (2017: 9). If the transnational ideology that provided for *Short Night of Glass Dolls*' coproduction sought to assure European citizens that they had reached a state of homogeneity, its reliance on the dubbed voice equally has the opposite effect, presupposing the specificity of audiences' national-linguistic identity. If this film is an example of Euro-pudding, then it is only half-baked and reveals both the profundity and the perseverance (for better or worse) of national distinctions.

The reasons for this paradox — which, given the centrality of internationalism to the *giallo*, affects many such films — can be found in the history of Italian dubbing. If Club 99 stand in for the Soviet regime imposing itself on Czechoslovakia after the 1968 Spring, they may also be read as a caricature of the Italian Fascist Party (*Partito Nazionale Fascista*) that led Italy from 1922 until 1943. Like Club 99, Mussolini's propaganda policies required that everyone in Italy 'think as we do' and, as with Club 99, this often meant 'speaking as we do.' This equation is most evident in the Fascists' mandating of voice dubbing once sound came to cinema in the late 1920s. Dubbing was a critical tool by which the Regime strove to eradicate traces of both foreign languages and non-standard dialectical Italian in the films distributed around the recently unified and still disparate country, with the aim of fostering a homogenous and nationwide sense of *Italianicity* (Sisto 2014; Keating 2016). Later, the technique became a tool of overt censorship by which ideologically unacceptable words or ideas were either removed or modified into line with the Regime's worldview. Sisto is clear about the implications that this 'xenophobic' history has for Italian cinema's reliance on dubbing and labels the practice a 'vocal/sensorial and cultural cannibalization of the other' (2014: 8). Of course, the Fascist case is another example of ideology insisting on a unity of voice, another idealised, monotonous consistency that denies that cadences of national or regional difference. In this sense, the dubbed voices of Fascism figure aural equivalents of the fasces itself, the symbol of Fascist ideology which adorned much of the Regime's visual culture. The icon

consists of a group of straight lines (logs or sticks) bound into a uniform bundle often around an axe or spear. Fascist dubbing cut all voices to the same specification, bundling them together into a single consistent group that supplanted the identity of the constituent part. Club 99's monotonous shared voice can also be heard as a caricature of the extra-diegetic insistence on uniformity of voice at play in Italy's recent political and cinematic history. The important fact that the case of Fascist dubbing reveals however, is that unity can only be achieved in relation to difference; to unite is not so much to remove borders as to move them. The *Italianicity* of Fascist dubbing relied on the dissolution of regional, dialectical difference, but simultaneously insisted upon un-crossable borders of national linguistic difference.

While dubbing gained its initial omnipresence as a means of translating (culturally as well as linguistically) films imported into Italy from abroad, the scale of this task led to the development of an infrastructure so developed, normalised and cost-effective relative to direct-sound capture that it also became the default choice for dialogue recording for films produced in Italy, a practice which endured after the fall of Mussolini's government (Sisto 2017: 401). Sisto argues that this continued, unquestioned use of dubbing in post-Fascist Italian cinema of all forms and genres 'constitutes itself today as the sonicscape of the nation's fascist repressed unconscious' (2014: 10). The implication of dubbing's continuation beyond Fascism was that it continued to insulate Italy within impermeable linguistic borders; in Sisto's terms it 'impedes full exposure to the other in his or her own terms literally, representationally, and ideologically' (2017: 400). Nataša Ďurovičová neatly describes it as 'an "acoustic roof" over the native soil' (2010: 102). Sisto's observation that 'dubbed-film spectatorship must be characterized by alienation' (2017: 400) can thus be understood not as an unfortunate aesthetic side-effect of dubbing, but as its very aim: what purpose did Fascist dubbing serve if not to distance the other and isolate the Italian viewing subject? Indeed, Betz writes that 'the dubbing of films […] functions variably as the effacement of the national signifier *and the very building block of it*' (2009: 90. Emphasis added). Keating concludes her book by pointing to the paradox that, while dubbing renders the other familiar, 'The public receives and understands the foreign only in its own linguistic terms. As a consequence of this, dubbing can create a cultural and semantic barrier between us and the other' (2016: 157–58).

Although the *giallo*'s dubbed voices seem to render Europe a single cultural territory accessible to all, they also serve to divide that territory along rigid linguistic lines and to hold otherness at arm's length. The other is integrated, but only by denying their otherness. The spectator is sutured into an international mise-en-scene, yet insulated from that mise-en-scene

within a bubble of vocal familiarity made up of recognisable languages, accents and exclamations. The dubbed voice's goal of seamlessly suturing the spectator into *Short Night of Glass Dolls*' Czechoslovakian mise-en-scene in line with the transnational economy of *giallo* production is undermined because dubbing articulates borders as much as it denies them. The voice interminably and irrepressibly straddles the borders between text and context, present and past. Through its bold formal design, the film puts diegetic, thematic concerns with vocal ideology into conversation with comparable contextual concerns operative within the industry that produced the film, and it invokes, simultaneously, the historical ideologies that undergird the post-war Italian film industry and its approach to cinematic sound. The voice in *Short Night of Glass Dolls* represents a knot to many threads, interminably and constantly folding context into text in a fashion that is concretely manifest at the level of the film's materiality. The vocal imbrication of text, commercial context and historical context in *Short Night of Glass Dolls* is palpable because, in this film, the dubbed voice so clearly utters two conflicting ideologies at once: that of transnational integration, and that of national isolation. Perhaps this ideological paradox, quite aside from the aesthetic unseemliness of poorly synchronised lip movements, is why the dubbed voice is so often characterised as uncanny in the *giallo*.

Summary: The Contextual Puppet Master

In *Short Night of Glass Dolls* Gregory Moore's silenced voice serves as an insistent call to understand the broad and multiple function of the voice in *giallo* cinema, and Italian cinema of the 1970s more generally. The film's stylised use of voice-over insists upon the voice as a formal component that merits sustained reflection, putting on display the process of voice dubbing and laying bare the voice's complex situation as a nexus of ideological concerns.

Though dubbing is certainly not the only commercial framework through which this thesis approaches the voice in *giallo* cinema, it is perhaps the most significant as it always already reverses the assumed priorities of the soundtrack. Whereas the classical audio-visual relationship in cinema harnesses synchronised voices in the creation of aesthetic verisimilitude, dubbing prioritises the economic and commercial demands of film production and distribution and sacrifices representational seamlessness in the name of lowering production costs, simplifying soundtrack production, expanding distribution markets and perhaps even advancing political dogma. The dubbed voice always foregrounds the contextual imperatives operative within the film text. It is important to return to Altman here. His concluding claim that 'sound uses the visible to further its own cause […] Using the ideology of the visible as a

front, the sound track remains free to carry on its own business' has significance far beyond the level of the cinematic apparatus with which he is primarily interested (1980: 76). *Short Night of Glass Dolls* makes it clear that the real ventriloquist at work is less the loudspeaker hidden behind the screen than the commercial, historical and political forces that determine, unseen and easily unnoticed, the voices which come out of it. It is the project of this thesis to sound out those forces.

Chapter 1

Early *Gialli*: Borders between Texts, Borders between Authors

When sound came to cinema, the speech that had previously been signified in intertitles was sonorously reanimated. This transformation introduced a new tension into the cinematic text; the tension between logos (the word spoken) and phonos (the sonority of the voice which exceeds the linguistic content it delivers). Since antiquity, philosophical thought has been concerned with the stakes of the voice's ongoing negotiation of word and sound; Mladen Dolar has described how Chinese scripts from 2200 BC suggest that 'as soon as it departs from its textual anchorage, the voice becomes senseless and threatening' (2006: 43). Adriana Cavarero has similarly built on the work of Hannah Arendt to detail the guiding metaphysical assumption that underpins Western logocentric thought around signification, text and sound: 'outside speech, the voice is nothing but an insignificant leftover […] logocentrism radically denies to the voice a meaning of its own that is not always already destined to speech' (2005: 12–13). Cavarero's summary is revealing in how, following the logocentrism it describes, it opposes the sonority of the voice to speech as if speech were itself silent, a textual act realised by the voice but never assimilated into it. Heard in this way, the interstitiality of the human voice is confirmed. In its sonority, the voice is independent of the texts it fleetingly intersects. When the fault line between logos and phonos is listened for — when the intimate distinction between vocal sonority and the word is traced — the voice can be heard resounding between texts to mediate and perhaps, as Dolar suggest, trouble their interaction. In this sense, the voice is inherently intertextual.

The *giallo*'s extension from literature into film was also, of course, a move from the silence of the written word to the complex sonority of the spoken word. Mario Bava's *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (*La ragazza che sapeva troppo,* 1963) is widely regarded as the first cinematic *giallo* (see below) and openly displays its literary ancestry through a range of stylistic and overt references to the *giallo* literature from which it grew, alongside additional references to cinematic and televisual tropes. Alexia Kannas writes that, 'From its inception, [the] cinematic *giallo* engages reflexively with its roots in literary tales of mystery and crime, and with earlier and contemporaneous Italian and global cinema positioned across the spectrum of taste' (2017: 185). Austin Fisher similarly argues that films made within the *filone* system operate 'in constant dialogue with both a diverse set of external influences and with one another, rather than as self-contained narrative units' (2019: 14). Indeed, Bava's film is openly

intertextual: its title is a reference to Hitchcock's two versions of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934, 1956; see Met 2006), its black-and-white cinematography is a reference to Hitchcock's later *Psycho* (1960; Lucas 2007: 448), and its plot combines the setup of Billy Wilder's *Roman Holiday* (1953) with the criminal premise of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot novel *The ABC Murders* (1936). The film's use of voice — principally its use of an anonymous voice-over — underpins these specific intertextual gestures by functioning as the formal locus where the film's literary heritage intersects and merges with the cinematic influence of film noir, as well as the less obvious influence of Italy's boom-era television advertising. The term 'text' itself is, as many have noted, derived from the Latin 'textus' meaning (amongst other things) 'web' or 'woven fabric' and if the multiple forms which *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* draws upon are strands woven together into a cinematic fabric, the voice is akin to a kind of textual loom. A process of intertextual weaving is performed through variations in the voice-over's sonority, which shifts throughout the film and calls upon different intertexts with each shift, incorporating them into the fabric of the film.[29]

Recent scholarship on the *giallo* has diverted attention to rethinking the *filone* against its socio-political and commercial contexts, but it has never thoroughly investigated these films' links to their broad textual ancestry. Valentina Vitali argues that 'the ground out of which these films may have emerged and developed is never outlined, let alone examined in some detail' but she herself fails to address in any depth the dialogue between the audio-visual *giallo* and its cultural forebears (2016: 35). Attending to the voice allows this omission to be rectified, as the negotiation that the voice stages between logos and phonos directly maps onto the

[29] Intertextuality has been theorised extensively throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The term was coined by Julia Kristeva, building upon the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, and was developed variously and extensively by Roland Barthes, Gérard Gennette, Paul Riffaterre, Harold Bloom, Elaine Showalter and others (for overviews of intertextual theory see Alfaro 1996, Orr 2003 and Allen 2011). These writers' theorisations are based in the study of literature and represent complex and often schematic attempts to better understand the semiotic processes involved in reading and writing. The term 'intertextuality' is used in this analysis of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* in a less theoretically invested form to designate the text's participation in a conversation — overt or subtle — with other texts through either its narrative content, its form or both. In other words, the intertextual elements of Bava's film are those elements that it introjects from other texts or groups of texts through allusion, mimicry or direct reference. Although such a general and open definition of intertextuality is challenged by some of the writers above, it will serve this chapter effectively 'because it foregrounds notions of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence in modern cultural life' without axiomatically limiting the use of the term (Allen 2011: 5). A general definition also allows this analysis to focus less on the theorisation of intertextuality per se than the way in which this film's intertextual elements are mandated and underwritten by the commercial imperatives of its production, and thus speak to the wider economics of Italian culture at that time.

embryonic *filone*'s negotiation of its cultural milieu. From within the film, the voices of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* balance logos and phonos in a manner that points outwards to the texts they are mediating, texts that orientate the film to other cultural products and reference points circulating through early 1960s Italy. The many extra-diegetic gestures performed by the voice in Bava's film also point to the fact that *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* was the result of the broad and international collaboration of agents and commercial imperatives which was typical of 1960s genre film production in Italy. In other words, from within the text, the voice in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* renders material both the *giallo*'s cultural predicates and the practical, economic realities of its emergence as a cinematic *filone*. Context is thus expressed as a concrete matter of form rather than (or as well as) a matter of representational content. Not only does the film, accordingly, stand as an embryonic moment at which the *filone*'s ancestry and future converge, but its use of the voice more broadly reifies the increasingly global and increasingly multi-media cultural milieu from which it emerged.

Following its birth with *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, the maturation of the *giallo* into one of Italian cinema's most prolific post-war *filoni* was a slow process. Bava's next *giallo, Blood and Black Lace* (*Sei donne per l'assassino*, 1964), subjugates its murder mystery narrative to an oneiric aesthetic identity dominated by an overwhelming colour palette and prowling camerawork. In this way, *Blood and Black Lace* figures a stylistic prototype for the *giallo* as *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* stands as its narrative beginning. It was not until Dario Argento's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (*L'uccello dalle piume di cristallo,* 1970), however, that the *giallo* crossed a key threshold and initiated a major cinematic cycle by combining the mystery narrative of Bava's first *giallo* with some of the stylistic audacity of his second (Koven 2006: 5; McDonagh 2010: 91–92; Sabelli 2013: 15; Kannas 2017: 184). If Bava pioneered the *giallo* as a cinematic proposition, it was Argento who gave it the impetus to become a bona fide *filone*. Certainly, the slew of quickly produced imitations with the names of animals in their titles gestures towards *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* as the *filone*'s governing cinematic reference point (see Argento 2014: 124; Baschiera and Hunter 2016a: 7; Bartolini 2017: 14). Taken together, *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* and *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* can therefore be thought to demarcate an early phase in *giallo* cinema that extends from its tentative first manifestation to its ascension to the level of a major *filone*.

Argento is unique amongst *giallo* directors not only for his fame but for his partial status as an art film auteur. Like his art film contemporaries, to many of whom he has had personal and professional ties, Argento has always exerted considerable personal control over

his film projects. Consequently, his films are marked by a greater insulation from the commercial exigencies that over-determine the bulk of *giallo* film production. This is a privilege which initially accrued to Argento thanks to his powerful family connections to the Italian film industry. As a young filmmaker, these connections afforded him an atypical degree of creative space within which he was (and remains) able to pursue his own artistic preoccupations with topics such as the problematics of human perception, urban space and, crucially here, the nature of cinema itself. Argento's work thus asks to be read slightly differently from that of his *giallo* contemporaries. Largely shielded from the artisanal pragmatism of the *filone* system, Argento has been free throughout his career to indulge a more personal, auteurist form of expression. His work's meta-cinematic preoccupations reverse the current of determination in the relationship between film form and socio-cultural context: rather than his films' socio-cultural context determining his films' form (via the exigencies of *filone* production), his self-aware manipulation of film form directly models his representation of that socio-cultural milieu. Thus, the intimate relationship between form and context that characterises the *giallo*'s less auteurist texts persists in Argento's cinema (and his work can thus be read according to the same critical schema), but his exceptionalism is marked by a reversal of the relationship's terms.

Alongside its meditations on the nature of spectatorship and the operation of cinema's imagistic apparatus, Argento's directorial debut stages a profound awareness of the centrality of voice in demarcating and delineating space. The capacity of the voice to partition space becomes meta-cinematic because Argento presents this phenomenon in terms that are powerfully evocative of the act of cinematic voice-over narration (which this film does not employ directly, unlike *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*). In short, the film suggests that to possess the capacity for logocentric speech is to possess the power to determine which sides of the film's many vague spatial borders constitute the 'inside' and which sides (typically those occupied by the speaker) constitute the 'outside'. This vocal-spatial dynamic replicates the way in which the cinematic voice-over divides the inner diegetic world from an outer space of enunciation. The film furthers its meta-cinematic aurality through an obsession with voice technology like telephones and tape recorders, and the ability of those technologies to grant the user the narrator-like power to extend their voice's implication in space far beyond the limits of the body from which it originates. In this way, whereas Bava's commercially contingent *giallo* uses the voice to fold texts and forms found within the wider socio-cultural milieu of post-boom Italy into the text, Argento's film uses the voice to project a formal model drawn

from the cinematic text outwards onto its socio-cultural milieu. The voice in these early, formative *gialli* thus figures a richly historicised nodal point at which the literary and the cinematic, the aesthetic and the commercial, and the textual and the contextual are in constant conversation and constant negotiation.

Speaking Intertextually

Bava's *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, a three-way collaboration between American International Pictures, and two Italian producers, Galatea and Coronet (Lucas 2007: 448), was released in Italy in 1963 and in the UK and USA in 1964 (in significantly reworked form and under the title *The Evil Eye* [see below]). The plot is a convoluted but ultimately rather simple murder mystery: Nora Davis (Letícia Román) is a young American and *giallo* novel obsessive who comes to Rome to visit a sick family friend, Ethel. When Ethel dies soon after Nora's arrival, Nora runs to fetch Marcello Bassi (John Saxon), the young attending Doctor, but is mugged on the Spanish Steps (onto which Ethel's house opens) and passes out. She awakens a short while later to see another crime taking place nearby, the murder of a young woman by an older man, before passing out again. The next day, in hospital, she is told that she hallucinated the murder, but continues to believe that she really saw it take place. As the film continues Nora and Bassi investigate (and develop a romance) and eventually team up with journalist Andrea Landini (Dante Di Paolo). Ultimately it is revealed that the murder did indeed take place and was connected to a series of killings perpetrated years earlier by a murderer known as the Alphabet Killer. Landini had written articles on this first spate of killings, and had helped to get the wrong man arrested, a down-and-out known as Straccianeve. This has left the true killer, Laura Craven Torrani (Valentina Cortese) — Ethel's neighbour and Nora's friend — free. The woman Nora saw murdered was Straccianeve's daughter who had uncovered the truth and was blackmailing Laura; the older man was Laura's husband and seemingly enslaved assistant who was disposing of the body. Laura is about to murder Nora for knowing too much before her husband shoots her through a closed door and Nora and Bassi escape to start a new life.

Philippe Met describes *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* as 'a proto-giallo' that can be seen 'actuating a shift of paradigms' (2006: 202), while Lucas refers to it as 'a birth pang of the *giallo*, but not the birth itself' (2007: 471). Claudio Bartolini labels it a 'prototype of the Italian *giallo* film' (2017: 12). As these arguments suggest, the emergence of the cinematic *giallo* cannot be localised clearly. Bava's film appears to be both too late and too early to

qualify: narratively, Visconti's *Obsession* (*Ossessione*, 1943), based on James Cain's noir novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934), seems to pre-empt it (see Koven 2006: 3) while the surreal and colourful visual aesthetic and prowling camerawork which would soon seem quintessential of the *filone* did not appear until Bava's own *Blood and Black Lace* and Dario Argento's *gialli* of the early 1970s. *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* can nonetheless be fairly identified as the first cinematic *giallo*, the point at which the literary genre bore its cinematic offspring, given that it stands as 'the earliest theatrical release to acknowledge the *gialli*, not only as an influence on its storytelling and *mise-en-scène*, but as part of the story it tells' (Lucas 2007: 450. Original emphasis; see also Needham 2002). The literal (in both senses of the term) way in which the film draws attention to its printed ancestors insistently articulates the way that the film is consciously straddling the literary and the cinematic and expressly translating the former into the latter.

The vocal split between logos and phonos is vital to understanding how the film negotiates between the various intertextual threads upon which it depends. The film's very narrative premise displays an overt interest in depersonalised, alphabetic logic, of course, which is employed by the Alphabet Killer as she murders women according to the contingency of their names in order to create a smokescreen for her true motives. Laura Craven Torrani murders an innocent woman with a surname beginning A, then another with a surname beginning B so that when she achieves her goal of murdering her sister (surname Craven) her true motives will be obscured by the fact that the alphabetical alignment of the victims dictates an entirely misleading rationale. Cavarero argues that alphabetic writing is the logocentric schema par excellence and completes logocentrism's privileging of the visible over the audible because it 'consists substantially in a muting of speech. Substituting the acoustic sphere with a visual map, the written sign translates sound and eliminates it' (2005: 82). At the heart of this elimination of sound is, for Cavarero, a disavowal of the body in which the voice's sonority is rooted. Certainly, the bodies of Laura's victims are totally subsumed by the logos of her plan which is self-supporting in its self-referentiality. Laura explains that her first victim 'hadn't done me any harm, but I had no choice. Her name began with an "A"!'. Laura's elimination of her victims' bodies simply figures the logical consequence of how her disembodied and disembodying alphabetic scheme has already done likewise. The embodied voice, of course, has no role in this process; Laura's frequent *disembodying* of her own voice via anonymous phone calls and tape recordings betrays a desire to separate her words from her own body as much as possible, to grant them maximum independence.

It is precisely in its otherness to alphabetic logic that the voice gains an insurgent potential. Laura prepares to kill Nora saying, 'I know you won't say a word. I'm certain of it. When they find you, you won't be able to talk' in an oblique indication that vocal expression incorporates a dangerous contingency that cannot be tamed by the rigid logos of Laura's alphabetical scheme. Elsewhere in the film, Nora tells Bassi that he will know when she is ready to become romantically involved 'by the sound of my voice', and it is Straccianeve's wails, as he is taken to jail, that ultimately convince Landini of his innocence. In both cases, the sonority of vocal phonos fleetingly presents an obstruction to the relentless march of logic and the contingency of the embodied voice is ultimately Laura's undoing, when she is shot through a closed door by her dying husband as she finishes her final speech. The implication is that the sound of her voice has provided Professor Torrani with an index of the spatial coordinates of her body and has allowed him to aim correctly. The embodied sonority of Laura's voice at this moment undoes the disembodying effect of her earlier use of sound technology; it localises her and renders her vulnerable to mortal injury.

As is the case with *Short Night of Glass Dolls*, however, the most profound work done by the voice in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* is at the formal level, where it is central to the text's collection and fusion of various pre-existing textual and media forms. The film's media-straddling character is clear from the opening scene, in which the camera looks down on the jetliner carrying Nora to Italy and a non-diegetic voice-over proclaims, 'This is the story of a holiday'. Here, the Voice-of-God which had become commonplace in cinema by 1963 (particularly in the documentary, a mode Bava had become very familiar with during his time as a cameraman at the Fascist film institute, the *Istituto Luce* [see Lucas 2007: 65–80]) is imitating the 'Once upon a time…' (or '*C'era una volta*…') syntactic device of the literary narrator. The narrator continues setting the scene as the camera tracks down the plane's cabin, towards Nora and the *giallo* novel she is reading. The voice-over states that Nora reads *giallo* novels to escape reality, but that 'this would be the last one'. It is unclear whether the narrator is referring to the novel Nora is reading, the film the viewer is watching or both. Claudio Bartolini describes the voice-over as one of the film's 'literary gimmicks' (2017: 232) and Met similarly argues that the narrator is borrowed from the noir stories which Nora reads so voraciously, suggesting the sense that she is reading her own mystery (2006: 204; see also Lucas 2007: 460). In this way, the voice-over at once stands as the narrator of a film and the narrator of a novel, while the film itself becomes a sort of mise-en-abyme; Nora is reading a murder mystery novel and yet is simultaneously positioned within the novel's narrative. The

voice-over thus folds the literary narrator directly into the cinematic form of the film and necessitates that the latter be decoded with reference to the literary works that preceded it. The voice, perhaps, represents a sort of aural umbilicus as the cinematic *giallo* emerges from its literary pretexts.

Not only does this voice overtly position *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* in relation to *giallo* literature but, in so doing, it strives to be heard simply as a facilitator for the textual. The even, calm tone of the narrator's voice, its phonos, serves to minimise any sound that may distract from the text. It is a voice that aspires to logocentrism, to function purely as a vehicle for the words which sustain the *giallo* as a category of cultural/media products. Like both the third-person literary narrator and the cinematic Voice-of-God, this is a voice framed as the point from which the textual enunciation of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* issues forth. Read in relation to either the film's cinematic form or its literary self-awareness, the voice-over is placed just beyond the fringe of the diegesis to which it stands as other and over which it exercises authority: it utters, in Michel Chion's terms, 'Textual speech [which] is inseparable from an archaic power: the pure and original pleasure of transforming the world through language' (1994: 173).

The voice-over's logocentric, literary authority is short-lived though, and the demise of that authority is central to how the film speaks to its wider intertextual constitution. First, the voice-over's utterances are unevenly distributed across the film: after the initial scene setting, the narrator falls mute until he offers a smattering of commentaries just before the midpoint. He then falls silent again until speaking a final commentary shortly before the end of the film. This intermittency implies that the supposedly authorial voice has an unsteady control of the diegesis, and this suggestion manifests more overtly in the changing nature of the voice itself. With the cluster of utterances expressed towards the middle of the film the voice-over no longer 'exceptionally gather[s] to it the powers to direct or produce or project what we are about to see in advance' (Connor 2013: 111) but repeats the details of a series of murders explained moments earlier by Laura's doorkeeper; he is led by rather than leading the narrative. Further, his words segue into Nora's internally voiced reading of some newspaper clippings that she finds during her investigation and elsewhere he vocalises her inner thoughts: 'it was useless for them [Bassi and a colleague] to comfort her'. Here, the disembodied voice-over, other to the diegesis, experiences a form of pseudo-embodiment through its close alignment with Nora's interiority. (The final voice-over of the film is an actual internal monologue by Nora, which suggests that by the end of the film the voice-over has been fully

embodied by her.) Finally, in the middle of the film the voice-over departs from its logocentric minimisation of the sonorous and at times breathlessly rushes and yelps his words in line with Nora's state of tension. He exclaims 'That's right!' as she hatches a plan for foiling potential intruders using talcum powder and at times he whispers as if trying to avoid being heard by anyone lurking unseen in the scene (Sevastakis 2016: 17). The irruption of exaggerated phonos into the narrator's speech reveals that this is a voice-over no longer other to the diegesis in the style of an omniscient, third-person literary narrator (or the cinematic Voice-of-God), but firmly and responsively embroiled in the contingencies of its events, spaces and soundscape. The narrating voice has, in a sense, been pulled across the diegetic border.

The shift from neutral to emotionally driven phonos is a shift from an unambiguous third-person perspective to a fallible, quasi-first-person position. It is a shift from a model of narrator-as-author to one of narrator-as-character. It is also a shift of allusion from the literary to the cinematic; specifically, to film noir. Film noir had long been popular in Italy by 1963, and Mary Wood has extensively accounted for its influence on Italian culture both during and after the Fascist period (2007; 2020). Wood explains that 'American gangster films were freely imported into Italy on the basis that they showed the decadence of US society and values of rampant individualism foreign to the corporate fascist state' (2007: 239). In both Visconti's *Obsession* and Michelangelo Antonioni's *Story of a Love Affair* (*Cronaca di un amore*, 1950), domestically produced Italian cinema can be seen incorporating elements of film noir's narrative and visual style (interestingly, both films draw on James Cain's crime novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice*) but Wood argues that 'for popular expressions of noir in the 1950s and 1960s, we have to go to mid- to low-budget genre films' and specifically gives those of Bava as an example (2007: 249–50). Certainly, in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* high-contrast lighting, canted camera angles, a cast of shadowy characters and a plot built on murder and intrigue signal the text's awareness of noir traditions, and lead both Collette Balmain and Tim Lucas to identify the noir as one of the film's guiding formal reference points (Balmain 2002: 24; Lucas 2007: 453; see also Howarth 2014: 47). Wood also notes that 'A visual trope, which recurs in […] noirs, is that of the staircase, which represents a boundary zone' (2007: 244), and in this way one may read the film's fixation on the Spanish Steps as another participation in noir convention. Against these visual allusions, the film's shift from a calm, controlled narrating voice to a frantic and subjective voice-over marks its most complex engagement with film noir form. Paul Haacke points out that 'one of the most familiar devices of film noir is its use of voice-over narration' (2019: 49). J. P. Telotte argues that 'today we

would typically begin any list of the basic *noir* conventions with that narrative combination of voice-over and flashback' (1989: 40) and that the voice-over 'suggest[s] an eruption of the subjective in a world that we initially see in a conventional, objective manner' (ibid: 15). This subjectivity is, naturally, signalled in 'the grain or laboring of the voice-over as well as its periodic diegeticization [which is] proof of the faltering of the hero's knowledge, his inability to control or comprehend the image' (Copjec 1993: 185). Indeed, the Italian dubs of America film noirs were careful to replicate the characteristic, all-too-human sonority of their voice-over narration. It is in this way that the sudden increase in the sonority of the narrator's voice points up film noir as a key influence on the film's textual constitution; it is an aural flag signalling an entry into a new generic framework. With its shift to a more frantic phonos, in other words, the voice-over in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* comes to resonate within a complex network of (intertextual) interstices, straddling not just the border between the film and its literary precedents but, concurrently, that between the film and its cinematic contemporaries.

Wood's account of the influence of noir in Italian cinema during and following the war is finely attuned to the hybrid nature of much Italian production at the time, and leads her to 'take the view that noir conventions are used so widely that they constitute an intellectual and creative choice, rather than a genre' (2007: 238). From an Italian perspective, according to this analysis, 'film noir' represented an intertextual and transnational matrix of specifically cinematic tropes that *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* could tap into, engage and activate along with its references to mystery literature and, as discussed below, television, while leaving enough generic room for all of its various influences to persist within the film's form.[30] Vitali writes, 'The layered aesthetic fabric of Bava's films allowed them to resonate with the expectations of a wide and diverse contemporary public' (2016: 60) but (despite her aural metaphor) does not highlight the central work done, in this regard, by the voice-over in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*. In sliding from a form of vocality that invokes the author of written literature to a form of vocality that invokes the diegetic or semi-diegetic narrator of film noir, the voice-over adds a layer of cinematic intertextual reference on top of its literary allusions and further orientates the film around the recognisable cultural 'expectations' upon which it sought to capitalise. In other words, the voice-over and its aural mutability are central to Bava's

[30] Certain strands of film noir itself were influenced by the pared-down, documentary photography of neorealism (see Hirsch 2008: 67), in which sense Bava's film figures a new intervention in an ongoing transnational cultural relationship.

workman-like 'exploitation of well-tested sales points' in the film (Vitali 2016: 60). Vitali goes on to argue that reading Bava's work in terms of the pressures at play in Italian film production at the time and not questions of authorship 'opens up his films to the actual constituents of the force field that the films can be seen to mediate' (ibid: 69). In *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, the voice-over is the fulcrum of this mediation as it oscillates between and weaves together the various constituents of the cultural force field from which the film emerged and to which it is very tangibly, and very audibly, still attached.

Doubtless, *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s reference to film noir is complicated by the fact that film noir was intimately linked to the same crime literature that the film itself is drawing on. The *giallo* literature with which Nora is obsessed included the hard-boiled American crime paperbacks that inspired film noir (it also included English and German murder mysteries, and the narrator's statement that Nora has 'appealed to Wallace, to Mickey Spillane, to Agatha Christie' when concocting a plan to defend herself neatly delineates this wide group of authors). Further, the subjective, grained voice-over of film noir 'imitated the detective novels' distinctive narrative style' (Kozloff 1988: 40), and Fredric Jameson argues that 'both pulp or hard-boiled detective stories and *film-noir* are indeed structurally distinguished by the fundamental fact of the *voice-over*' (1993: 36. Original emphasis). By sonorously replicating the voice-overs of film noir, *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* refers both to cinematic intertexts and redoubles its allusions to *giallo* literature in the same breath. Speaking of the film's narration in general, Vitali argues that 'The narrator progresses as if suspended in a search for the most suitable means not to reduce the various registers and levels to an orderly vision, a closure, but to bring new layers out onto the already overloaded surface of the text' (2016: 67). It is thus the voice-over which represents the engine of the film's intertextual and trans-medial overloading: by invoking the film's literary influences and its cinematic influences both variously and simultaneously it overlays and fuses the two, driving and revealing the hybridity of registers that characterises both the film and *filone* filmmaking more widely. Though he may masquerade as the narrative's point of enunciation in the opening scene, by the end of the film the narrator figures not so much a point of enunciation as a web of enunciation, decentred and nebulous.[31]

[31] The idea that *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* is a cinematic precis of its literary and cinematic pretexts is stressed further by the film's recurrent hints that Nora may by imagining or hallucinating her experiences (not least the fact that the film's original working title was *L'incubo*/*The Nightmare* [Lucas 2007: 453]). The film never relinquishes this possibility since it ends with Nora remembering that she smoked a cigarette, on the plane, that was given to her by a drug dealer. The sense that the film may be one long hallucination on

It is worth noting too that the way in which the voice-over narration of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* points to the film's intertextual constitution plays to the wider emphasis on intertextuality which characterised Mondadori's dissemination of *giallo* literature itself. As Jane Dunnett has described in detail, Mondadori's advertising of *giallo* paperbacks privileged the interconnected collection of texts over the single work (Dunnett 2010). The novels were published with the consistent yellow covers that gave the *giallo* its name and served to unify them into a collection perceived singularly, on top of which 'each book recorded, in capital letters, the number of "Libri Gialli" published thus far, thereby seeking to assert and reinforce the popularity of the series' (ibid: 70). Bumper anthologies were also common (indeed, the cover design of the book Nora is reading on the plane suggests that it contains two stories [Lucas 2007: 450]). So was intertextual advertising: 'the books themselves served to promote the series by advertising other titles at the end of each volume and by giving details of how to take out a subscription to "I Libri Gialli", with the enticement of a free book which subscribers could choose from the series' backlist' (Dunnett 2010: 69). As Dunnett implies, through these marketing strategies Mondadori conceived of *giallo* literature as a single intertextual network within which an individual text could be deciphered and consumed only in relation to the wider series into which it was inextricably woven and to which it always already pointed. The various levels of reference which *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s voice-over narrator makes to the film's ambient intertextual matrix serve, then, to weave the film back into that intertextual network. The dynamic sonority of the voice-over functions like the aural equivalent of a yellow dustjacket and performs an act of textual orientation through which this cinematic prototype is familiarised for spectators thanks to its emplacement in a longstanding and popular network of cultural products.

Speaking Contextually

Nora is frequently distinguished in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* by the way her attempts to communicate logocentrically are overwhelmed by the 'irrational' sonority of her voice. When she is found by a policeman on the Spanish Steps following the murder he asks her what happened but, still dazed, she moans, cries, and, having mistaken him for the murderer, pleads, 'Let me go! I won't say a word!'. Clear speech figures little here, and even in the following scene where, in the hospital, a doctor explains to a group of students that Nora is an alcoholic,

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Nora's part frames it as the condensation or composite of all the *giallo* texts she has consumed, and the noir-style narrator as one of their defining formal components.

her protests are shouted in an agitated tone of panic that markedly contrasts the doctor's monotonous logocentric delivery. Nora's tendency towards sonorous screams and cries is consistent throughout the film, and her estrangement from logos is crucially connected to her inability to clearly perceive the spaces around her. Cavarero describes how the metaphysics underpinning Western thought has 'always dreamed of a videocentric order of pure signifieds' since it is a tradition that locates knowledge in the realm of the visual (2005: 40).[32] Thus, the voice as conveyor of the signifier is totally dependent on the eye through which it accesses the signifieds in which speech may be grounded (ibid: 35). To speak logocentrically, it is first necessary to see clearly. Clear vision eludes Nora throughout *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, however. The mise-en-scene, lighting design and camera placement during the murder scene on the Spanish Steps, for example, are all calculated to maximise the scene's obscurity: many shots are filmed at disorientating Dutch angles; high-contrast lighting and backlighting are used extensively to obfuscate foreground details; a water screen (made by Bava himself) is placed in front of the camera to likewise obscure mid-ground and background details; and shots are often in soft focus. This visual schema initially seems to represent Nora's dazzled and confused perspective. As the assailant (later revealed as Professor Torrani, Laura's husband and reluctant accomplice) retrieves a knife from the dead woman's body, Bava includes a hazy long-shot of the act before cutting to a shot of Nora's bewildered reaction to suggest, initially, that the long-shot was from her viewpoint. Nora then ducks behind a wall, but the next shot is the same hazy long-shot, revealing that its perspective, and its lack of visual clarity, is in fact independent of Nora's point of view. David Sanjek argues that cinematic *gialli* 'often tend to center their mysteries on the fluctuating substance of the social contract […] or the undependable nature of human sense perception' (1994: 84–85). Sanjek's reference to general categories like the social and the human are telling; it is not the individual who has become disorientated in the *giallo*, but all people and the social space they share. Certainly, Bava sets this trend during the murder by demonstrating that the perceptual confusion which characterises the scene, and Nora's perception of it, is an integral and independent quality of the film's diegetic space. It is a quality that, since logocentrism presupposes clear visual access to the signified, forecloses Nora's ability to vocalise rationally what she has witnessed.

[32] Western thinking has long aligned woman with phonos and the body, and the male with logos and the mind (see Cavarero 2005). In this sense, Nora's logocentric estrangement, especially set against the supposed logocentrism of Bassi, Landini and the film's male doctors and detectives, participates in a cultural prejudice with deep roots.

As early as 1975 French critics Alain Silver and James Ursini noticed that 'all of Bava's films revolve thematically around a denial of the permanence of commonplace reality' (1975: 43), but *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* is particularly notable for how it ties the instability of perceptual reality to the concrete materiality of Rome's urban space. Unlike higher-profile contemporary works such as Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), Bava's film's external scenes were shot on location, signalling an interest in the 'reality' of the profilmic city waived by Fellini's extensive use of Cinecittà's soundstages to reconstruct Rome's public spaces (budget differences would, of course, also contribute to this difference). Furthermore, Trinità dei Monti repeatedly draws the camera's gaze during the murder scene and the passage from the night of the murder to the following morning is conveyed via a shot of the church reflected upside down in a puddle disturbed by rain, as if the diegetic world is slipping back and forth between concrete urban Rome and its distorted and transient impression. In short, the 'real' urban space of the profilmic city is heavily implicated in the perceptual obscurity of the film's diegetic space.

Vitali writes that, 'Like the best of Italy's films produced in the early 1960s, Bava's films engage in a search for new strategies to present "the real" Italy of those years' (2016: 65), and Lucas states that 'the film explores the fantasy that was Rome in 1963, in the wake of *La dolce vita*' (2007: 459). This 'real', post-*La dolce vita* Rome was, of course, a modernising city that was changing rapidly on economic, societal and cultural fronts thanks to the industrial boom and 'economic miracle' that followed the large influx of foreign capital into Italy after the war (see Introduction and Ginsborg 1990: 210–53). For example, Rome Fiumicino airport, through which Nora enters the city, was opened in 1960 for the Rome Olympics and was iconic of a new Italian modernity figured in international openness and the creation of an infrastructure that enabled the smooth exchange of people, goods and capital between Rome and the rest of the world (Siegel 2011: 227). This opening location presupposes tourism as one of the film's guiding obsessions; the Piazza di Spagna, around which much of the film's action is placed, also carries overt connotations of tourism and had been a popular attraction since the Grand Tour era of the eighteenth century. This historicity is carried directly into *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s narrative, which is introduced by the narrator as that of 'a holiday — a holiday to Rome' (an opening statement that achieves the double end of cueing the film's narrative references to *Roman Holiday*). It is also a running joke throughout the film that Bassi is obsessed with 'selling' Nora Italy's beauty, great weather and relaxed lifestyle. In one light-hearted montage sequence, he tries to take her mind off of the murder by taking her around a

series of tourist sites as part of an enthusiastic 'sales pitch' on the restorative potential of the city. Bava's use of montage here is more than a cinematic timesaver; it depicts the way in which the post-boom repackaging of Rome as a commodity to be sold to tourists has fragmented the city into a series of heterogenous postcard-style sites which erase both intermediate space and any sense of the city's overall connectedness, in a sense turning the city itself into one big urban montage. In Fisher's words, 'tourism [in the *giallo*] is therefore framed as a tangible manifestation of the rapid changes that have visited Italian (and other European) cities and society in recent decades, and a symbol for how once familiar urban spaces have become corrupted and alienating' (2019: 128). As Lucas suggests in constellating the film with *La dolce vita* — a film which, from its opening shots of a statue of Christ flying over the city with the help of a helicopter, presents Rome as a collision of floating images — the Rome of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* is on its way to becoming what Guy Debord has called a 'society of the spectacle', in which '*Fragmented* views of reality regroup themselves into a new unity as a *separate pseudoworld* that can only be looked at' (2002: 7. Original emphasis).[33] This tumultuous juxtaposition of key sites leads, paradoxically yet logically, to a decrease in actual perceptual acuity (in Fisher's terms, it is the spatial corruption that leads to individual alienation). After Nora and Bassi return home from their trip, she tells him 'I swear that I'm so confused now, I couldn't tell the difference between the Coliseum and Via Veneto!'. The hyper-imaging of Rome by Bassi (and the city's industrialised modernity more generally) only renders the city more obscure; to use a cinematic metaphor, Nora has close-ups, but no establishing shot and indeed there are few establishing shots in the film so that, like Nora, the viewer often struggles to orientate themselves to the onscreen environment.[34]

Curiously, the notion that the film's presentation of Roman space might be paratactic in nature leads the film towards another intertextual matrix; that of television advertising and particularly Italy's long-running advertising show, *Carosello* (1957–77). This thirty-minute-long programme was screened daily by state broadcaster RAI (*Radiotelevisione italiana*) in a prime-time slot immediately before the 9pm news, and was made up of a sequence of unconnected advertising 'spots' each lasting one minute and forty-five seconds. The rules surrounding these spots were specific: the product being advertised could only be referred to

[33] Pier Paolo Pasolini was particularly excoriating in his interpretation of the economic miracle and its spectacular manifestation, claiming that 'consumerism […] has cynically destroyed a real world, transforming it into a total unreality where there is no longer any choice between good and evil' (1983: 107).
[34] See Siegel 2011 and Rhodes 2007 for significantly more in-depth analyses of post-war Roman urban history in relation to the cinema of Argento and Pasolini respectively.

directly for a total of thirty seconds at the beginning and/or end of the segment. The intervening time was taken up with short stories or sketches, either live-action or animated, that held at most a vague relationship to the product itself (Ginsborg 1990: 240–41; Dorfles 1998: 17).[35] The show came at a time when television spectatorship was itself changing considerably in Italy: only 88,000 licences were sold in 1954 when the medium was introduced to the country, but by 1965 half of Italian families owned a television (Ginsborg 1990: 240). Although watching television had initially been a communal activity undertaken in bars and neighbours' houses, by 1960 the practice of watching in one's own home had also taken root, particularly in the North (Foot 1999: 380). The same year, *Carosello* became the most watched television programme in the country (Ginsborg 1990: 241).[36] It is important to note the very significant imbrication of *Carosello* with the wider socio-cultural change being experienced by Italy at this moment in time. Piero Dorfles, in his history of *Carosello*, argues that the programme's celebration of the commodity necessarily and inevitably arose from the conditions of the economic miracle; the show was at once a symptom and a driver of Italy's accelerating consumerist modernity (Dorfles 1998). Children, for example, now often went to bed 'after *Carosello*' and its short-form, entertainment-driven content appealed to them greatly; through *Carosello*, children were 'introduced in this familial, homely and seemingly innocuous way to the delights of consumerism' (Ginsborg 1990: 241).

Central to the *Carosello* spot was 'the incumbent and heavy presence of the voice-over, typically male […] with an informative and generally paternalistic tone, that accompanied the images' (Scaglioni 2013: 344). Even a cursory glance across archives of *Carosello* spots from the 1960s validates Scaglioni's observation; the use of the male, early middle-aged voice-over speaking evenly and clearly with an upbeat and enthusiastic, yet professionally restrained, tone is virtually ubiquitous whether the product in question be food, drink, clothing or utensil. In terms of tone, pitch, timbre and intonation, these voices are almost identical to the voice-over of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s opening sequence, during which Nora arrives in Rome. Importantly, the film's voice-over returns to this sonorous register, having shifted to that of film noir in the intervening period, during the montage in which Bassi takes Nora on their sightseeing tour. That the narrator's voice should return to an even but upbeat tone at the moment in which the film is most explicitly concerned with the abstraction and

[35] See De Iulio and Vinti 2009 for an account of the wider, but incomplete, Americanisation of Italian advertising during this period, which includes discussion of *Carosello*.

[36] *Carosello* was later joined by several other programmes of a similar format which broadcast at various times of the day (Dorfles 1998: 17).

commodification of Rome underscores, in that sequence, the aural identification of the film's narrator with the ubiquitous narrator of the *Carosello* spot.[37] The fact that the film's narrator says little about Rome (the 'product') itself during this section of voice-over (he is more concerned with explaining Nora's emotional struggles) is of little consequence; in *Carosello* spots the mode of vocal performance used by narrators signals the process of commodification itself, irrespective of what those voices go on to say. Indeed, a broad survey of spots from the show reveals that the use of voice-over in *Carosello* adverts is largely reserved for the product/brand descriptions that bookend each segment, whereas the intervening sketches tend to play out with only diegetic sound and non-diegetic music. The use of the paternalistic voice-over thus always already signals the presence of a commodity before it specifies that commodity. In other words, the primary purpose of the *Carosello* voice-over is to flag up the process of commodification per se. The film's use of a *Carosello*-style voice-over interweaves the general impression that Rome has become a mediatised commodity (or series of commodities) with the actual mechanisms of commodification at play in Italian media at the time. In this way, the film vocally incorporates both another set of recognisable intertexts (television adverts) and the socio-cultural trajectory from which they are inextricable. Further, it formally implicates that socio-cultural milieu in the perceptual failures that undergird its plot. However, the film also *participates* in both the commodification and fragmentation of Roman space. Fisher writes that, in terms of *filone* cinema's historicity, 'we must recognise that the very processes of mediation that grew around […] events were inseparable from, and entwined within, those events themselves' (2019: 52). *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, a media product aimed partly at the US market (see below), does not simply register how tourism and mediatisation have disassembled the city, but participates in and perpetuates that disassembly by restaging it. The film is, in other words, necessarily complicit in the process it documents.

Kevin Lynch, writing shortly before the production of this film, argues that 'A vivid and integrated physical setting, capable of producing a sharp image, plays a social role [...] It can furnish the raw material for the symbols and collective memories of group communication' (1960: 4). In these terms, Nora's estrangement from logos — the sonority of her utterances and

[37] To be clear, it is impossible to state definitively what direct influence *Carosello* had on Bava's construction of this scene. It seems equally impossible, however, that a jobbing director possessed of an acute sensitivity to the realities of the Italian film industry should be unaware of the formal tropes of the country's most popular television show. Dorfles also argues that *Carosello* contributed innovative approaches to televisual and cinematic form, including techniques of montage, though he stops short of giving examples (1998: 67–68).

their accordant inability to logically explain what she has experienced — stem from her unclear perception of the spaces that surround her, from modernising Rome's perceptual impossibilities. Owing to Rome's ongoing modernisation and commodification (effected both in and, more widely, by the film), Nora the international traveller finds herself in an unfamiliar and unreadable space that can only be experienced impressionistically and, accordingly, that can only be represented through the affective and contingent sonority that lies beyond logos. The voice in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* not only straddles a series of borders within the intertextual network from which the film is emerging, but it resonates across the (increasingly international and increasingly commercial) socio-economic context that in turn surrounds that intertextual network. As the film's evocation of the *Carosello*-style advertisement suggests, the booming Rome of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (perhaps even more so than that of *La dolce vita*) had become a kind of mediated and fragmented (inter)text in itself, accessible only via mediation/mediatisation and therefore not really accessible at all. The text of modern Rome is consequently one which it is impossible for either character or audience to read clearly or comprehensively and again this is a changing social/urban reality that the film does not simply reflect, but concretises in its acoustic form.

Inter-Authorial Speech

If the voice in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* constantly overreaches multiple borders between text and context(s) to speak to both the cultural and social milieus from which the film emerged, it also speaks directly to the realities of the film industry that produced it. It is in this double gesture that the voice reveals itself as a nodal point through which the *giallo*'s past and present manifestations meet and, therefore, a rich opening into the *giallo* film's historicity. It is important to recall that Mario Bava celebrated the artisanal character of his career; in a 1979 *L'Espresso* interview he told Dante Matelli: 'I am just a craftsman, a romantic craftsman […] How could it be art, when there are 60 people working on a single film?' (quoted in Howarth 2014: 181, 184). Bava also repeatedly referred to his films as 'bullshit' and 'improvisations', and claimed that he could not remember the names of actors with whom he worked. Certainly, Bava was hugely prolific and worked in almost every Italian popular film genre during his career, often due to financial necessity, and Peter Hutchings argues that Bava's career 'brings with it […] a sense of some of the practicalities and contingencies of Italian popular film production from the 1950s through to the 1970s' (2016: 81). In *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, the voice is where the necessarily collaborative contingencies and practicalities of Bava's

filmmaking, and of Italian popular film production more generally, are evidenced. The film's script itself, for example, was a piecemeal object. It was the result of collaboration by six writers (Lucas 2007: 458) and was anyway revised extensively mid-shoot. In Howarth's words, 'The people who worked with Bava remarked of his love for adlibbing; for him, the script was little more than a blueprint' and John Saxon (who plays Bassi) told Howarth that 'working with Bava was like engaging in one long improvisation' (2014: 13; see also Lucas 2007: 453). The extensive reshoots that were done after principal photography wrapped also suggest that significant alterations to the script were made long into the film's production (Lucas 2007: 465). Lucas hypothesises convincingly that each of the film's writers would have brought to the script their own textual influences and inspirations, which he identifies by carefully comparing the previous output of each writer, their known interests, and the final form of this film (ibid: 452–53). If the voices on the film's soundtrack (particularly that of the narrator) register the film's intertextuality it is very possible that this intertextuality has its roots in the authorial collaboration that underpins the film (and post-war *filone* production generally), with each authorial contributor adding their own textual influences. In this way, the narrator's voice marks both the film's intertextual allusions and its inter-authorial genesis, and suggests a causal link between the two.

This supposition is ultimately speculative, but *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s inter-authorial production is indicated by the voice in two more concrete ways. First, it should be noted immediately that this film, like virtually all Italian cinema of the 1960s (and up until the mid-1980s), is dubbed in both its Italian and English versions (a French dub was also produced). As discussed previously, dubbing overtly and inescapably marks the intrusion of commercial exigency into the form of the cinematic text and so the voice in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* always already, to use Vitali's words, 'stages the socio-economic conditions of [the film's] production' (2016: 158). *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* is remarkable, however, for the significant alterations made to the film's voice-over when it was dubbed and re-edited for Anglophone release, now under the title *The Evil Eye*. The English-language version is slightly longer than the Italian release because it contains extra scenes (see Lucas 2007: 466–69). It is also principally voiced over by Nora herself, in the form of sections of her stream of consciousness. At times, *The Evil Eye* directly vocalises the thoughts of other characters too, such as the humdrum thoughts of Nora's fellow passengers as the camera tracks through her plane in the opening scene. In Lucas's words, Nora's American voice-over (dubbed by Román) is characterised by a 'giddy, girlish, "Dear Diary" exuberance' which serves to align the

audience more closely with Nora herself (2007: 460). This is notable given that, like its Italian counterparts, the film's American co-producer American International Pictures frequently sought to 'capitalize on particular, perhaps short-lived trends' (Dickinson 2008: 59) and was keen to use the film specifically to exploit the relatively recent popularity of *Psycho* (Lucas 2007: 448; Balmain 2002). The replacement of the anonymous male voice-over with Nora's inner monologue would seem to replicate the audience's close and ultimately traumatic alignment with Marion Crane during the first half of *Psycho*, which in part also relies on the audience having acoustic access to the memories she keeps replaying in her mind as she drives out of Phoenix. The wholesale alteration of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s voice-over in the film's transition into *The Evil Eye* is an economically determined act of recalibrating the intertextual network to which the film acoustically orientates itself as a decipherable and thus easily consumed cultural product. This intertextuality is particularly important given that Bava's films were 'conceived and executed for perhaps two weeks of theatrical play at best' on both the Italian *terza visione* circuit and the US B-movie circuit (Lucas 2007: 23), and so needed to be immediately 'placeable' relative to culturally specific intertexts in each market. Again, the intertextual and inter-authorial valences of the voice in the film/s reveal each other, with the American producers' intertextual requirements leading to a change in the form of the voice-over. Even if this hypothesis is rejected, the shift in voice-over between the Italian and English-language versions is nonetheless a dramatic and commercially driven modification of both the sonority of the voice-over and its placement relative to the diegesis (internal rather than external/semi-external, embodied rather than pseudo-embodied). Listening to the two voice-overs in parallel reveals the shifting balance between commercial imperatives at each stage of the film's transnational production and distribution by rendering palpable the diverse and determining interventions made by the film's various industrial contexts into its formal constitution(s).

Returning to the Italian version of the film, the recurrence of Adriano Celentano's singing voice is also revealing. His song 'Furore' accompanies the opening shots of Nora's plane, his words clear and forceful. It is included again, this time diegetically localised, when Nora moves into Laura's house and plays a record on the gramophone. After doing so she moves to answer a knock at the door and the audience's point of audition moves with her. Celentano's voice fades into background *sound*, his words hard to pick out. Finally, Nora searches for Landini in a deserted apartment and falls for a trap set by Laura when she walks towards a voice which is eventually revealed to come from a tape deck. She replays the tape

but the only sound that comes out is the screech of a sped-up and highly pitched version of 'Furore'. As song, Celentano's voice is automatically engaged in a balance between logos and phonos and it marks out the shifting emphasis that the film places on each as it proceeds. At the beginning of the film, the clarity of Celentano's words pairs with the calm, literary voice-over; the sonorous screech of the song's final usage comes at the point in the film when the narrator's voice and its non-diegetic authority have become troubled by its increased sonority. Celentano's voice acts as an index of the shift being experienced by the voice more diffusely during the film.

Celentano's voice also held significant commercial value for the film's Italian producers (it was replaced with music by Len Baxter for *The Evil Eye* as Celentano's Italian lyrics and his persona would mean little to Anglophone audiences).[38] The inclusion of the singer's voice was, in large part, a marketing ploy; the track was used as a key paratext during the film's Italian promotion, and Bava was obliged to use it in the film itself (Lucas 2007: 464). Lucas speculates that the song's distorted final rendition was Bava's way of getting revenge for this imposition, but provides no evidence for this intriguing suggestion (ibid: 462). Even discounting the idea that Bava may be fighting a personal battle through the scene's diegetic manipulation of voice, the scene does present a node at which the film's commercial necessities and thematic interests intersect. Celentano's recurrent presence on the soundtrack exemplifies microcosmically both the ongoing troubling of logocentric speech within the film and the way in which the film's acoustic form is often shaped directly by contextual factors. By responding simultaneously to both aesthetic and commercial exigencies, Celentano's song — like the film's vocal narration — inseparably fuses the two.

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage: Meta-Cinematic Spatiality

Dario Argento's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* bears a slightly ambiguous relationship to *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*. Argento has both stated that it convinced him that a murder mystery set in Rome could be effective (Argento 2014: 89),[39] and elsewhere entirely refuted the notion that he was influenced by Bava (Jones 2016: 19). This contradiction summarises Argento's ambiguous relationship to intertextuality more widely. As L. Andrew Cooper writes, 'Argento's films inhabit the cinematic worlds of the popular director Mario Bava […] and of

[38] See Gundle 2006 for an account of Celentano's huge significance to post-war popular culture in Italy.

[39] His frequent collaborator, Luigi Cozzi, has also said that Argento was 'surely influenced' by Bava's film (interview with author 2019).

the canonized artists Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fellini' (2012: 4). That is, Argento is a director working within a *filone* model, but with an anomalously auteurist vision and a personal control over his texts. Intertextual influences are unmistakably detectable in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, such as the casting of Reggie Nalder in the role of an assassin — Argento had loved Nalder's performance in none other than Hitchcock's 1956 version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Argento 2014: 99) — and the film's narrative debt to Fredric Brown's hard-boiled novel *The Screaming Mimi* (1949). The film also references *Psycho* in the final 'explanation' of events delivered by a psychoanalyst, and Ellen Nerenberg has suggested that the protagonist's name, Sam Dalmas, is a reference to Raymond Chandler's character John Dalmas (2012: 83). At the same time, unlike with *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*'s intertextual elements would not seem to indicate the overt entry of commercial forces into the text. Argento was singularly controlling of the film's production: he wrote the script in total isolation and insisted on directing despite his total lack of experience (Argento 2014: 81–82, 86), produced it through a company he started with his father Salvatore, a powerful producer in Italy at the time (the company was named Seda, standing for 'Salvatore e Dario Argento' [ibid: 88]), refused to use a more marketable English pseudonym (ibid: 89), and likewise refused to hand over direction of the film when Goffredo Lombardo, head of Titanus and the film's distributor, was unimpressed with early rushes (ibid: 97–98). Notwithstanding Argento's esteem for his technical collaborators, such singular artistic control is in marked contrast to the pragmatic, inter-authorial nature of Bava's work and has led to Argento's eventual acceptance as an auteur by film scholars (see Baschiera and Hunter 2016a: 1). Alberto Pezzotta summarises: 'For Bava, style is probably a side effect and not intended as a signature […] For Argento, however, style is the means by which he builds his authorship and his modernism' (2008: 85).

To be sure (but not to overlook his undeniable stylistic flair), Argento's exceptionalism as a *giallo* auteur results in part from the unique freedom he has enjoyed throughout his career. Paolo Fazzini writes that Argento 'enjoys a freedom of production that other genre directors have never had: guaranteed such independence, Argento is able to pursue his own objectives' (2008: 180). This seems to have been a privilege afforded to Argento by his father Salvatore's powerful position in the Italian film industry. His father helped him acquire writing experience under the eye of producer Sergio Amidei, and Argento (with Bernardo Bertolucci) went on to write the script for *Once Upon a Time in the* West (*C'era una volta il West,* 1968) for Sergio Leone (Argento 2014: 68–73). When he finished the script for

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage it was again his father who contributed money, acted as producer and interceded to help the film find a major distributor (ibid: 87–88). In the words of Manlio Gomarasca, 'the production machine behind Argento's first film […] had an extremely familiar management, one that allowed the young Argento to be hands-on with all of the ongoing production processes' (2008: 246). Argento's friend, long-time archivist and critic of his work Alan Jones, puts it even more bluntly:

> you have to remember how powerful a figure Salvatore was in the industry. No one wanted to cross him or their export stream might suffer. Salvatore was not beyond using his clout for his son […] Dario was lucky to be born into such an esteemed family and he knows it. (Correspondence with author 2020)

This is to neither deny nor disparage the enormous influence that Argento's films had on the *giallo filone* according to their own artistic merits, but attending to the unique economics of Argento's early career reveals that he made films in an environment unrepresentative of those encountered by most of his contemporary first-time directors; from the outset Argento possessed the freedom to pursue artistic and creative interests in a manner more commonly associated with the arthouse. His cinema accordingly demonstrates a reversal of the form-context relationship that characterises *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*: for Argento, cinematic form does not index industrial, and by extension socio-cultural, forces, but is used to precisely organise and interpret contextual social phenomena. Put differently, for most *filone* texts, the film industry acts as a one-way valve through which socio-cultural context shapes commercial imperatives which shape form. Argento's comparative artistic autonomy removes this industrial 'valve' and the one-way relationship it mandates; his films use their form to intervene in their socio-cultural contexts and they ask to be read accordingly, through a mode of close reading that identifies their formal elements as interventions in their historical moments rather than as indexes of commercial decision making.[40] In any case, although a sizeable number of *gialli* had been made throughout the 1960s, including Romolo Guerrieri's *The Sweet Body of Deborah* (*Il dolce corpo di Deborah*, 1968) and Lucio Fulci's *One on Top of the Other* Aka

[40] In a sense, Argento's cinema perhaps reveals the overriding influence of the industrial on the formal in *filone* cinema precisely by offering an alternative, by showing how the film-context dialogue may play out differently when the commercial is attenuated as a concern.

Perversion Story (*Una sull'altra,* 1969), it was the eventual success of Argento's debut that gave rise to the *filone* proper by 'unleash[ing] a tidal wave of *giallo* film production in Italy' (Kannas 2013).[41] Given *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*'s importance as the *filone*'s governing reference point, it demands attention on its own terms, that is, according to the auteurist rubric under which it was constructed.

The plot of *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* replicates many narrative tropes evident in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* and, following Argento's rise to fame, these tropes quickly came to define the *giallo* film narrative. Sam Dalmas (Tony Musante) is, like Nora Davis, an American visiting Rome. Sam is a writer suffering from crippling writer's block and he has taken a job writing a textbook on the preservation of rare birds for an ornithological museum. After picking up his cheque for the job he walks home through Rome's EUR district with plans to return to the US two days later along with his British girlfriend Julia (Suzy Kendall).[42] Passing a modern art gallery, Sam sees a man dressed in a black trench coat and hat (a stylistic hallmark of the *giallo* that originated with *Blood and Black Lace*) attack a woman before fleeing. Sam runs to help, but is trapped between the gallery's two wall-to-wall glass doors and is left to watch as the woman writhes on the gallery floor. Eventually the police arrive, take the woman — Monica Ranieri (Eva Renzi), one of the gallery's owners — into care and question Sam repeatedly about what he saw. Sam knows he witnessed something significant but cannot pinpoint the key detail amongst his unclear memories. The detective in charge of the case, Inspector Morrisini (Enrico Maria Salerno), believes that the attack is the latest in a recent series of murders of young women, and confiscates Sam's passport in an effort to force his memory. The tactic fails, but Sam becomes obsessed with solving the case, to the point that he decides to remain in Italy after his passport is returned. In the background of a threatening phone call he later receives from the killer (and records) is an unexplained sound which is discovered to be the cry of a rare bird held at the local zoo. This leads Sam to realise that the call came from the apartment, adjacent to the zoo, shared by Monica and her husband — fellow gallery owner Alberto (Umberto Raho). Sam rushes across the city to apprehend

[41] It should be noted that the film was not an instant success and drew small crowds upon its initial release in Rome. It enjoyed much more favourable turnouts and audience reactions in Florence and Naples, however, from where its eventual national popularity spread out (Argento 2014: 107–09).

[42] EUR (*Esposizione Universale Roma*) is an outlying district of Rome that was built in a modernist, neo-classical style during the late 1930s and early 1940s. It was intended to host the (later cancelled) 1942 World's Fair (which Mussolini's Fascists planned to use as a showcase for the Regime's achievements) and, after the war, it became home to the headquarters of many international corporations.

Alberto in the belief that he is the murderer. In the ensuing fracas, Alberto falls out of a window and, in his dying moments, admits to being the killer, the black-coated man in the gallery. Alberto's is a false confession, though; the real killer is Monica. A painting of a violent attack (which Sam had uncovered during his investigation) has released long-repressed traumatic memories of an attack she suffered in the past. In the return of these memories Monica identified with the attacker rather than the victim, and commenced her murderous rampage. Monica was the aggressor in the gallery, not the victim, and her wounds were either accidental or defensive moves on her husband's part; this is the detail that has been eluding Sam throughout his investigation. Monica attacks Sam, but he is saved by the police officers who have followed him and returns to America with Julia as the final credits roll.

Space and speech are of prime, mutual importance in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*. Sam's textbook, 'a manual on the preservation of rare birds', is literally a text designed to put things *in* cages: it is logos operating to define which objects may be recessed within internal spatial zones and how, and is thus instrumental in defining as internal the spaces which those objects come to occupy. This logocentric spatial operation is enforced and clarified by the mise-en-scene of the museum where countless glass cages and display units are stuffed full of preserved birds. Each bird is accompanied by a small descriptive label which collectively figure three-dimensional manifestations of the sort of text Sam has written. These labels construct logocentric walls that redouble the physical glass walls of the cages, screens of signification that define the birds they refer to and confer onto them fixed meanings just as the process of taxidermy has fixed their bodies. In this operation, logos itself encases the birds. The labels demarcate the sides of the glass panels occupied by the birds as the 'inside' of the cases relative to the space 'outside' the panels traversed by the writers Sam and Carlo (Raf Valenti), a space which confers discursive authority and the power to capture, collect, curate and perhaps colonise (see Burke 2002). The fact that Sam and Carlo walk along narrow passages likewise hemmed in by ubiquitous glass surfaces as they navigate the labyrinthine museum further indicates that, within the museum, the inside/outside distinction is fragile. It is thus all the more important that this distinction is established and maintained through logocentric structures.[43]

[43] The complexity of space within the museum is symptomatic of Argento's personal interest in space and architecture. He claims, 'my passion for architecture comes from Michelangelo Antonioni, a director who gave it primary importance […] I've come to love the use of space in his films' (quoted in Mendik 2015: 123).

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage's overarching investment in spatiality has been incisively explored by Michael Siegel, who devotes specific attention to the ubiquity of glass in the film (2011). Siegel notes that the gallery scene 'emphasizes the transparency of glass, its subtle reflectivity, and its visual property of collapsing multiple planes of depth onto one surface. At the same time, Argento's camera also highlights the materiality of glass, that is, its ability to demarcate and segment space by obstructing the passage of sound and bodies' (ibid: 212). Key for Siegel is the paradox underlining glass's separation of space, since it enacts physical separation while allowing for the 'optical interpenetration of space' (ibid). As the glass cases in the museum illustrate, the spatial distinction which is threatened by this paradox may be shored up logocentrically via words which, in a sense, increase the *significance* of the glass surfaces to which they refer.

This operation is at the centre of the crisis Sam faces in the gallery, when he becomes trapped between two huge glass doors while attempting to come to Monica's aid. On one side of Sam is a glass panel physically separating yet optically connecting him to the gallery housing Monica and several modernist sculptures, on the other side is a glass panel separating him from the street. He is stuck in an overt margin, alienated in both directions and enclosed in glass like the museum's stuffed birds. Signalling Argento's characteristic concern with film form per se,[44] this moment in the film is often interpreted as a meta-cinematic comment on spectatorship, in which Sam is rendered both incapacitated spectator and spectacle as the film self-reflexively condenses both sides of the voyeuristic act into one body (McDonagh 2010: 49–50; Gracey 2010: 28; Siegel 2011: 213). Such a reading is in line with Argento's avowed interest in the materiality of cinema, and the exploration of both cinematic technology and the gaze that runs through his entire corpus (see McDonagh 2010: 241; Pugliese 1996: 7–8; Pezzotta 2008: 89). Previous interpretation of this scene has wholly overlooked the way in which Sam's position between the glass doors also meta-cinematically recalls that of the voice-over narrator of the kind used in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (but not in this film). Sam's liminal position between the 'scene' of the gallery and the 'real world' of the street closely replicates that of Bava's narrator, who hovers precariously and provisionally on the fringe between the diegetic world and the extra-diegetic audience. This critical oversight is the more surprising since Sam's foregrounded identity as a writer has already framed him as a narrator figure albeit, at this moment, a troubled one. Interestingly, Argento himself would later provide snatches of voice-over narration in his films *Suspiria* (1977) and *Phenomena* (1985). These vocal cameos

[44] A concern he developed in part during his earlier career as a film critic at the newspaper *Paese Sera*.

underscore the general imbrication, implied here, of scriptural authorship and voice-over narration within his cinematic paradigm.[45]

Sam's troubled ability to narrate carries sonorously into this scene as the glass doors almost totally silence his voice; his shouted words cannot effectively reach Monica in the gallery, and when he tries to tell a passerby on the street to call for help the man just points to his ear and shrugs to say, 'I can't hear you.' Unlike the cinematic narrator to whom he is visually compared, Sam's voice can neither resound across the 'diegetic scene' being played out in the gallery as Monica writhes on the floor, nor reach and inform the 'extra-diegetic audience' on the street. Between the two doors Sam is paradoxically both 'locked in' and 'locked out' of the gallery and so, like the proverbial glass half-full/empty, Sam's spatial status is uncertain. Mary Ann Doane notes that:

> the voice-over commentary is necessarily presented as outside of that [diegetic] space. It is its radical otherness with respect to the diegesis which endows this voice with a certain authority. As a form of direct address, it speaks without mediation to the audience […] establishing a complicity between itself and the spectator — together they understand and thus *place* the image. (1980: 42. Original emphasis)

It is this discursive operation that is compromised by the increasing sonority of the narrator's voice in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* because that increase in sonority aligns the voice-over with the film's characters rather than its audience. Doane, however, brings to prominence the explicitly spatial valence which accrues to the voice-over. That is, a narrator must vocally align themselves with auditors occupying an 'outside' space to render the image an 'inside' space – a 'place' – over which they gain power. Charles Wolfe observes that the very term 'voice-over' amalgamates the voice's spatial separation from the diegesis with the power of its discursive control of that diegesis (1997). Sam's failure to instruct the 'extra-diegetic' passerby to open the outer door therefore carries great significance: his inability to vocally transcend the space in which he is trapped both portends and precipitates his inability to physically transcend that

[45] As discussed above, Argento was largely unconcerned about his films' dialogue tracks. While that may be true in terms of individual vocal performance, this film makes clear the Argento was highly interested in the *structural* importance of voice and speech to both the text's overall formal design and to its engagement with its wider milieu.

space and achieve, in Doane's terms, 'radical otherness' to the 'scene' in the gallery. In other words, the spatial dynamics that Doane attributes to the voice-over are transposed onto diegetic utterance; the fact that Sam's voice cannot reach his audience on the street literally forecloses the gallery's outer door and confirms Sam's spatial and discursive *interiority*. Sam's vocal impotence and spatial containment coalesce to render him powerless, and the police eventually find him slumped silently on the floor, subsumed into the 'interior' mise-en-scene of the gallery and aligned with Monica who lies amongst her sculptures (including several which are poignantly bird-themed). Here, Argento's meta-cinematic framing of Sam's voice as failed voice-over invokes one of the film industry's cardinal vocal paradigms only to openly subvert it, and to open up questions surrounding the spatial implications of the voice far more broadly.

The correlation between the ability to vocalise with authority and the mastery of space becomes one of the film's structuring tropes. The spatial paradigm implicit in the commercial cinematic soundtrack (the fundamental division between diegetic/inner and extra-diegetic/outer soundscapes) thus persists as the model according to which *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*'s entire notion of space is conceived. Certainly, Sam is not the only figure in the film to suffer consignment to a space of powerlessness in concert with failures or absences of voice. Hoping to jog Sam's memory as to the identity of the black-coated man, Inspector Morrisini shows him a line-up of 'perverts', who are each introduced by name and (sexual) criminal history (until, in a joke at the expense of forensic categorisation, Morrisini yells out that the last individual, Ursula Andress, 'belongs with the transvestites, not the perverts!'). The criminals are silent as a policeman's discursive speech classifies each like the labels in the birds' cages, or like a cinematic narrator; in another of Argento's meta-cinematic nods the policeman sits at the back of the darkened, studio-like room on a folding director's chair as if to explicitly tempt this comparison. Both mise-en-scene and sound design here recess the silent, criminal group into a powerless interiority framed by the state power that the police voice manifests. (Apart, it should be said, from Andress, who shouts back 'I should hope so!' after Morrisini's objection and indeed walks off the stage and momentarily out of her recessed interiority.) Similarly, Sam later visits a jail to speak to the pimp of one of the murderer's victims (Gildo Di Marco), known as So Long (Addio in the Italian dub). Their conversation is framed side-on as the two men sit on either side of a visiting booth in an almost totally symmetrical shot, and they are separated by two low panels of glass in a direct replication of the 'double-glazed' architecture of the gallery. As in the gallery which it recalls, either side of the glass divide could be the 'inside' or the 'outside'. So Long's interiority is, of course,

determined again by the state power that operates through the prison. It is *signified*, however, by the stammer that interrupts his logocentric speech by fracturing his words and overwhelming them with the strained sonority of his attempts to form sentences (he is so named because only the repetition of the phrase 'so long' allows him to complete sentences at all). So Long's constricted voice constructs a second cage within the wider container of the prison, as the bird museum's labels build secondary logocentric cages around the encased and stuffed animals. (Interestingly, Steven Connor has noted historical links drawn between stuttering and animality more widely [2014: 28].) Against the balanced and neutral framing of his conversations with Sam, and even though as the interlocutor in possession of the key information he should logically assume the position of 'narrator', So Long's stammer extends and solidifies the glass panels between the two men to both confirm and perform his incarceration 'inside' the prison. It is also notable that Sam assumes an external position here where he was internalised in the gallery. Both cases demonstrate how, in the film's meta-cinematic soundscape, vocalisation itself defines a person/body's spatial status. This status is neither a fixed quality nor a result of information asymmetry, but a fluid relativity constantly negotiated by the voice.

At a higher level, Sam's failure to exert vocal mastery over the unfolding scene in the gallery goes on to leave him trapped in interiority at a national level. After Sam is released from the glass doors, Argento and editor Franco Fraticelli cut to a scene in Morrisini's office where Sam tells the inspector 'we've been through the whole damn thing six times! Look, I've told you everything, everything!'. Morrisini replies, 'Let's start over again, maybe there's a detail you've forgotten to mention?' Morrisini is here concerned by Sam's inability to convincingly narrate the scene he witnessed, and Gary Needham has argued, in this vein, that Sam's enigma throughout the film is not one of detection, but one of narrative (2000: 89). Sam's meta-cinematic characterisation as a voice-over narrator who has 'lost his voice' here goes from implied to literal as the flashbacks through which he repeatedly recalls the scene are invariably wordless, literally lacking the explanatory voice-over he is unable to provide. Fittingly, Sam's passport — a written, logocentric text which directly grants one the ability to traverse spatial borders — is confiscated by Morrisini in the hope that he will soon be able to 'tell', that is narrate, his story more comprehensively. As his failure to explain vocally his situation to the man on the street consigned him to the impotent interiority of the 'scene' unfolding in the gallery, Sam's inability to retrospectively narrate his memories of that scene has left him trapped within Italy's national borders.

Sam's national entrapment is consequential given the film's jet-setting narrative: Sam is an American living in Rome, his girlfriend British and their friends Italian and, where *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* starts with images of TWA Boeing 707 flying into Fiumicino airport, *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* ends with a shot of one flying out. The film is heavily invested in detailing an epoch in which globalised subjects might transcend spatial borders at will, where anyone with sufficient economic resources may become external to anywhere and ascend narrator-like to the very border of terrestrial space. Vitally, the film suggests that Sam's need to discursively extricate himself from the scene in the gallery before he can physically extricate himself from Italy is self-enforcing; even after his passport is returned he decides to stay and continue his investigation, and continues to be haunted by silent, un-narrated flashbacks. In the film's archly meta-cinematic soundscape it appears that, for Sam at least, attaining the spatial exteriority beholden to his socio-economic position is always contingent on the prior establishment of discursive exteriority, the radical otherness of the voice-over narrator. *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* employs the meta-cinematic paradigm of the voice-over to point up the implication of the voice not just in the demarcation of immediate or hyper-local spaces, like the two sides of a glass wall, but in the organisation of urban and national spaces too, as well as the options they offer for individual mobility. The voice in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* is endlessly implicated in the diegetic negotiation of socio-spatial borders and in the process — as in Bava's earlier film but in a different mode — it transcends the borders of the text itself. Rather than incorporating context into text via the commercial injunctions of its production, Argento's complex and more auteurist recourse to the human voice interprets profilmic space and spatiality in explicitly (meta-)cinematic terms. Where Bava's cinematic text can only be decoded in terms of its context, Argento's film's context can only be decoded in terms of the density of the film's textuality. In both cases, the process of decoding hinges on the films' use of the voice.

Speaking Technologically

Having established the centrality of the voice to shoring up inside/outside distinctions at both the micro and macro levels, *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* then deploys voice-mediating technology as a way of turning this paradigm into a source of anxiety and tension. Monica and Alberto each make one threatening phone call, one to Morrisini and one to Sam, both of which are recorded by their addressees. Despite the meta-cinematic weight given to the visual in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, through Sam's constant attempts to remember what he saw,

these audio recordings become the mystery's prime clues as a sound recorded in the background (the call of the titular rare bird kept at the local zoo) ultimately gives away the killers' identities. Aside from their overt threats of violence, Monica and Alberto's anonymous calls are menacing because they isolate the callers' voices from identifiable and placeable bodies. Thus, according to Chion's seminal definition, these voices are rendered acousmatic and seem to gain the powers of omnipotence, omniscience, all-seeing sight and ubiquity (1999: 24). In the first phone call to Morrisini it is suggested that the anxiety introduced into the film via the acousmatic telephonic voices results particularly from their ubiquity, their ability to instantly be anywhere and everywhere. The telephone calls effect an acoustic interpenetration of space where the glass effects, according to Siegel, spaces' 'optical interpenetration' (2011: 212).[46]

Of course, even when the two voices of a phone call are identified and localised the spaces occupied by the two speaking bodies are still imbricated. Rather than a nebulous interpenetration of space, in which the unidentified voice may occupy anywhere and everywhere and therefore gain ubiquity, the telephonic localisation of the identified voice engenders a spatial palimpsest in which two concrete places are layered one on top of the other. For example, Sam calls Julia after visiting the painter of the picture responsible for triggering Monica's mania and Julia asks him where he is. He explains, pinpointing his location at a station outside of Rome. Julia explains that Carlo wants to see him and, as she speaks her final lines the image cuts to an exterior shot of their apartment window. Julia's telephonic voice acts as a fixative bonding the two specific locations together and suggests that such auditory technology may thus work to create layered space in which the specificity of the speaker's bodily location is superimposed on top of the space occupied by the listener. Where the ubiquity of the acousmatic voice floods the place occupied by the listener with a spatial excess that is both everywhere and nowhere, the acoustic palimpsest effected by the exchange of localised telephonic voices conjoins two concrete places. This distinction represents a subtle but significant difference because the latter allows the speakers to be in two specific places at once. Siegel builds on the work of Paul Virilio to argue that 'the diminished importance of physical boundaries' characterises *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, and that 'boundaries have been eroded by the new experiences of time and space produced by ever-advancing

[46] Chion himself notes that the acousmatic voice has a fluctuating relationship to the space in which it manifests as it establishes 'a relationship of power […] capable of functioning in both directions; the image may contain the voice, or the voice may contain the image' (1999: 23).

technologies of transport and telecommunications' (2011: 227). Siegel's reading is interested in the air travel and television broadcasts in the film as well as Argento's cinematic rendering of Rome itself, and seizes on Virilio's analysis of television to suggest that it is the medium which best represents the collapsing of space at work in the film. Since all the film's diegetic television broadcasts originate in a studio (and at the compulsion of the police), however, it seems that the television cannot connect *any* two places. By contrast, the telephone allows virtually anyone in virtually any place to duplicate their presence and occupy another place solely through their voice. Telephony is spatial immediacy's most pervasive and most efficient technological manifestation in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, hence the leading role it assumes in the structure of the film's mystery and its centrality to the film's denouement. In stark contrast to the fleeting and narratively ineffectual television broadcasts made by Morrisini and his psychoanalytical consultant, the killers' calls are replayed recurrently throughout the film as the investigating characters struggle to identify and localise the callers' voices. This is a struggle to solve a sort of audio-spatial puzzle — who is talking, and from where — staged entirely through the manipulation of sound technology from which the television is merely a momentary distraction. It is a struggle to read the sorts of concrete spatial palimpsests that, the film suggests, telephony occasions more openly, conspicuously and consequentially than the younger technologies around it.

Importantly, Cooper's argument that the audio equipment the police use is 'sophisticated (for the 1960s)' does not seem to be entirely borne out by that technology's actual historicity (2012: 29). The sleek, science fiction aesthetic of the police lab belies the fact that historically speaking much of the voice technology in the film had long been normalised: the telephone, to give the obvious example, had been invented nearly a hundred years earlier. In fact, Connor writes, 'The determination of some cultural historians to find amazement and anxiety at the coming of the telephone and the phonograph meets with a puzzling lack of evidence for cultural trauma […] the contemporary reaction to the coming of the telephone seems to have been "about time, too"' (2000: 410). The telephone was, it seems, instantly normalised. Furthermore, the tapping and secret recording of phone calls had been widespread since the 1940s and was itself based on techniques originally designed to intercept telegram messages (Smith 2008: 167–69); the reel-to-reel tape deck with which voices are recorded and analysed in the film had also existed, in essentially the same form, since before the Second World War and was in fact becoming dated technology by 1970, increasingly overtaken by multitrack and then cassette-based formats; and even 'voiceprinting' technology such as the

oscilloscope monitor used by Morrisini's technician, though becoming more refined by the early 1970s, had existed since the 1940s (see Karpf 2006: 257–58).

Attending to the historicity of the specific technology foregrounded in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*'s mise-en-scene underscores the unique relationship between form and context in Argento's work. The film's dual interest in both voices displaced from their bodies of origin and the historically well-established technologies that sustain this displacement posits a broader social reality in which the displaced or spatially disembodied voice had become, to a great extent, a *default*, in line with or perhaps precipitating the normalisation of spatial immediacy that Siegel notes in the film. If the film's meta-cinematic frame works to reveal that internal/external spatial demarcation is an ongoing vocal negotiation, there is a concurrent suggestion that, in the social context beyond the film, voice technology has greatly expanded both the scale and the importance of that negotiation. As one of the killers tries to break into her apartment, Julia grabs a telephone to call the police but panics when she finds that the line has been cut. Taken as a symptom of the film's historicity, Julia's panic is indicative of the disorientating and terrifying *unfamiliarity* of a scenario in which the voice *cannot* be disembodied and used to transcend space. The crucial fact that only after the call fails does Julia try to physically break out of a window suggests that, in the technologically developed society that the film represents, the automatic response of one in a state of entrapment is to use the voice to negotiate an escape of some sort before, or even in place of, the body itself. In this way, while the film certainly does explore the 'scopic regime' of late-capitalist Rome (Siegel 2011: 213), it is equally invested in that period's 'auditory regime': one in which the voice might take spatial precedence over the physical body itself (a suggestion later reinforced when Sam departs Italy's national space only after vocally mastering his memory of the gallery scene). Julia's entrapment in her apartment is vocal before it is physical, the cut phone line as constraining as the window she subsequently does not manage to break through. Like Sam in the gallery Julia is stuck behind a glass barrier in a single and isolated location beyond which she can neither be heard nor move — and in that order.

The Girl Who Knew Too Much employs an unstable narrating voice-over that, in its sonorous instability, reverberates between and conjoins intertextual reference points. The voice in Bava's film spins an intertextual web that tethers the film to literary, cinematic and televisual points of reference. Alberto Pezzotta argues that the film combines tropes from several existing genres (and he includes the vacation-comedy thanks to the significant narrative nods to *Roman Holiday*) to 'create a new paradigm' (1997: 34) and it is in the voice that this act of creation

can be heard in flux. Vitali argues that 'The Italy of the 1960s was spoken and addressed in [Bava's] films' photographic texture' (2016: 60) but her reference to speech should not be taken metaphorically; alongside this film's 'photographic texture' its soundtrack can be heard addressing the socio-cultural conditions found in Italy (at least in its urban, northern zones) at the end of the economic miracle. Seven years later, *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* employs the vocal-spatial paradigm of the narrator meta-cinematically. In so doing, the film uses the mechanics of the voice-over to explore the voice's increasingly complex role in the establishment and negotiation of spatial borders — micro, urban, national — in a Rome increasingly affluent, increasingly globalised and increasingly replete with auditory technology. Taken together, these two early *gialli* represent an embryonic stage in which the *giallo* as a cultural product was transitioning from the literary to the cinematic. In different ways both films, in their use of voice, also speak to the profound social changes underway in Italy (and specifically Rome) at the time: the city's increasing imbrication in global and mediatised cultural flows in Bava, and in Argento the increasing (if socially uneven) malleability that (aural) technology has begun to confer upon urban, national and international space. These films do not merely reflect their social milieus but, by introjecting their contexts into their most fundamental form, they reify and perpetuate the socio-cultural trends in which they are implicated. These texts, that is, betray an active engagement with context, an engagement far more palpable than is suggested by social reflectionist readings that posit film texts as mirrors held up to social contexts to which they are thought to be somehow constitutively external. In this way, these films, in their baroque approach to form, also establish a core truth of the cinematic voice. Forever overreaching the text to negotiate between the formal and the socio-cultural (with the imperatives of commercial injunctions, or, more rarely, auteurism, acting as generative intermediary forces) the voice in the *giallo* is a sound without borders. The voice in the *giallo* is a sound that haunts the hinterlands between texts, between authors and between diegetic and profilmic space (social and physical) to put the cinematic text into conversation with the forces at work around it.

Chapter 2

Middle *Gialli*: Borders between Regions, Borders between Eras

To discuss the voice means listening closely to silence. Of course, for the voice to come to the fore and attain distinct audibility, a degree of silence is prerequisite. The voice requires its own absence as the a priori aural space into which it may emerge, and in this way the voice can be heard in a permanent dialectic relationship to its own silencing. Rather than silence understood as the total absence or elimination of audible sound, the voice is bonded specifically to what might simply be termed 'vocal silence', the withholding of audible utterance. Certainly, the choice, or compulsion, to utter must always implicate a refusal to remain silent, but consequently to remain silent — voluntarily or involuntarily — figures an *act*, one which carries an ontological and, in the (sound) cinematic context, formal gravity of its own.

Silence carries an added urgency in *giallo* cinema since the *giallo* mise-en-scene is a mise-en-scene of corpses. Together, the *giallo*'s murder mystery plots and its spectacular production of ruined bodies make the corpse the cornerstone of the *filone*'s narrative and visual pleasure, and here the silence of the corpse manifests as a siren call drawing the *giallo*'s plots into inescapable confrontations with death. In the *giallo* the silence of death haunts every voice with the threat of its own extinction and suggests that silence itself carries an autonomous formal significance in these films, that it operates with a complexity beyond that of a lacuna that remains when utterance ceases. As Michel Chion argues, 'cinema is a vococentric or, more precisely, a verbocentric phenomenon […] it almost always privileges the voice' (1994: 5). The use of vocal silence in sound cinema in general — the frustration of cinema's fundamental recourse to the human voice — always already constitutes a positive formal strategy, and one so significant that its consequences may extend beyond the film's soundtrack.

Undoubtedly, certain *gialli* grant vocal silence a prominent place in their sound designs. Foremost amongst these are Lucio Fulci's *Don't Torture a Duckling* (*Non si sevizia un paperino*, 1972) and Sergio Martino's *Torso* (*I corpi presentano tracce di violenza carnale*, 1973). Fulci's film features a cave-dwelling witch who lives outside the southern Italian village in which the narrative is set, and remains silent for most of her time on screen. Martino's film dedicates the final third of its narrative to a tense cat-and-mouse sequence in which the protagonist, Jane, tries to escape from a house that has been invaded by a killer who does not know she is there. The sequence takes place in almost total vocal silence, as Jane desperately tries to avoid being discovered. Both films were produced during the high-point of *giallo*

production: the period, following the success of *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, from 1970 to 1975 (Koven 2006: 6–7). This was a period in which the *giallo* had gained recognition as a cinematic *filone* but before its production dwindled and it engaged increasingly in cross-*filone* hybridisation (see Chapter 3). Thus, where Chapter 1 framed its case studies as early *gialli*, the films currently under consideration might be labelled 'middle *gialli*'. Fulci and Martino's films are also both set in rural locations: the fictional village of Accendura in an unspecified part of the Italian South (or *Mezzogiorno*) in the case of *Don't Torture a Duckling*, and the countryside surrounding the town of Tagliacozzo in the region of Abruzzo in the case of *Torso*. The films form part of a small subset of rural *gialli* that also includes Mario Bava's *Bay of Blood* (*Ecologia del delitto*, 1971), Luigi Bazzoni's *Footprints on the Moon* (*Le orme*, 1975) and Pupi Avati's *The House with Laughing Windows* (*La casa dalle finestre che ridono*, 1976). This group of films subvert the *giallo*'s typical preoccupation with cosmopolitan, urban spaces, and the scholars who have studied them have framed the significance of the rural in a variety of broadly accordant ways. Koven claims that, in Fulci's film, 'the tension […] is often regarding the villagers' resistance to modernity' (2006: 53); Xavier Mendik writes that 'the South […] figures as the rural return of the repressed, which displaces technological innovation via recourse to archaic and feudal modes of existence' (2015: 45); and Austin Fisher argues that rural *gialli* 'gaze inwardly to invest in a set of discourses surrounding the nation's past, and thereby offer symptomatic insights into the preoccupations of their own era' (2016: 161). These lines of analysis demonstrate that the turn to the rural figures a (re)turn to national specificity. Where in the more common urban *giallo* '"Italianness" gives way to an indistinct and "vaguely Anglophone" milieu' (Kannas 2013), the subset of rural *giallo* films attends carefully to specifically Italian geographical and social spaces. Indeed, Tomas Milian, who plays Andrea Martelli, the protagonist of *Don't Torture a Duckling*, said at the time of the film's release that, 'my favourite thing about the film is its deep Italianicity [*Italianità*]. Enough with *gialli* set in London […] or even in undetermined, vague cities […] I believe that its setting, so typical and real, is one of the film's principle merits' (quoted in Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 162). It is worth attending to these films specifically then, because the rural *giallo* clearly complicates Baschiera and Di Chiara's claim that, unlike Italy's post-war art cinema, the *giallo* is characterised by a distance from national concerns (2011: 34). While rural *gialli* certainly remain stylistically and narratively distinct from the films of, say, Federico Fellini or Michelangelo Antonioni, in their attention to socio-geographic specificity they manifest the *filone*'s clearest articulations of 'specific historical and cultural anxieties localizable to Italy's

economic and social position during this period' (Balmain 2002: 25). The rural *giallo* thus provides a particularly fertile opportunity for the *filone*'s imbrication in specifically Italian social, cultural and economic concerns to be unpacked, and for that reason it is particularly surprising that these films have received little sustained critical attention to date. Further, these films reveal that, in the *giallo*, Italian rural space is never framed as autonomous but always in opposition to (modern) Italian urban space.

In *Don't Torture a Duckling* and *Torso* the dialectical relationships between the voice and vocal silence on the one hand, and the urban and the rural on the other, converge. Rosalind Galt has written that the representation of landscapes in European films produced in the 1990s (including those of Italy) opens onto a 'logic of cartography: a form of writing that articulates both the discursive and the referential spaces of nations' (2006: 4). In the rural *gialli* of the 1970s, vocal silence operates within a similar framework. These films oppose the vocal urban to the silent rural, and so to attend to the use of vocal silence in these films is to attend to a process of aural cartography, an (in)audible configuration of Italy's urban/rural fault lines. The voice again gravitates to the borderland, gesturing to borders as it transgresses them. In the rural *giallo* the voice performs three operations at once: a diegetic socio-spatial cartography of Italy; an extra-diegetic imbrication of textual representation and contextual socio-political discourses, and; a cartography of the aural itself, that is, of the borders between that which is heard and that which is left inaudible. Where Chapter 1 suggested that the voice in early *gialli* constantly manipulates and questions the borders between texts, this chapter listens to the voice's implication (both textual and contextual) in the domestic borders that persisted on the fringes of Italy's international modernisation, away from Rome and the country's other urban centres. In the urban films discussed in Chapter 1, the voice frequently introduces the concrete elements of socio-cultural change into the text and reifies that change as part of the films' form. In *Don't Torture a Duckling* the voice can be heard serving a more conservative function by participating in representational discourses that date back to Italy's pre-unification history. These are representational models in which the spaces and inhabitants of rural zones, especially those of the Italian South, are presented (and fetishised) as picturesque — and, crucially, silent — spectacles. This film renders apparent how the voice in *giallo* cinema was multifaceted and did, at times, serve to shore up elements of socio-cultural continuity against the backdrop of wider socio-economic modernisation. *Torso* offers an altogether less Manichean representation of the urban/rural divide in Italy and betrays less indebtedness to contextual discourses concerning their oppositional relationship. Whereas Fulci's use of silence evidences (and

perpetuates) elements of continuity that persisted in the *giallo*'s otherwise rapidly changing social context, *Torso*'s use of silence draws attention to elements of continuity present in the *giallo*'s cinematic context; particularly, the maintenance of both production practices and performative modes that dated to the time of silent cinema. In this way, the voice (audible and/or silent) in Martino's film transcends the temporal borders between assumed cinematic eras to question their fundamental distinction.

It is important, when studying silence, not to err by treating it as a lacuna, simply the lack of audible sound. In *Silence: The Phenomenon and its Ontological Significance* Bernard Dauenhauer argues at length that 'Silence is a complex, positive phenomenon. It is not the mere absence of something else' (1980: vii). Before him Max Picard had written that 'Silence is an autonomous phenomenon. It is therefore not identical with the suspension of language […] it is rather an independent whole, subsisting in and through itself' (1961: xix). Writing specifically on film sound, Béla Balázs notes that 'The presentation of silence is one of the most specific dramatic effects of the sound film. No other art can reproduce silence' (1970: 205). Cinematic silence in the sound era is always an active component of form and part of wider processes of representation; the consequences of its use depend on its integration into wider representational structures and, like any element of film form, its uses and effects are intrinsically multiple and malleable. By tracing the specific manifestation of vocal silence in these films and its concrete implication in social, economic, political and geographical concerns, one might use the theorisation of vocal silence to approach a material historicism of the rural *giallo* and use the historicity of the rural *giallo* to better theorise vocal silence. Indeed, by relentlessly staging silence, the rural *giallo* poses a profound ontological question: What is a voice?

Don't Torture a Duckling and the Silence of the Dolls

Don't Torture a Duckling opens with panoramic shots of the *Mezzogiorno* countryside that quickly gravitate towards the grey line of an elevated motorway (*Autostrada*) cutting through the landscape. Following this establishing sequence, a woman (Florinda Bolkan) known only as Maciara (a generic term denoting a rural witch in some southern Italian folklore) exhumes the skeleton of her deceased child from the roadside earth with her bare hands. Meanwhile, a trio of boys from the nearby village of Accendura taunt a mentally challenged man, Giuseppe Bara (Vito Passeri), as he spies on the activities of a pair of prostitutes in an isolated house. Maciara accuses the boys of disturbing her child's grave and later, in the cave in which she

lives, she makes three anthropoid clay models before piercing each through the throat with a needle. Sure enough, one by one the boys are found dead, and a scrum of police and media descend on the village. This group includes Milanese journalist Andrea Martelli (Tomas Milian), who discusses the case with the chief inspector, and the young local priest, Don Alberto (Marc Porel). Martelli also forms a friendship with a young socialite, also from Milan, called Patrizia (Barbara Bouchet), the daughter of a businessman who was born in Accendura before making his fortune in the North. Patrizia is lying low at her father's modernist residence on the outskirts of the village following a drug scandal back in Milan. In turn, Giuseppe and Maciara are suspected and cleared of the crimes, but the villagers' fear and distrust of Maciara leads to a group of men trapping and then brutally beating her to death. The killer is eventually revealed to be Don Alberto, who has killed the boys to save them from the impurities of their imminent sexual awakening. While trying to kill another child atop a nearby cliff, Don Alberto is apprehended by Martelli and, in the ensuing scuffle, falls to his death.

In the attention that its opening shots give to the elevated motorway running through the rural landscape, *Don't Torture a Duckling* makes a spectacle of its own historicity. Angelo Restivo argues that following the economic paradigm shift of the 1958–63 boom and the vast infrastructural development it enabled, 'the road becomes not only a new reality in the physical landscape of Italy, but also a central trope in the construction of a new Italy based on a culture of consumption' (2002: 46). Certainly, Fulci's film uses an opening mise-en-scene of infrastructural development to establish, as its first gesture, the narrative's economic-political landscape as well as its geographical setting. As Restivo points out, this 'social transformation […] was directed from the North' (ibid), and by opening *Don't Torture a Duckling* with images of a newly built motorway overlaying the southern landscape Fulci invokes the motorway as a synecdoche not only of Italy's changing economic base, but of the economic disparity between the North and South of the country. This disparity goes back to the Risorgimento (Italy's nineteenth-century unification [see Schneider ed. 1998b; Gribaudi 1996 & 1997]), but was severely exacerbated by the northern-centric nature of recent economic transformation (Ginsborg 1990: 216–17, 229–33). Furthermore, by setting the film in the fictional and regionally unidentified Accendura, Fulci allows the village and the rural landscape around it to stand in for the Italian South in general as a form of spatial synecdoche, sidestepping the immense regional variety present in the South at social, cultural and economic levels (see DeGiglio-Bellemare 2018: 64). Whether its implications be benevolent or malign, the modernity of the motorway is set against the rural landscape that, as Galt argues in relation to

Italian cinema of the 1990s, automatically connotes 'a sense of distance from the modern world' (2006: 53). In other words, *Don't Torture a Duckling* urgently marks out its narrative space in terms of a blunt socio-geographic polarity between the modern, urban North and the pre-modern, rural South (see Fisher 2016: 168), and this is a distinction upon which the film, particularly through its manipulations of voice, dwells extensively.

Not only is the motorway a tendril of the North insinuating itself into southern rural space, it allows for pockets of northern space to manifest within the South. Restivo argues that the economic asymmetry of post-boom Italy means that 'the South needs to be conceived of as a postcolonial space which exists within the very nation' (2002: 47), and as such these pockets can be thought of as micro-colonies or settlements (see Schneider 1998a: 13). They include Patrizia's father's modernist house on the edge of Accendura, described by a policeman as a 'funny looking building' built 'only for show'. Certainly, the house — roughly pyramidal and replete with feature windows and airy, high-ceilinged living space — inverts the cramped and dark architectural spaces of the village proper.[47] It also contains the accoutrements of northern consumerist life; a record player, orb-like lamps and, most pointedly, stacks of northern newspapers. If Patrizia's house represents a sort of embassy of the North in the village, the North's presence is augmented (and tied directly to the motorway) through two key scenes featuring Fiat 500s. A Fiat 500 brings the prostitutes to the house outside the village where they conduct their sexual labour, and Maciara's killers use another to reach her before launching their attack. Ginsborg notes that Fiat, based in the northern city of Turin, became an industrial behemoth during the boom (1990: 215). The Fiat 500 was one of the period's most iconic consumer commodities and triggered a revolution in physical mobility by allowing the northern working class to make weekend and summer trips into the countryside (ibid: 242; see also Chianese and Lupi 2013: 100). The Fiat 500 (and the mass-produced family motorcar more broadly), was both a product of northern industry and one instrument with which the North could commodify and perhaps colonise the South's rural landscape. As Maciara dies beside the motorway a montage of shots of passing cars (and their oblivious occupants) foregrounds the beach balls, towels and suitcases that seem to overflow every vehicle, each presumably making its way to the South's tourist developments. However, the Fiat factory floor was staffed largely by immigrant southern labourers, which complicates the North-South

[47] Satirical Italian journalist Luigi Barzini notes that as one travels south through Italy one constantly encounters buildings constructed by northern powers, dating from the Bourbon era to the present day (1968: 269).

dichotomy congealed within the car. The 500 was not only an object disproportionately unattainable for southerners, but one predicated on the extraction of their labour and estrangement from their homes. In this way, it stands for both a dearth and excess of southern mobility: if the southern labourer faced the absolute choice of whether to emigrate north, the northern consumer-driver enjoyed a mode of mobility altogether more fluid, spontaneous and non-binding. In Ginsborg's words, for those who could afford it, the personal motorcar 'gave individuals and families a previously undreamed-of possibility of the personal selection of travel itineraries' (2001: 83). For the affluent northerner (and, to be clear, post-boom northerners were by no means *all* affluent), mobility itself was a commodity and the Fiat 500 represents a quotidian form of the urban subject's assumption of mobility which is demonstrated by Sam in *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*. As a journalist for a Milanese paper and an exile from Milanese high society respectively, Martelli and Patrizia are both defined in terms of the mobility which has brought them to Accendura from the North.[48] More literally, both are shown driving; Martelli when he initially arrives at the crime scene and Patrizia repeatedly, both on the motorway and around the village (her car also bears a Milanese number plate, linking her literal mobility with her overall status as an outsider). The villagers themselves traverse Accendura on foot (and in one case Giuseppe uses a small moped). Even Maciara's murderers are revealed emerging from their Fiat 500 only after it has been parked, disassociating the car (and its occupants) from its connotation of autonomous movement.

Martelli also uses telephones repeatedly to dictate his reports to colleagues in Milan, and he and Patrizia make and receive phone calls related to the case from within her house. Patrizia also makes a mysterious call from a public phone booth at a motorway service station, temporarily incriminating herself in the eyes of the investigators. Meanwhile, a small shop in the centre of the village has a public telephone sign above its door, suggesting that the villagers have little or no access to private telephony. In other words, the film's northern characters have access to (and conversely, the southern characters are denied access to) space-transcending vocal technology as readily as they have access to space-transcending automotive technology.

There is an uncanny resonance here with a series of articles written by the filmmaker, writer and journalist Pier Paolo Pasolini in the 1960s and 1970s, on the 'linguistic questions'

[48] Martelli and Patrizia together play the role of 'foreigner in a foreign land' that tends to define *giallo* protagonists (see Needham 2002). The fact that Martelli and Patrizia can be designated as foreigners abroad while in Accendura thus shows how deeply the divide between North and South manifests in the film: the South is so different from the North that, as far as the film's generic tropes are concerned, it (still) represents another country (as it did before Italian unification).

surrounding the development of a single Italian language. Pasolini seizes on a speech given by Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1964 at the opening of the *autostrada del sole*, the 'highway of the sun' which links Milan, Florence, Rome and Naples (and perhaps the very motorway which runs past Accendura). He notes that the Italian used in such official contexts has become 'crudely technical' and is characterised by technological terminology and clear, precise syntax (2005: 14). He both predicts that 'the purpose of language will re-enter the cycle of production-consumption, impressing on Italian that revolutionary thrust that will be precisely the prevalence of the communicative over the expressive purpose' (ibid: 19) and fears the loss of expressivity bound up in both literary Italian and dialect.[49] He also sees the rising hegemony of a technocratic Italian as a neo-colonial phenomenon: 'the nascent technocracy of the North has identified itself hegemonically with the entire country and is therefore developing a new type of culture and language that are actually national' (ibid: 17). In *Don't Torture a Duckling*, the issue of the communicative hegemony that stems specifically from northern industry is transferred from language onto the voice per se. Whereas Pasolini locates the imperialism of industrialisation in technical language (which flattens regional specificity in the North as well as the South), Fulci's film displays it through the more fundamental phenomenon of the technologically disembodied voice. The disembodied voice is, in this sense, the voice of the industrial technocracy; it is the product of industrial technology and, through its endless consumption, it expands the cultural influence of industrial technology.

It is unsurprising, then, that in both its appearances the Fiat 500 is associated with the disembodied sound of radio; the prostitutes listen to a radio play as they drive to the village and Maciara's murderers play their car's radio at full volume as they attack her (resulting in a disturbing discord between the romantic pop music that dominates the scene's soundtrack and the visceral, graphic violence that dominates the image). Like the Milanese characters' recurrent use of telephones, the close association of the Fiat 500 and the radio suggests that the disembodying of the voice is, in some sense, a northern phenomenon. Conversely, it is embodiment that comes to dominate the film's characterisation of the rural South. This textual strategy is made patent by the film's treatment of Maciara, whose body is constructed as a more literal incarnation of the landscape. Galt points out that 'the metonymic link from landscape to the female body is a standard patriarchal one' (2006: 58), and the film merges Maciara with her ambient rural space through both her behaviour and her physicality. In the first instance,

[49] Despite the growing prevalence of standardised/national Italian, regional dialects were still widely spoken in Italy in the 1960s.

her exhumation and reburial of her child's skeleton, and her voodoo-style ceremonies, embed her (maternal) body in images of superstition that, in Italian culture (particularly in the North), are frequently associated with the rural South (see Saunders 1998; Fisher 2016: 168). This entwinement compresses the distinction between Maciara's body and the landscape it occupies, and indeed the broader rural specificity of the Maciara witch figure in Italian folklore already undergirds this association. This alliance is literalised by her intense physical connection to the earth: she lives in a cave and frequently emerges into the mise-en-scene from behind shrubbery or trees as if sprouting from the landscape itself; she is introduced digging up her child's skeleton with bare hands caked in a mixture of blood and earth, and later buries the three clay models in the dirt of her cave floor; and she has the feral appearance of an animal.[50] She is also almost totally silent; she makes virtually no vocal sound other than during her fleeting chastisement of the three boys, during her police interrogation and, briefly, during her murder (though she is quickly returned to silence by her wounds).[51] According to Balázs, 'Sound differentiates visible things, silence brings them closer to each other and makes them less dissimilar' (1970: 206). Like her visible dishevelment, Maciara's consistent silence as she traverses the village's outlying rural space troubles her distinction from the landscape — bringing them 'closer together' — with the effect that she no longer seems to stand apart from it. (This is the opposite effect to that of the motorway which not only stands out against the fields and valleys geometrically, but does so literally atop concrete pillars.) Vocal silence in *Don't Torture a Duckling* becomes the acoustic bedrock of the rural South, as through the radio and the telephone the voice becomes the acoustic bedrock of the urban North.

Naturally, the combination of Maciara's silence, her feral appearance and her intense connection to the landscape also invites connotations of animality, the sense that her estrangement from audible vocality in part troubles her classification as human. Maciara's characterisation intersects that of Don Alberto's six-year-old deaf and dumb sister. Patrizia tries to speak to the girl when she finds her walking through the village, but Martelli stops her and explains that 'she can't understand you […] the girl is sub-normal, retarded.' In *Don't*

[50] In her cave-dwelling, Maciara perhaps also suggests the Palaeolithic cave settlements of the Sassi di Matera in the southern region of Basilicata, which puts greater distance between her character and notions of (built) civilisation.

[51] Maciara does speak in the police station, where she confesses to the boys' murders because she feels the spell she has cast via her dolls is the cause of their deaths. She soon becomes manic and collapses back into mute unconsciousness, however, frothing at the mouth like a rabid animal as if her body is fundamentally unable to support vocal utterance.

Torture a Duckling vocal silence may undergird the rural South, but to be estranged from vocal interaction is also to risk becoming somehow estranged from normative humanity, an animal or a 'retard'. Crucially, contemporary political statements made shortly before the film's production raise the stakes of this suggestion. In 1967, the prominent Italian economist (and soon-to-be Senator) Manlio Rossi-Doria argued that the exodus of southern labour from the countryside was a cause for celebration as it 'means that finally the men of the South will find a way of living worthy of human beings, and not of the non-humans they were in the past' (quoted in Ginsborg 1990: 231–32). In employing this rhetoric, Rossi-Doria participates in a northern tradition of dehumanising the South which Antonio Gramsci had derided forty years earlier:

> It is well known what kind of ideology has been disseminated in myriad ways among the masses in the North, by the propagandists of the bourgeoisie: the South is the ball and chain which prevents the social development of Italy from progressing more rapidly; the Southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or total barbarians, by natural destiny […] Southerners are lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric. (2000 [1926]: 173)

From the heart of the Italian nation-state Rossi-Doria thus perpetuates a discourse ongoing since 'the end of the nineteenth century, [by which] Southern Italians were represented in Italy as racial or cultural others whose difference from northerners were intrinsic and for all time' (Schneider 1998a: 12). By reiterating this discourse with the suggestion that the natural state of the rurally dwelling southern Italian is one of literal inhumanity, Rossi-Doria's comment urgently intersects *Don't Torture a Duckling*'s equation of silence with both the rural South and the inhuman. The voice can again be heard overreaching a border between textual form and contextual discourse, even as it haunts a geographical one within the film. If Italy's wider political-economic paradigm might locate the rural southern Italian on the border of the human, then Fulci's film employs the voice as the cartographic tool which diegetically articulates that border, exemplified most categorically by those silent characters who — unable to use the voice to negotiate a border crossing — seem to slip irredeemably across it. A paranoid urgency may be heard running through the vocality which accompanies the film's northern characters,

an urgency to constantly (re)state a northern humanity from within the potentially inhuman spaces of the South.[52] (In a moment of frustration Patrizia tells, or perhaps reassures, fellow Milanese Martelli that he is 'the only civilised human being in this lousy place'.) To point again to Balázs, if 'Sound differentiates visible things' then the production of vocal sound by the urban North in *Don't Torture a Duckling* is a constant act of differentiation, maintained to keep at arm's length the southern, rural or inhuman other. That is, the voice concretely imbricates film form and social context by weaving powerful discourses at work in the film's contextual milieu into its governing acoustic-aesthetic paradigm.

According to Gabriella Gribaudi, the South has long been discussed within hegemonic Italian discourse in terms of the northern qualities it has lacked, such as individualism, solidarity, and an entrepreneurial class (1997: 85). *Don't Torture a Duckling* suggests as much when the chief of police (who is southern but is rendered quasi-northern thanks to his external, institutional authority and the investigative activity that narratively aligns him with Martelli and Patrizia [see Howarth 2015: 147]) responds to the villagers' vigilante attack on Maciara by criticising their backwardness, explaining that 'we can build highways but we're a long way from modernising people like this'. In Fulci's film, adherence to the rural South's (supposed) cultural codes and the adoption of vocal silence have the same effect: they signal the lack of the urban North's modern humanity. To return to the idea of aural cartography, the distinction between voice and vocal silence is a cartographic tool with which the film both articulates the socio-geographic contour segregating the North and the South, and reveals the division of the human and inhuman that haunts that border. In *Don't Torture a Duckling* vocal silence never transcends the status of a lacuna indexing the absence of voice, as the rural South which it designates stands as a lacuna indexing the absence of the modern, humanistic values that define the North. In other words, the film formally forecloses the possibility of silence acquiring a positive, autonomous presence while thematically foreclosing the possibility of the South acquiring a cultural identity decoupled from critical comparison with the North.

Unsurprisingly, *Don't Torture a Duckling* has often been understood as a 'critical message aimed at a bigoted and provincial society' (Chianese and Lupi 2013: 105), an interpretation that led to Fulci himself being attacked as a bigot for his portrayal of the South (Thrower 2017: 115). If the polarities outlined above — North/South, urban/rural,

[52] More broadly, the association of southern Italy with barbarism or savagery goes back to the Risorgimento (see Gribaudi 1997).

human/inhuman, voice/vocal silence — are to be fully understood however (both individually and in combination), they must be read not just in terms of the film's diegetic themes, but in terms of its industrial construction. To perform such a reading is to attend to facets of the film that are at once banal but, for that reason, betray quite clearly the socio-cultural forces underpinning the text. In the first instance, it must be stated that *Don't Torture a Duckling* is not a *southern film* but a film *about the South*. Tellingly, Fulci had originally wanted to set the film amongst a group of southern migrant workers in Fiat's Turin factory, where he claimed to have seen voodoo ceremonies being carried out in the courtyards (Palmerini and Mistretta 1996: 59). The film, that is, was initially conceived within an overtly northern frame, its narrative rooted in the insertion of supposed southern superstition into a wider urban/northern industrial modernity. Despite Fulci's producers' insistence that the film be relocated to the South (ibid), the text's narrative structure retains a fundamentally northern focalisation. The two protagonists, whose actions and acquisition of clues and information structure the film's narration, are both Milanese, and the police force with which they are allied stand as '"enlightened" city officials' in contrast to 'the superstitious villagers' (Howarth 2015: 147). (The fact that Martelli and Patrizia are both from Milan and that Fiat is so intimately linked to Turin means that the northern and the urban become over-simplistically synonymous in the film, as do the southern and the rural.) The result is that a northern narrative point of view serves as the foundation for the film's representation of the South. In the end *Don't Torture a Duckling* may have been set in Accendura rather than Turin, but it still perceives both the society and the geography of the South with northern eyes and ears.

Notwithstanding his original plans, having made the film Fulci commented that 'the story could not have taken place anywhere but in Italy, in the South of Italy, in a village far from the big cities and lines of communication, where ancient customs, beliefs and superstitions still live' (quoted in Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 171). Fulci's comment brings the film's northern perspective into sharper focus. Fulci does not conceive the South as a complex and dynamic society, rather he frames it in terms of its exoticism and, in so doing, follows longstanding cultural precedent. In George Saunders's words, 'Most northerners (including northern Italians) have felt little compunction about declaring the unchanging otherness of southern Italy in particular. In discourse at least, it is an alien land, and the alien attracts and repels simultaneously' (1998: 178). It is helpful to note Galt's observation that representations of landscape in cinema invite interpretations that borrow from feminist theory (2006: 58). *Don't Torture a Duckling* surveys both the landscape of the rural South and the

archaic black-magic customs which (according to the film's narrative perspective) that landscape connotes with a gaze akin to the male gaze described by Laura Mulvey's work on visual pleasure and gender in cinema. Mulvey argues, in part, that 'In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*' (1975: 11. Original emphasis). In this way, 'The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly' (ibid). As mentioned above, the female body and the rural landscape have a long history of mutual connotation, and the application of Mulvey's theory to *Don't Torture a Duckling*'s portrayal of the South (which in this instance includes not just its landscape but the communities it contains) is clear. Rather than catering to a specifically male gaze,[53] the film presents an image of the South styled according to a primarily northern cultural gaze, one predisposed to imagine the South according to a set of stereotypes that go back to the Risorgimento.

By focusing a northern gaze on the rural spaces of the South, the film glances off the tradition of the picturesque. In addition to her work on landscape in European cinema, Galt has written on the presence of the picturesque in Antonioni's *L'avventura* (1960) and uses the history of the concept to uncover the economic, geographic and class tensions that underlie the film. Galt's broad premise is that, as well as signifying a compositional predilection for rusticity and bounded framing, the picturesque engenders a certain model of 'looking relations' in that it encodes 'the power dynamics of looking at and being in a landscape, underwritten by questions of which Europeans get to look/own and which are framed as exotic displays' (2011: 139). The exoticised framing of Accendura, its environs and its inhabitants by Fulci's film betrays the embedded privilege the film holds, as a northern representation, to frame the South on its own terms.[54] That is, the film betrays a northern gaze that evidences the geographically determined power imbalance that is manifest in Italian society far more broadly. John Dickie notes that northern Italian culture has long looked upon the South of the country through a

[53] Though, given the *giallo*'s predominantly masculine audience (and Barbara Bouchet's early nude scene) that gaze can be considered to *also* be male.

[54] Fulci was from Rome, and Medusa Distribuzione (the film's producers) were also based there. Rome is ambivalently placed between the North and the South of Italy and belongs fully to neither. However, Rome is north of the historic Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the borders of which are still taken to define the Italian South. The city's rapid, urban modernisation following the war further aligned it with the North from the 1950s onwards. Consequently, Fulci's film is considered a northern cultural product for the purposes of this analysis (the fact that its narrative revolves around two Milanese characters further encourages this reading. See below).

picturesque frame that 'aestheticizes and patronizingly celebrates the South's anomalous position between Italy and the Orient, between the world of civilized progress and the spheres of either rusticity or barbarism', a frame that goes back at least as far as the nineteenth-century magazine *L'Illustrazione Italiana* (1997: 135).[55] Transposing the picturesque onto the stylistic conventions of the *giallo*, *Don't Torture a Duckling* constructs a sort of nightmare-picturesque representational frame and in this sense the film also displays an affinity with the *mondo*-style documentary, a related *filone* that was also popular in the 1970s (and through this gesture, the *giallo*'s investment in intertextuality and hybridisation discussed above in Chapter 1 can be read as continuing apace). These documentaries specialised in showing unconnected assortments of exotic scenes (often violent or sexual in nature) filmed in various parts of the world. Although they operated under the guise of a supposedly ethnographic and pedagogic mission, most *mondo* films, especially those made towards the end of the *filone*'s cycle, show more interest in providing sensational spectacles that played to their audiences' underlying, nervous fascination with 'primitive', alien societies than building bridges between the world's diverse cultures (see Shipka 2011: 59–70). The provision of this sort of *mondo*-style exotic titillation, constructed to pander to the assumed fantasies of the rural South held by the film's implied urban/northern gaze, would seem to be at the root of Maciara's voodoo scenes (see Saunders 1998 for a full discussion of how, and in what terms, the South has been associated with magic and superstition in Italian discourse). Maciara's ceremonies with her clay dolls and her child's skeleton at once provide the fetishistic intrigue demanded by the *giallo* and suggest the faux-ethnographic perspective of the *mondo*. In both cases, the sheen of cultural insight quickly evaporates to leave pure spectacle as the *filone* cinema model's commercial injunction to provide titillation forecloses the possibility of the film garnering any sort of sociological or political value. Contemporary commentators noted as much. A contemporary reviewer for the newspaper *La Stampa* wrote: 'at moments, director Lucio Fulci seems to have been tempted into bitter sociological analysis, but immediately falls back under the laws of commercial production' (quoted in Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 172). Another, writing in *l'Unità*, argued similarly: 'In this movie there is no trace of any socio-ideological analysis […] Instead one

[55] A significant waypoint in the modern representational history of rural Italy (not, in this instance, restricted to the South) was the Fascist *Strapaese* movement, an artistic tradition that concentrated on painted countryside scenes. *Strapaese* celebrated regional folk culture, 'promoted the traditions of small-town life and the peasantry […] and envisioned a rejuvenation of Italian society through continuity with the past' (Braun 1995: 91). The movement essentially invoked a politicised form of the picturesque which framed rural Italy (often idealistically) as a stark social, spatial and historical other to the country's urban, modernising and decadent centres (see Braun 1995 for more on *Strapaese*).

finds only irritatingly over-simplified attitudes […] *Don't Torture a Duckling* clearly and fully reveals its commercial intent rather than its social engagement' (quoted in Thrower 2017: 140).

Owing to the film's exotic sensationalism, watching *Don't Torture a Duckling* resembles the experience of taking a day trip during a package holiday, in which a tour company reinforces their customers' preconceptions of a given culture through the careful curation of already familiar (and often staged) experiences and spectacles. As Koven points out, any judgement that the audience may direct towards the cars that drive past Maciara's beaten body is compromised by the fact that 'We ourselves, in watching *Duckling* […] are also engaged in a kind of tourism' (2006: 54). As the motorway that snakes through Italy 're-creates every place as just yet another place to travel through, another place to see' (Rhodes 2007: 146), the mechanisms of *filone* filmmaking (re)create cultural 'practices' (genuine, caricatured or fabricated entirely) as consumable surface images. Another resonance with Pasolini's work presents itself here. Pasolini's 1964 film *The Gospel According to Matthew* (*Il vangelo secondo Matteo*) was filmed in several locations in the Italian South after the director found the Holy Land itself to be unusable due to its own rapid modernisation (his location scouting process is chronicled in the documentary *Location Hunting in Palestine* [*Sopralluoghi in Palestina per il vangelo secondo Matteo*, 1965]). The film is sparse in its use of vocal expression, which again aligns the southern landscape with silence but also suggests that the film is telling a story which does not require the voice to perform an expository or expressive role. The young Virgin Mary (Margherita Caruso) in Pasolini's film, for example, makes no sound of any description and this choice indicates that, as a cardinal figure in the Italian imaginary (in the most literal sense), she enters the text as a character with an a priori constitution, whose identity and nature are recognised by the audience upon first sight with no need for further development through vocalisation (or, for that matter, movement as she is also still in most of her scenes). Her presence is iconic both in the semiotic sense and in the sense that she appears as a meaning-laden static image in the mode of a religious icon. Pasolini's iconic Mary, in other words, is *pre*formed rather than *per*formed. Similarly, if profanely, Maciara is relegated simply to the type of a folkloric, rural witch (and again the fact that her name means exactly that underscores precisely this textual reduction) to tell the audience a tale they already know. As a (titillating) picturesque figure, she too is *pre*formed and further vocal exposition or expression is redundant. As a source of visual pleasure, both Maciara and the rural South that condenses within her function primarily as a spectacular, and occasionally sensational, backdrop for the film's northern-anchored narrative onto which northern cultural assumptions/fantasies are

projected. Indeed, a newspaper article penned by Martelli, which Patrizia picks up as they speak, carries a sub-headline reading (in Italian), 'The rampage of murder that has shaken a small village in the South shows no sign of going away'. The article figures a mise-en-abyme of the film's own narrative; it is a story produced by a northern cultural industry 'set' in a village which can be delineated simply by the phrase 'in the South'.

To return to Mulvey, both the film's landscape and the female body with which it is aligned exist *to-be-looked-at*. It is not enough simply to suggest that, as a personification of the rural landscape, Maciara figures a metaphor for the status of silent spectacle to which that landscape is reduced; although this may be a viable analysis in and of itself, her silence has a more structural cause. As Koven explains, the *giallo* exhibits a fundamental reliance on the set piece: scenes, usually of sex or murder, that are emphasised and dwelt upon to the extent that they gain the status of 'mini-movies', addressing and exciting audiences with an autonomous affective impact that is often only loosely integrated into films' wider narratives (2006: 123–27). Of course, the *mondo filone* goes further in staging entire films made up of nothing but isolated spectacles. Although less striking than scenes of graphic murder, in their gesture towards the *mondo,* Maciara's folkloric rituals are revealed as set pieces — spectacles that appeal autonomously to the audience with an emphasis that exceeds their narrative purpose by pandering to what Jane Schneider terms 'neo-Orientalist' views of the rural South (1998a). Since Maciara and her black magic are eventually revealed as red herrings, the asides to her occult practices are never reconciled to the narrative proper (and once revealed as a red herring she is disposed of through her murder). Instead, and as Troy Howarth suggests when he describes her as 'not a main part, *per se*' (2015: 148. Original emphasis), throughout the film Maciara is located on the narrative periphery, a position from which she can provide the text with macabre cutaways without substantively affecting the film's investigative thrust (her consideration as a suspect by the police and Martelli is brief and quickly dismissed).

The silence of the South in *Don't Torture a Duckling* and the film's links back to the picturesque converge ever more closely here; the rural South is silent because, looked at through the lens of a northern cultural tradition, it is — and can only be — a picture. *Don't Torture a Duckling*'s narrative thrust is provided by the intervention of two northern characters into the South, an intervention that frequently takes the form of extended (and often dry) dialogue scenes in which Martelli and Patrizia discuss the case with each other, the police and Don Alberto. Northern urbanites Martelli and Patrizia figure the film's locus of enunciation and this tendency is already evident in films made, in different generic contexts, before *Don't*

Torture a Duckling. As Galt points out in her analysis of *L'avventura*, the South is presented as sparse and primarily visual, while speech is reserved for the visiting Roman protagonists. Even Luschino Visconti's neorealist *The Earth Trembles* (*La terra trema,* 1948), which features much dialogue in the local dialect of the Sicilian village Aci Trezza in which the film is set, includes an explanatory Tuscan voice-over which serves to override the local voices and aestheticise them as a form of acoustic picturesque. Visconti's voice-over thus suggests that the northern voice is the voice with which the Italian film industry must always, eventually, speak to and of the rural South.

Maciara's silence, then, evidences the typically one-way conversation conducted between Italy's post-war film industry and the country's more peripheral regions. To approach the issue at its most practical level, she is silent for much of the film because her picturesque estrangement from the central, discourse-driven spine of its narrative means that she rarely engages with other characters. As a folkloric spectacle who functions to satisfy the expectations or fantasies of the cinematic tourist, Maciara has no substantial place in the conversations that propel the film's investigative drive. Bolkan herself has underlined how profound her character's narrative isolation was: 'The amazing thing is that I never met any other [principle] actors during the shooting of my scenes' (quoted in Howarth 2015: 150). Maciara's silence is the banal but revealing consequence of the fact that the film's indulgence in picturesque titillation casts her as a sort of human prop, akin in her silence and her instrumental function to the dolls she herself makes and the absurdly unrealistic model of Don Alberto that is rent, in slow motion, by the cliff face when the priest is finally thrown to his death. Maciara's vocal silence thus exceeds its thematic significance to betray her *to-be-looked-at* status as background image within the film's nightmarishly picturesque material blueprint. As a sort of pictorial window-dressing, her role is to form part of the landscape, part of the exotic setting for a northern narrative that intersects her without pausing to engage her, as the elevated motorway, supported by enormous concrete pillars, traverses at a distance the equally spectacular countryside she inhabits.

Don't Torture a Duckling's aesthetic manipulation of the human voice thus enfolds Italy's socio-economic modernisation into the film by at once anchoring its representational strategies and serving the commercial (and cultural) imperatives that subtended its production. While the technologically mediated vocality of the northern (urban) characters restates thematically the increasing cacophony created in and by the country's industrial centres, the film's insistence on the vocal silence of the rural South shores up those regions' cultural

estrangement from modernisation, their suspension in a picturesque Neverland. With a conservatism that is rarely present in the *giallo*'s more urban texts, Fulci's film thus uses the formal gravitas of vocal silence to maintain lines of continuity with hegemonic representations of rural southern space and society that go back to at least the nineteenth century. Again, the voice in the film is Janus-faced and borderless; it assumes a central role in the text's formal organisation while also mediating its engagement with the socio-cultural traditions upon which the film, as a product shaped by the imperatives of an urban cultural gaze, draws. From its ever-apparent interstice between text and context the voice interweaves the two. In *Don't Torture a Duckling* the voice is the aesthetic component by which the film not only registers the (longstanding) contextual discourses within which it was produced, but — as the hostile press reviews above suggest — gives them material form and thus perpetuates them.

Torso and Silence as Utterance

Sergio Martino's *Torso* was released a year after *Don't Torture a Duckling* in 1973 and opens with a soft-focus and soft-core sex scene between a man, two women and a porcelain doll. The film cuts to the University of Perugia where a group of female students are attending an art history lecture. That night a young couple are murdered as they make love in their car (another Fiat 500 parked under another rural motorway overpass). The murder is the first in a string that also claims Carol (Conchita Airoldi), one of the friends. To get away from the growing danger the remaining group of four (who are of mixed nationality) head to a rural villa on a mountainside overlooking the town of Tagliacozzo (unnamed in the film), which is owned by the family of Dani (Tina Aumont). Jane (Suzy Kendall) is late to arrive, having gone on a date with the group's art history lecturer Franz (John Richardson) and then suffered a car breakdown on the way to the villa. In the countryside, the women are subjected to leering attention from the local men and visited by a peeping Tom from the town, as well as Stefano (Roberto Bisacco), a spurned suitor of Dani's who has followed the group from Perugia. Unknown to the women, the murders continue as both the local peeping Tom and a street vendor back in Perugia (who has tried to blackmail an unknown figure) are killed. In the meantime, Jane sprains her ankle in a fall at the villa and, having washed down the sedatives prescribed to her by the local doctor (Luc Merenda) with champagne, passes out. Waking up, she finds that the killer has broken into the house, killed all three of her friends (as well as Stefano) and, unaware that she is upstairs, is now dismembering the bodies. The final third of the film is taken up with a speechless cat-and-mouse sequence in which the crippled Jane alternates between trying to

get out of the villa and trying to alert the town below to her predicament without giving away her presence. Eventually, the killer is revealed to be Franz, who has been inspired to kill women by a traumatic childhood memory of his brother falling to his death while trying to retrieve a female friend's doll. Franz eventually finds Jane, but she is saved by the return of the doctor.

Torso can be classified alongside *Don't Torture a Duckling* as a 'rural *giallo*'. It also, though more fleetingly, uses images of the elevated rural motorway and the Fiat 500 to gesture towards contemporary changes in the Italian social and geographical landscape, but Martino's film avoids any overt engagement with Italy's domestic division of North from South. Rather, according to Baschiera and Di Chiara, the film opens by expressing a 'duality of Italianness/otherness which, for an Italian audience, is easily recognizable in the location of Perugia, which with its popular university for foreigners, always merged its provinciality with a global horizon' (2010: 116). That is, where *Don't Torture a Duckling* constructs North and South as, essentially, separate countries, *Torso* homogenises (or, perhaps, unifies) Italy in blunt opposition to the non-Italian.[56] In so doing it also homogenises the foreigners. Dani is presumably Italian given that her family own the villa, but Jane is American (and like Patrizia in Fulci's film drives a car with a number plate — from Chicago — that flags her status as an outsider). Ursula (Carla Brait) and Katia (Angela Covello), the other two women in the group of four, have indeterminate national identities. (Ursula is black and speaks English with a non-English accent in that version of the film, acting as a textual locus of otherness more fundamental than nationality. Indeed, she is also homosexual.) The result is that regional fault lines within Italy are eclipsed by the film's vague gesture towards the country's border with the rest of the world. This is not to say that *Torso* lacks regional specificity; the settings chosen for the film display a marked attentiveness towards the nuances of location. The locations employed by Martino's film, however, are characterised not by their oppositional polarity to other places, as undergirds the cartographic logic of *Don't Torture a Duckling*, but by liminality. For instance, Perugia is in Umbria in Italy's central belt. Sometimes referred to as the 'Third Italy', this is a segment of the country that is neither fully northern nor fully southern and, during the boom, developed a specific regional economy 'characterized by small firms employing less than fifty people — and often less than twenty. These firms flourished in traditional sectors like clothing, shoe-making, furniture production' (Ginsborg 1990: 234). So as well as being geographically liminal, in the post-boom years central Italy became

[56] Martino himself has said that he chose Perugia for the film's opening as its connotations of internationalism would make the commercially mandated use of foreign actresses more credible (2017: 112).

economically liminal, occupying an artisanal middle ground between the industrial North and the agricultural South. Even the very topography of central Italy garnered a degree of liminality as the categories of urban and rural dissolved into each other. Ginsborg notes: 'The terms "diffused industrialization" (*industrializzazione diffusa*) and the "urbanized countryside" (*la campagna urbanizzata*) became widely employed to describe this model of economic growth' (ibid). Thus, the governing binaries that underpin *Don't Torture a Duckling*'s textual organisation become largely untenable in an Umbrian context.

While Tagliacozzo, the diegetically unnamed location of the villa in which the second half of *Torso* is set, is in the region of Abruzzo and thus in the South, it occupies the position of a border town and further upholds the film's interest in geographical liminality. Being on the northern edge of Abruzzo, it is within touching distance of the line between the South and the North and is roughly level with Rome, a city which likewise, if more significantly, stands 'as an essentially liminal space within the nation, in the way that it is perched strategically between North and South' (Restivo 2002: 46). In any case, the fact that the town is never specifically located in the film allows issues of North and South to recede, to be replaced by a more fluid and flexible investigation of the urban and the rural generally. Here, too, the town is liminal. Its relatively small size, emphasised by the all-encompassing and almost bird's-eye shots that gaze down on it from the villa, marks it as 'not-urban', as does the tractor which is compositionally foregrounded as the women collect in the town's piazza, and then carries them up to the villa. The density of its streets and the number of both cars and businesses that occupy the piazza nonetheless confer on Tagliacozzo significantly more urbanism than accrues to the village of Accendura. As the town occupies a borderland between North and South, so it occupies a borderland between urban and rural. The villa itself, sitting on a verdant and isolated hillside above the town, is more clearly ruralised but its proximity to the town is extensively belaboured by the film. This proximity manifests visually, as several extreme long-shots begin on the villa before executing a combined zooming and panning motion to end on the town, and vice-versa. The women frequently look down on the town from their bedroom windows, Jane is told that she will need to walk up the hill from the town to the villa after her car breaks down, and the doctor comments on the state of the hillside road when he arrives to treat her ankle. The villa is demarcated in terms of a short but treacherous journey from the town, and so its paradoxical proximity to/separation from Tagliacozzo is underlined. If the town is a border between urban and rural then the villa is undoubtedly on the rural side of the divide, but *only just*. Where *Don't Torture a Duckling* negatively defines the rural South

as a lacuna-space that diametrically lacks the humanism and development of the urban North, the liminal settings of *Torso* betray an interest in *degrees* of socio-geographic difference, and the film performs a cartographic operation that positions the urban and the rural on a spectrum.

As Tagliacozzo hovers between the urban and the rural, it similarly marks an aural space that hovers between the presence and the absence of audible voice. As the women collect around their tractor transport, Ursula sits on top of its wheel-arch, and editor Eugenio Alabiso intercuts close-ups of her legs with close-ups of the male crowd that has gathered to stare at her. Though the men, wrought with barely contained lust, appear silent — mouths unmoving — snippets of lecherous (and vaguely racist) comments constitute the scene's diegetic soundscape. The men's voices are at once absent yet present, and as the town presents a physical intersection of the urban and the rural (and the North and the South), so it presents an aural intersection of the voice and silence. It is a space in which the voice may be present and absent in the same breath. Indeed, the film suggests that this parallel is no coincidence. As in *Don't Torture a Duckling*, the urban is cast as a space of vocality in *Torso*: the audience enters Perugia by way of Franz's art history lecture on hagiographic painting, a performance of vocality that underpins the urban values of education and enlightenment that the university suggests. The police also address the university's students about the murders from within the lecture hall, which suggests a similar imbrication of urban order and authoritative voice. Furthermore, a minor red herring is introduced when Jane overhears Dani's uncle breaking off an affair with Carol shortly before her murder; in Perugia, even 'unofficial' social structures are rooted in vocal acts and accidents. On the other hand, and again like *Don't Torture a Duckling*, the rural space of the villa and its environs is a space of vocal silence. The women's noiseless sunbathing suggests that the languorous lifestyle that obtains within this purely recreational space makes vocal silence something of an acoustic default. It is also within the villa that Ursula and Katia are shown to be conducting a lesbian relationship, and doing so in total silence. When framed together they communicate with lingering looks and light touches, but say nothing (even a sex scene of the two in bed features no diegetic sound). At one point, Dani remarks upon their vocal reticence, joking 'you two make wonderful company' as the couple gaze into each other's eyes. It seems that the intrinsic silence of the rural villa is the requisite soundscape within which their silent relationship may burgeon.[57] More tangibly, the

[57] Here, the film (surely inadvertently) glances off contemporary discourses of *lesbofeminismo*, an Italian lesbian-feminist movement that argued for female sexuality to be redefined without recourse to male sexuality as a default. Such arguments also pointed to silence as a potential tool of feminist resistance to male hegemony as expressed through language (see Rafaella 1991 [1983]). As lesbianism resists models of

fact that the peeping Tom who approaches the house is a mute (he is shown briefly in the piazza as the women leave, being taunted as such by other men: 'If you could only speak to them, how they'd love it') furthers the link between rural space and vocal silence. In fact, the rural space around the villa seems to have an almost asphyxiating power to silence the voice. When the delivery boy arrives to discover the sunbathing women, he pants, gulps and gasps as if robbed of his voice; even once he enters the house (moments after Jane sprains her ankle) he stands dumbstruck in the corner of the frame until the women tell him to get a doctor. At other points the killer and Stefano also both gaze silently upon the house from the surrounding bushes, as if the space itself unilaterally stills the voice. The silence that variously and consistently accrues to the rural villa reaches its zenith, of course, during *Torso*'s final thirty-minute suspense sequence (see below). In short, at the level of *Torso*'s acoustic form, the villa makes manifest philosopher Alain Corbin's claim that 'There are houses that breathe silence, where it seems to permeate the walls' (2018: 5) but anchors the trope of the silent house firmly within the rural. Of course, the villa and its lush grounds are the site where three of the women, the peeping Tom, Stefano and Franz are all killed and consigned to silence in its most profound and irrevocable form.

Although *Torso* posits the same sort of overarching urban-vocal/rural-silent cartographic paradigm as *Don't Torture a Duckling,* its careful delineation of a spectrum running from the vocality of urban Perugia to the silence of the rural villa via the spatial and vocal liminality of Tagliacozzo avoids establishing a polarity between the audible and silenced voice. As Bernard Dauenhauer puts it, 'silence is neither muteness nor mere absence of audible sound [it] is at least equiprimordial with utterance' (1980: 4–5). According to Dauenhauer, silence is of a piece with voice and one implies the other. The form of *Torso*'s sound design suggests likewise in its extensive emphasis on breath. For instance, the delivery boy pants and gasps as he gawks at the sunbathing women; his inarticulate sounds correspond to the strangled wheezing of the peeping Tom as he runs from the killer and Jane's stifled hyperventilation as she surveys the scene of her friends' murders as well as her muffled gasps as she hobbles around the villa. In François Jost's words, 'in cinema, silence does not consist of the absence of all sound. Rather, it results from an action of one of the sound sources over others' (2001: 49). Breath is the sound source that, in *Torso*, is frequently called upon to bring the silence of the voice proper into relief. Breath is also a liminal phenomenon in itself, hovering on the

sexuality determined by male desire, perhaps *in some form* female silence could offer a resistance to cinematic soundscapes determined by and in relation to male voices.

border of the vocal and the purely respiratory, and as such it points to the voice which is *just absent* in moments of vocal silence as the villa's views of Tagliacozzo point to the border with the urban which is *just out of reach*.[58] Breath points to the absent presence of audible vocality in moments of vocal silence, the voice's proximity to silence and its implication in silence.[59] In this way, *Torso*'s formal conception of silence affords access to a more complex ontological approach, one that conceives vocal silence not as an absence of voice so much as a *manifestation* of voice; a mode of utterance that eschews audibility yet is intimately interwoven with, implicated in, and proximate to the audible.

At this juncture it is productive again to take a more wholly extra-diegetic perspective and consider the straightforwardly commercial basis for the *giallo*'s recourse to vocal silence, which is closely tied to the *filone*'s reliance on empty space as a driver of narrative tension. In the words of Baschiera and Di Chiara, *Torso* 'gives us all the spatial information and the coordinates that we need to be placed in that cinematic/physical space. We know exactly the location of the villa in relation to the village' (2010: 118). Indeed, Martino chose Tagliacozzo as the film's final location precisely because the villa was visible from the piazza (Martino 2017: 115). *Torso* articulates its key spatial coordinates by insistently — almost fetishistically — delineating the volume of empty space that separates the villa from the town in the repeated zoom-pans between the two places. In so doing the film (presumably inadvertently) participates in an Italian artistic tradition going back to the fifteenth century: Andrea Mantegna's fresco *Camera degli sposi* (1465–74), for example, features in its background a castle perched on a clifftop above a town. Art historian Martin Warnke argues that, in such representations, 'castles have hardly any contact with the earth: only remote, torturous paths lead up the mountainsides' and that this tendency constitutes a compositional

[58] For an in-depth study of breath in cinema, which also lays emphasis on the breath's signification of liminality (particularly in relation to the inside/outside of the body), see Quinlivan 2012. See also Gibson 2013.

[59] The case of the mute peeping Tom is particularly complex. As a mute, the young man may seem to stand as a rejection of the permeable border and mutual implication of the audible and silent voice. His breath would thus represent an iron curtain between the two, rather than the site of their mutual implication. However, as Chion argues, 'mutism is a corollary and condition of speech' (1999: 98). Defined by his vocal silence, the mute insists on the border between the audible and inaudible, 'he refers by inference to his counterpart, the bodiless voice of the acousmêtre' (ibid: 100). In other words, the mute's inability to transition from inaudible to audible voice does not disprove the permeability of that border any more than blindness disproves the difference between light and dark. Rather, his inability to cross that border — his becoming stuck at the point of audible breath — only emphasises the permeability that is otherwise taken for granted.

trait which makes empty space a marker of social separation (1994: 42). The women's villa, repeatedly shot from the town below, similarly seems to occupy the very edge of the Earth, surrounded by clear air. The long zooms accentuate the empty space in which the villa seems to float and further synonymise empty space and rural space.

The commercial basis of the film's insistence on the empty space surrounding the villa is clear; in the *giallo*, as in horror cinema more broadly, empty space is generative of suspense. In a 1997 interview, Martino explains as much in relation to the formulaic nature of *filone* film production:

> In genre films the stories are often very mechanical and the characters are moved not by true reactions to the situation, but by the necessities of moving the story along. For example — why, in giallo films, do so many beautiful and vulnerable girls sleep alone in sinister, isolated castles instead of comfortable and secure hotels in the towns nearby? Because otherwise, it would not be possible to generate any suspense. (Martino 2016)

In terms that apply directly to *Torso*'s spatial design Martino locates suspense — the beating heart of the *giallo* narrative — in the empty rural space that might surround an 'isolated' building but which is filled up in the crowded town nearby. Of course, the mechanism by which empty space drives cinematic suspense is simple enough: empty space is suspenseful because at any moment it could stop being empty. In Karl Schoonover's words, the void in horror cinema is 'a genre-specific device for generating an anticipation of horror to come […] vacancy is established in relation to the contents of the frame, in tension with those parameters' (2018: 346). Schoonover intimates that the void figures a spatialisation of narrative potential. It is the space into which, from one moment to the next, may emerge an unknown (and invariably threatening) addition to the contents of the frame, a possibility that challenges the reassuring integrity of the frame itself. *Torso* is explicit in its representation of the empty space that surrounds the rural villa as a latent and threatening potentiality. After gazing out of the living room window, Ursula comments on the security bars that criss-cross the glass: 'With all the windows barred, it seems like a prison'. Dani replies, 'There's no one here most of the year. It was a paradise for thieves so we put up the bars to discourage them.' The empty space around the villa, emphasised so pointedly and repetitively by cinematographer Giancarlo Ferrando's

camera, is a space of thieves, bandits and threats to both property and life. Alexia Kannas suggests as much when she writes that 'the Italian countryside in the *giallo* is a malignant place, with a culture weary of intruders' (2013). Later, Dani looks out into the scrubland beyond the river as the group relax, and seems to see Stefano lurking behind a tree; a momentary realisation of the threat which seems always already to saturate the rural.

The inherent threat of empty space in the *giallo* may go some way to informing the *filone*'s trope of filming murders from the killer's point of view (a trope indulged repeatedly in both *Torso* and *Don't Torture a Duckling*). As well as conveniently veiling the killer's identity, the point-of-view shot has the additional quality of permanently locating the killer in the diaphanous space beyond the frame. Like the acousmatic voice with which they occasionally speak, the killer-behind-the-lens is delocalised, both everywhere and nowhere. The space beyond the visible limits of the frame here stands as the empty space par excellence since, for cinema, the empty equates to the unseen. Empty space is such because it is empty of visual information; it is that which is not framed by the image at all, or that which within the image amounts only to the void, the transparent airspace between visible objects and surfaces. A continuum runs, then, between the space off screen and the onscreen void, and it is this axis that the killer haunts. The description of suspense articulated by Alfred Hitchcock might elucidate the rationale behind why the *giallo* so often starts with murders that confirm a link between murder and empty space. Hitchcock repeatedly used the example of a hidden bomb when explaining the mechanics of suspense. In his 1966 interview with François Truffaut he points out that a hidden bomb exploding at the end of a scene leaves the audience with a short-lived sense of shock, whereas if the audience are shown the ticking bomb at the beginning of the scene then its entire duration is suffused with wrenching tension (Truffaut 1967: 52). The *giallo*'s point-of-view murders, and especially those that appear early in a film, function like the revelation of the ticking bomb. Once the link between the killer and empty space is forged, all such empty space is suffused by suspenseful tension, the promise that violence will issue from it sooner or later. The *giallo*'s empty spaces are replete with the killer's absent presence. Saturated with the tension of their narrative potential, the *giallo*'s voids are *substantial* components of form.

To a great degree *Torso* reworks, through the prism of the *giallo*, much of the narrative interest of DW Griffith's early Biograph short *The Lonely Villa* (1909). As John David Rhodes argues, Griffith's film, which like Martino's revolves around the invasion of an isolated villa, 'is a film about distances and the modern technologies that should solve the

problems of distance, about social isolation, about anxiety over middle-class ownership' (2017: 37). Rhodes explains that the villa's initial distance from the company (and, presumably, assistance) of a wider community in Griffith's film is the result of turn-of-the-century suburban expansion in the United States which had dispersed domestic space away from urban centres. He goes on to argue that the film initially posits technologies such as the telephone and the automobile (as well as the gun and cinema itself) as correctives for this isolation (ibid: 38). The failure of such technologies in both *The Lonely Villa* and *Torso* — Jane and the villa-owning father figure both suffer car breakdowns, and both the buildings' phone lines are cut by the intruders — shows up the villas' true isolation and the vulnerability that such isolation connotes. In *The Lonely Villa*, such a move makes a narrative feature of spaces that are not as under-control as the film's protagonists may have initially believed, and both film camera and criminals invade the villa from without to cultivate a rising tide of suspense as the trapped family members are pursued from room to room. Rhodes argues that '*The Lonely Villa* seeks to appropriate the space of the house as the medium of suspenseful narration' (ibid: 43). In both *The Lonely Villa* and *Torso*, space is the medium of suspenseful narration because, in the present, it is contaminated by an imminent future. The characters' attempts to manage that contamination (by better controlling space through barricades and calls for help) drive the film forward. Thus, by implying its own imminent violation empty space in the suspense film not only becomes a palpable element of film form, but becomes the formal component around which the film's narrative thrust is organised.

In this way, the parallels between *Torso*'s conception of silence and its conception of (rural) empty space become clear. Martino has repeatedly described *Torso*'s cat-and-mouse finale as 'my absolute favourite [scene]. I think I was very successful in generating a lot of suspense there' (2016; see also Lachetti 2017: 242–43; D'Onofrio 2015: 42). According to Baschiera and Di Chiara, 'Martino renounced the possibility of shooting the usual choreographed killings in order to create a surplus of narrative tension, instead of merely visual tension' (2010: 116). In his autobiography Martino calls the scene the film's 'practically mute final section' and recalls that the film's original audience members would shout 'don't go through that door!' (2017: 115–16). The film's ongoing considerations of both vocal silence and empty space coalesce: silence is the aural equivalent of empty physical space, or the space beyond the door.[60] As Chion argues, 'silence is never a neutral emptiness. It is the negative of

[60] To be completely clear, Jane does (m)utter a handful of words under her breath at two points during the film's finale, and muffles a slight yelp when she falls (again) on the stairs. Such isolated moments of audible

sound we've heard beforehand or imagined' (1994: 57). As empty space in the *giallo* always already implies its own potential violation, vocal silence always already foreshadows its own violation by remembered or anticipated sounds. As the tension of the rural emptiness around the villa is rooted in the threat that bandits, thieves or murderers may appear within it unannounced, the tension wrought by Jane's silence is rooted in the threat that it may, at any moment, be obliterated by her cries or screams. In other words, vocal silence in the *giallo* insistently promises/threatens its own negation; it manifests an aurality around which anticipation may accumulate and which the audience may invest with sounds recalled or imagined.[61] Vocal silence, in the *giallo* and perhaps in sound cinema more widely, resonates with the pre-echo of the cry. Chion is, perhaps, too hasty in describing silence as the 'negative' of a remembered or anticipated sound. *Torso*'s use of vocal silence indicates that it is rather the temporal extension of that sound, its continuity beyond the period of its audibility. As a presence intrinsically contaminated by the future sounds towards which it stretches (and the sounds past from which it departs), vocal silence operates within the film's sound design to provoke a sort of narrative propulsion.[62] In moments of vocal silence, the film is pulled onward by the siren call of a scream yet to be heard.[63]

Susan Sontag's claim that 'silence has its identity as a stretch of time being perforated by sound' (2002: 11) suggests a more radical understanding of the relationship between the audibility and silence of the voice. Sontag suggests that vocal silence (the silence, after all, from which the human being comes during birth and to which they return, so frequently in the *giallo*, with death) is itself the *default* mode of voice, not just a presence but an omnipresence from which the voice absents itself only fleetingly in moments of utterance. Silence is as much a siren call pulling a film forward in moments of audible voice as the reverse. As Jane's vocal silence during the film's finale fills out with pregnant anticipation of the scream to come, that scream (which eventually materialises when she is discovered by Franz) elicits

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vocality, however, seem to serve only to ensure that the extent of her vocal silence throughout the scene is not taken for granted.

[61] Martino describes how at times during the 'mute scene' audiences themselves tend to hold their breath (2017: 116), as if this clearing of vocal space is so fundamental that the audience must participate in it.

[62] To analogise, (empty) space and vocal silence both write narrative cheques that the film promises to cash later.

[63] Vocal silence need not, literally, anticipate a scream. The broader point is that vocal silence may be thought as an anticipation of the audible. The idea that the scream, specifically, exerts a sort of narrative gravity is also expressed by Chion in his discussion of what he terms 'the screaming point' (1999: 75–79).

affect precisely through its own anticipation of the silence that will follow (the silence of Jane's death, the removal of the threat she faces, or simply a cut away to a new scene).

It is worth returning to the issue of rural space at this point. The rural is threatening in *Torso* not because it represents absolute otherness (as in *Don't Torture a Duckling*) but because it is a space that invokes liminality. As the rural space around the villa hovers on the edge of the urban and the emptiness of that space hovers on the edge of being filled with threatening bodies, the silence of that space hovers on the edge of its own annihilation by screams of fear or pain. If *Torso* organises its auditory form around a positive ontology of vocal silence as a mode of utterance coequal with other forms of utterance, then it is because such an ontology of vocal silence satisfies commercial exigencies. Like the film's recourse to liminal rural space, its recourse to vocal silence and the border between the audible and inaudible allows the film to generate propulsive suspense, which as Martino states above, is the primary purpose (or 'selling point') of the *giallo* film. Through its manipulation of vocal silence, the case of *Torso* renders audible how, three years after *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* and ten after *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, the *giallo* was less concerned with orientating itself to a wider cultural milieu than with satisfying the expectations that had accrued to it as a recognised *filone*. *Torso*'s complex imbrication of vocal silence and vocal audibility bind the text's form to the commercial imperatives that subtended its production, as well as performing a nuanced diegetic cartography of the contours of the urban and rural (and the Italian North and South). The film's exploration of vocal silence projects the voice onto another border however; the historical border between sound and silent cinema. Ultimately, the film brings to prominence a more profound question: What are the borders of the voice itself?

What Is a Voice?

With its tense, muted finale, *Torso* not only points forwards to the North American slasher film but backwards to cinema's silent history (indeed, in Italian silent cinema is known as *cinema muto*, 'mute cinema'). Italy's prolific production of early cinema often dwelt on images of the country's rural landscapes (see Bertellini 2017), and so *Torso*'s rural setting is a space that also invokes *giallo* cinema's distant ancestry. Though Martino's film retains an ambient soundscape around Jane's vocal silence, and so is not mute in the same sense as pre-1929 cinema, the withholding of the audible voice means that Suzy Kendall's performance recalls that of the silent film actor who was compelled to replace the expressivity of a voice that could never be

heard with an excess of gesture and facial expression.[64] In Pamela Wojcik's words, silent film performance 'adopted a slightly outmoded style of performance, geared toward pantomime and posing, to compensate for the lack of sound' (2006: 74).[65] Despite Martino's claim that 'Suzy Kendall is an excellent actress, and at that time she was very bankable, internationally' (2016), contemporary reviews commented disparagingly on the actress's gestural efforts. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, Linda Gross dismissed her as 'a competent actress reduced to a prolonged look of anguish' (1975: 72; see also G. Anderson 1973). Whether such opinions were rooted in the anachronistic style of such gesture-dependent performance or simply deficiencies in Kendall's execution of her role (or some combination of the two), it should be noted that her reliance on prolonged and exaggerated physical expression is not purely the result of her vocal silence. Although the protracted muteness of the scene is unusual in the *giallo* corpus, Kendall's recourse to stock gestures and looks of horror are not. Martino explains:

> In genre films the stories are often very mechanical […] The characters are motivated by the will of the writer and the director. In this respect it is difficult to communicate to the actors how they should be interpreting their roles, when it's mainly a matter of mechanics [there are] limitations on creative possibilities in these circumstances, where all you want from them is a routine 'fearful' expression, or whatever. (2016)

As the lack of sound in silent film 'developed the expression of emotional, non-rational experiences in a visual form-language' (Balázs 1970: 240), the lack of character development deriving from the *giallo*'s formulaic, *filone* production model had the same effect. Without the complex interiority of character psychology in which cast members might anchor their performances, *giallo* acting was typically a play of exterior surfaces and so, in their own ways, silent cinema and *giallo* cinema both evolved so that actors performed by choosing from a 'set menu' of 'routine' visual forms. In this way, the stylistic extremity of Jane/Kendall's mute

[64] Silent cinema, it should be noted, was rarely truly silent. See Abel and Altman eds. 2001.

[65] Martino himself is a great fan of Charlie Chaplin (Martino 2017: 100), an actor not only synonymous with the silent era but who insisted on performing in vocal silence well beyond the arrival of synchronised sound (Balázs 1970: 237). Though entirely speculative, it is tempting to read the influence of Chaplin in *Torso*'s finale.

duel with Franz does not alter the *giallo*'s performance paradigm to bring it closer to that of silent cinema, but brings into focus the permanent underlying affinities between the two in their mutual recourse to performative shorthand.

The centrality of gesture to performance in the *giallo* goes further. As outlined previously, *gialli* were made in part for external markets, and so their image tracks would ultimately be matched with a variety of voice tracks produced in other places at other times. As Tim Bergfelder writes, 'the success of these [popular European] genres, and indeed the primary motivation for their production, rested precisely on their cross-cultural appeal' (2000: 142). Dubbing was a critical tool in the cultivation of this appeal as it allowed foreign films to be localised to the relevant markets. Necessarily, the voice track as a material component of the *giallo* text is diaphanous and contingent. The images of the actors' bodies, in contrast, are constant and perhaps more 'solid': it is the image track that grounds the text's singularity in the face of its aural multiplicity.[66] This distinction perhaps adds a further, explanatory point of contact between the *giallo* and the silent film. Balázs writes that the coming of sound cinema was the coming of linguistic speech and thus, to a degree, of national specificity. It was a negation of the silent film's ability to appeal to audiences worldwide more or less equally. He summarises: 'The talking film seemed to threaten the international validity of the silent film […] rendering export much more difficult' (1970: 221). Balázs sketches a rubric according to which the expressive image of the body can fluidly cross national borders, while the speaking voice is contained within them. If in the *giallo* dubbing is the solution to this quandary, then the technique's viability is also dependent on the existence of an image track that itself can appeal in all markets. In this context, in the *giallo* as in the silent film, gesture and expression appeal as a form of visual Esperanto that relies on routine and, perhaps, exaggerated forms which are *generic* enough to maintain their expressive currency in multiple markets.

Martino insistently belabours the importance of dubbing to *filone* production in his autobiography and explains that popular films 'were never shot with direct sound and were performed by actors with a wide range of nationalities' (2017: 114). As discussed previously, actors' nationalities became irrelevant in the dubbed cinema and, according to Christopher Frayling, a 'picture can be shot virtually as a silent film, [because] there are no problems either with noise or with actors speaking different languages' (1998: 68–69). The addition of audible voice was handled away from the set by a different group of labourers. For example, in *Torso*

[66] Barring, it should be said, the cuts and censorship a film could be subjected to within a given market. Still, the images which remained, however reworked, were the same as those viewed in other markets.

the dubbing was directed by Lewis E. Ciannelli and interestingly, due to Jane's American nationality, Suzy Kendall (who is British) did not dub her own English performance (as she had done for Argento's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* three years earlier) but is voiced by an unnamed North American double. Kendall's performance throughout the whole of *Torso* is precisely that of a silent actor. Her voice is entirely inaudible in all iterations of the text, her only expressive labour is that of gesture and her 'prolonged look of anguish'. As in silent cinema, what actors did with their voices on set was often irrelevant for *filone* production; Frayling claims that they would sometimes just count (1998: 69),[67] whereas silent cinema's actors would often hold personal conversations when performing dialogue scenes (and were, according to contemporary anecdotes, sometimes caught out by deaf viewers who were able to lip-read [Raynauld 2001: 72]). Thanks to the division of performative labour underpinning the *giallo*'s business model, these films went further than merely resembling silent films at the level of their onscreen performances; as far as their directors and the actors labouring on set were concerned, they essentially *were* silent films.[68] The voice in the *giallo* is a complex composite of silence and audibility arranged across the different stages of a film's production; it straddles and questions the seemingly cardinal border between the eras of silent and sound cinema. As the use of vocal silence in *Don't Torture a Duckling* shores up elements of continuity in post-boom Italy's socio-cultural discourse, *Torso*'s extensive and generically mandated use of vocal silence establishes continuities in production and performance across the history of cinema. The absolute distinction of the silent and sound epochs here gives way to a historical continuum of technical and formal paradigms that is characterised by persistence as well as evolution.

The true inaudibility of Kendall's voice throughout her performance in *Torso* returns to the question of whether her voice is truly absent. The ontology of vocal silence proposed by the film's wider formal scheme suggests not. If vocal silence is a *form* of utterance rather than a *lack* of utterance, then Kendall's mute performance during the film's finale is one in which her voice is very much present (more simply, the utterance of her vocal silence would exist with or without direct sound recording). Mary Ann Doane suggests that silent cinema is replete

[67] One is tempted to detect a sly hint towards this habit during Giuseppe's interrogation in *Don't Torture a Duckling*. In an attempt to see whether a murdered boy's family recognise Giuseppe's voice from an earlier phone call they had received, a policeman passes him a phone and tells him to 'count to ten'.

[68] Luigi Cozzi even claims that in *filone* cinema 'if an actor didn't know how to play but had a good face, you could use him. […] Even if he didn't know how to act', because the dubbers would fill in the gaps in her/his performance (interview with author 2019).

with unheard but nonetheless present voices, as the 'voice re-emerges in gestures and the contortions of the face — it is spread over the body of the actor' (1980: 33). Doane's description of a re-emergence allows for a rethinking of Kendall's recourse to both vocal silence and gesture: it is not so much that the silent voice is eclipsed by gesture, as that the silent voice *becomes* gesture. In other words, the tortured expression and poses that Kendall adopts are the diffusion of the silent voice's presence across the body. Her expression is the scream that she cannot render audible. (When she sees the killer sawing up one of her friends, Jane mouths the silent gesture of a scream itself as she claws at her own face. It is as if, repressed audibly, the scream has burst out across her body.)

This diffusion can be best understood in light of how sound has been framed by both Christian Metz and Rick Altman. Metz argues that sound is 'of a basically adjectival nature […] At the discursive level, we are no longer naming, but already describing to a certain extent' (1980: 26). Altman would seem to agree when he argues that 'every sound seems to ask, unless it has previously been categorized and located: "Where did that sound come from?" That is, "What is the source of that sound?"' (1980: 74). Both theorists point to sound's fundamental anchorage in a locatable and spatially definite point of origin to which it automatically refers. In the case of the voice, of course, this source is typically the utterer's mouth, their 'moving lips' in Altman's parlance (see Introduction). Vocal silence is a form of utterance decoupled from the audible and thus, necessarily, from this gesture towards a precise point of origin. Vocal silence is the voice liberated from sound, and so liberated from the mouth. Thus liberated, it may diffuse and manifest elsewhere. It is the lack of 'adjectival' sound that allows the voice to re-emerge in the gestures of the body, as described by Doane in relation to silent cinema and illustrated by Kendall's performance in *Torso*. The film unsettles the presumed auditory borders of the voice itself; it presents the voice as an expressive force that exceeds the limits of the sonorous, and of the mouth.

The diffusion of the silent voice in *Torso* may even overstep the boundaries of the film's diegesis. Martino notes that both original audiences and audiences at recent retrospectives of his work often shout animatedly at the screen during the film's finale (Martino 2017: 116). Jane's silence is met or perhaps balanced by the raucousness of the audience (and Koven notes that *gialli* were often shown in such raucous cinematic contexts in 1970s Italy [2006: 27]). According to Jean Châteauvert and André Gaudreault, early film spectatorship was also a resolutely public affair and spectators were often invited to participate collectively in the spectacle of the moving image. This participation included applause, laughter, singing

and cries directed at the screen (2001: 183). Like perverse voice doubles themselves, the audience ventriloquise Jane, while at the same time the film's generation of suspense makes ventriloquist's dummies of the audience. Vocal silence is not only a phenomenon marking a continuation of the voice beyond the audible but a phenomenon through which the voice as an expressive force may diffuse across space and time seemingly without limits; it troubles the boundary of the screen and the seemingly irrefutable division between audience and performer. *Torso* performs a cartography of the voice itself by tracing its limits and revealing them to be fluid and mutable. In its silence the voice is truly without borders.

By spanning the audible and the inaudible, the cinematic voice acquires its value as a cartographic tool, since the fundamental border between the heard and the unheard offers itself as a cipher for thematic and contextual contours that are less directly representable. By frequently using the frontier between the unheard voice and the heard voice as an acoustic surrogate for the frontier between the rural and the urban — and the South and the North — the *giallo* posits the rural as a space of silence, but also a space in which silence may become utterance. In its silence the voice is not only present, but is at its *most* present precisely for its not being circumscribed by the limits of audibility. No longer bound by audibility, the voice in these films becomes a precarious foundation for the articulation of other borders. Italy's socio-geographic boundaries, the border between silent cinema and sound cinema, the border between audience and performer, and ultimately the ontological borders of the voice itself are all brought into question in the *giallo*'s silent, rural spaces. The small subset of rural *gialli* are thus texts in which, in the same breath, the voice reveals the *filone*'s imbrication in its commercial, socio-cultural and film-historical contexts, and in which the *filone*'s historicity renders audible the formal, historical and ontological complexity of cinema's silent voices.

Chapter 3

Late *Gialli*: Borders between Media, Borders between Nations

Having reached the peak of both its output and its popularity in the mid-1970s, the *giallo filone* entered a period of slow, entropic decline (see Bartolini 2017: 16–17). By the 1980s Italy's popular cinema industry was, in general, suffering 'a seemingly disordered proliferation of highly derivative, very low-budget films' (Baschiera 2016: 47), and *giallo* producers were forced to turn to hybridity — the mixing of the *giallo*'s formulaic elements and stylistic calling cards with those of other *filoni* — to breathe a degree of new life into the form and extend its exploitability for as long as possible (Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 14). The *giallo* did not die quietly, however, and the industry pushback against increasingly disinterested audience reactions often involved a marked increase in onscreen violence and gore (an escalation that was also evident in the births of the zombie and cannibal film *filoni*). 1982 saw the release of two of the most notable *gialli* from this 'late' period, which ended around 1987 (see Conclusion): Dario Argento's *Tenebrae* (*Tenebre*) marked his return to the *giallo* after a two-film detour into more gothic territory with *Suspiria* (1977) and *Inferno* (1980), and Lucio Fulci's *The New York Ripper* (*Lo squartatore di New York*), his first *giallo* since the mid-1970s. Both films are notable for their excess of violence and blood; the extremity of the latter's particularly sexualised violence has meant that today the original, uncut version of the film is still unavailable for sale in the United Kingdom.

Fulci was far more beholden than Argento to the exigencies of the film industry as he sought to eke out a career. Like Bava, Fulci was reluctant to frame himself as an artist and rather claimed the role of an artisan (Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 14); his enormous output alternated chaotically between comedies, rock-and-roll musicals, Westerns, *gialli*, zombie films, spy capers and science fiction. Thrower has accordingly suggested that his career be thought as more akin to that of a Hollywood jobber-for-hire than a European auteur (2017: 154).[69] As an artisan who made most of his films to stave off poverty, Fulci seems to have been acutely aware of the commercial pragmatics that orientated the *filone* production system, including its push towards genre hybridity in the 1980s.[70] *The New York Ripper* stands as a

[69] Fulci's turbulent professional and personal history has recently been chronicled in Simone Scafidi's semi-fictionalised documentary *Fulci for Fake* (2019).

[70] It is important to note, however, that such teleological understandings of the *giallo*'s evolution may not have been shared by audiences at the time who, due to the haphazard and inconsistent ways in which these

paragon of the increasing cross-pollination of the *giallo* and the neighbouring *poliziottesco* police-procedural/crime *filone*: the film features many of the *giallo*'s stylistic hallmarks like violent set-piece murders, an unknown killer and bold camera work, but its protagonist is a jaded police detective working within a broadly legal framework, rather than an amateur and/or outsider.[71] To a great degree, *Tenebrae* avoids such hybridity and sticks close to Argento's tested formula consisting of an urban murder mystery about a foreigner in Italy. In contrast to Fulci's financial pragmatism, *Tenebrae* lays bare Argento's continued ability to follow an auteurist path in his work, an ability cemented by the success of his films in the 1970s. In a conversation about *Tenebrae* with Alan Jones, Argento asks, 'Why shouldn't I use the same ideas all the time? […] I am the same person writing all the stories — besides I like them […] I have my own style and I don't want to change it. Why should I?' (quoted in Jones 2016: 120). In contrast to Fulci's economically guided filmography, *Tenebrae* indicates that Argento's work in the 1980s continued to be led by the sort of personal idiosyncrasies that more often characterise the arthouse.

Notwithstanding the differences in their industrial preconditions, both films are rare in transplanting the *giallo* to the United States, specifically, and importantly, New York City. Though *Tenebrae* only flirts with the location for a single, early scene of around two minutes, the film's treatment of New York offers a key window onto the historicity of the text. Fulci's film, of course, presupposes the relevance of the city more overtly: *The New York Ripper*'s opening shot across the East River is taken up by the Manhattan skyline in a stark indication of the central importance that the city's urban space will assume as the film unfolds. Claudio Bartolini describes the city as the film's 'main character' (2017: 271) and the fact that Fulci's team filmed guerrilla-style without permits or permission points to the film's raw engagement with profilmic space (Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 305, 307). The New York City invoked by both films is a city at a poignant and powerful historical juncture; a moment in which neoliberalism was rising to prominence as the West's dominant socio-economic paradigm, accompanied by the emergence of postmodernity.

The voice, again, profoundly implicates both films in their socio-cultural context. In each, though in very different ways, the voice evidences the *giallo*'s increasing entanglement with other forms of media and, consequently, the increasing neoliberal globalisation of the

films were distributed around Italy, may have encountered *gialli* in an order out of step with the order in which the films themselves were produced and released (Kannas 2017: 183).

[71] The prevalence of *giallo* components over *poliziottesco* elements in the film means that most critics consider it, foremost, a *giallo*.

Italian socio-cultural and media landscapes in the early 1980s. *Tenebrae* develops this interest by gesturing to the aesthetic paradigms of commercial television, which developed with explosive pace in Italy in the early 1980s. The film concerns an American writer on a promotional tour of Rome, and presents the television interview not just as a narrative fulcrum but as an aesthetic model which goes on to pervade the image-sound — or, camera-voice — relationship throughout the entire film. Argento, however, uses the film's violent set pieces to invoke a different image-sound relationship, and in so doing he not only explores television's aesthetic specificity but insists upon the continued distinction between the cinematic and the televisual. The influence of other media is altogether more insidious in *The New York Ripper,* which assimilates recognisable voices from across the international media landscape as a way of securing itself a profitable place within that landscape. By always already referring to voices familiar from other films, cartoons and television programmes, the voices in *The New York Ripper* are best understood as aural forms of the simulacrum; theorised by philosopher Jean Baudrillard (fittingly in the exact year that this film was produced) as the copy-without-original that characterises postmodern cultural production — the signifier that refers to other signifiers rather than to a signified 'real' (1994 [1981]). The repeated invocation of both the voice of Donald Duck and the stereotyped accents found in American crime dramas suggests that the vocal simulacrum undergirds the film's entire material form. The voice in *The New York Ripper* audibly evidences and participates in a historical moment in which the simulacrum had grown to dominate media production, a moment that was global yet particularly palpable in Italy. The prevalence of the vocal simulacrum here disrupts classical models of identification between the viewer-auditor and the voices that populate the film's soundtrack to render such identification schizophrenic, and in this regard the film *contributes* to the proliferation of a postmodern condition. Furthermore, the film's materiality emphasises the dubbed voice as an exemplary simulacrum and one that, in this film, demonstrates the increasing difficulty with which national spaces may be distinguished from one another in the postmodern epoch. Beneath the vocal simulacrum, however, lies the body as the original referent from which the voice has been severed and through which the film's 'Italianness' may yet emerge.

New York, Neo-York

Both films open by laying heavy emphasis on New York City's urban space and, notwithstanding how quickly *Tenebrae* dispenses with the city, in both cases New York provides a poignant contextual frame against which the films' formal and material operations

can be read. *The New York Ripper* opens with a man walking his dog and discovering a decomposing human hand beneath the Manhattan Bridge. The hand is identified as belonging to Ann-Lynne, a missing prostitute. Her landlady tells Fred Williams (Jack Hedley), the burnt-out police detective detailed to the case, that shortly before Ann-Lynne disappeared a man had called her and spoken with a duck-like voice. This murder is followed by a string of similarly gruesome killings of women by an unseen killer who mimics the voice of Disney's Donald Duck. The victims include a woman called Jane (Alexandra Delli Colli) who spends her days moving between Times Square's live sex shows, seedy bars and gigolos, carrying a Dictaphone with which she records the sounds of the sex acts that she witnesses and partakes in. When she returns home, Jane shares these recordings with her husband, Doctor Lodge (Cosimo Cinieri), to whom she seems to be happily married despite the couple apparently sharing no physical relationship. Williams recruits psychiatrist Paul Davis (Paolo Malco) to his team, but their collaboration only leads to the incorrect conclusion that the killer is a gigolo named Mickey Skelenda (Howard Ross), who himself turns up dead shortly after being implicated in the attempted murder of another woman named Fay (Almanta Keller). Having escaped the attack, Fay recuperates with the help of her boyfriend Peter (Andrea Occhipinti) who, in a twist ending typical of the *giallo*, is revealed to be the killer. Peter has a daughter named Susy (Chiara Ferrari) from a previous relationship who is suffering from a rare illness and must live inside a protective plastic bubble in a hospital room. Peter, who began using the duck-voice when talking to his daughter over the phone, has been murdering sexually active women in revenge for the feminine sexuality permanently denied to Susy. His final attempt to murder Fay is interrupted by Williams, who shoots him dead, and the film's end credits roll over an aerial shot of New York that shows downtown Manhattan in the background against a foreground of derelict buildings and squalid, vacant lots.

The New York Ripper is one of six films that Fulci shot, in full or in part, in New York between 1979 and 1984, and represents his most in-depth engagement with the city. Revealing the urban reality of New York was one the director's prime intentions for the film: 'I wanted to show the real New York and not make a postcard-film' (quoted in Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 305). Cinematographer Luigi Kuveiller claims that, without official permits, 'we shot internal and external locations that were very degraded, squalid […] the police didn't have the courage to go where we filmed!' (quoted in ibid: 308). The squalor of its mise-en-scene gives the film an unsurprisingly cynical stance towards profilmic urban space; almost every critic reviewing the film has noted the hopelessness which characterises the city. Albiero and

Cacciatore argue that 'the real, terrible murderer […] is the city: a metropolis that kills off the souls of its inhabitants and establishes the grounds for their physical destruction' (2015: 310). Critics Gordiano Lupi and As Chianese similarly claim that 'New York as a city symbolises human loneliness and collective fear' (2010: 161) whereas for Thrower the city is simply 'cold, barbarous and full of hate' (2017: 289). Urban space no longer hinges around the dual promise of new experiences, material wealth and comfort on the one hand and unfamiliarity and threat on the other, but becomes simply 'a damned and degraded hell on earth' manifested in 'the skyscrapers and streets of a barbaric and inhuman city' (Bruschini and Tentori 2013: 113).

Argento's *Tenebrae* offers a more traditional *giallo* narrative that revolves, like several of his preceding films, around the amateur sleuthing of a foreigner in Italy. The film shares *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s narrative and thematic preoccupation with *giallo* literature, a parallel which illustrates that the *filone*'s literary roots were not forgotten even after two decades as a viscerally cinematic form. Peter Neal (Anthony Franciosa) is an American crime novelist and the film opens as he cycles through New York City to JFK Airport, before boarding a plane to Rome where he is due to intensively promote his new novel, *Tenebre* (advertised in Rome's bookstores as 'The *giallo* of the decade'). Peter is greeted upon arrival by his Italian agent Bullmer (John Saxon — another link back to Bava's film) and a team of helpers which includes his assistant Anne (Daria Nicolodi). He has also, unbeknownst to anyone, been followed to Rome by his ex-wife Jane (Veronica Lario) who spies on him and vandalises his belongings. Peter begins a packed schedule of press and TV interviews to promote the bestseller, but his self-marketing is quickly interrupted when Detective Giermani (Giuliano Gemma) explains that a murderer has been killing women around Rome and stuffing pages of Neal's novel into their mouths. Giermani and Neal join forces to investigate as the murderer kills several of Neal's friends and a moralising television presenter named Cristiano Berti (John Steiner). Throughout the film the narrative is periodically interrupted by shadowy images of a groaning man reaching for pills, and hazy flashbacks to a scene on a beach in which a young woman (Eva Robin's [sic], aka Roberto Coatti, an intersexual actress who identifies as female) performs sex acts on a group of men. In one flashback, the woman humiliates one unseen man after he slaps her in disgust, and he later returns to murder her. In the narrative present, the killings continue until virtually no characters are left alive. In an ending replete with twists, it is revealed that the film has featured two killers. The initial murders were committed by Berti in a moralising crusade to rid the world of 'filthy, slimy perverts' but his actions have triggered a repressed madness in Neal, who is identified as the humiliated

murderer in the flashbacks. After killing Berti himself, Neal picks up the baton and murders all of the film's remaining characters except Anne. On the verge of killing her too, in the sleek, modern villa where the film ends, he slips and impales himself on a sculpture as Anne screams and the screen fades to black.

Like the booming Rome of *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* and the post-Spring Prague of *Short Night of Glass Dolls*, the New York depicted in both *The New York Ripper* and *Tenebrae* is a city at a crucial historical juncture, and its representation in both is vital to understanding the films' socio-cultural interventions. According to human geographer David Harvey, the years 1978–80 were 'a revolutionary turning-point in the world's social and economic history' in that they marked the explosion, around the world, of neoliberal economic policy (2005: 1). Neoliberalism valorises laissez-faire political intervention in the free market economy, minimal regulation, individualism, short-termism, speculation and a shift towards service-based (or virtual) commodities, especially financial services. Harvey identifies New York as the epicentre of this revolution and explains that its social effects had already begun in the 1970s: 'Capitalist restructuring and deindustrialization […] and rapid suburbanization had left much of the central city impoverished' (ibid: 45). Italian media activist Franco Berardi, visiting New York at the end of the 1970s, observed as much first hand: 'When I arrived in New York, its urban decay was impressive: wide swathes of the city looked like abandoned cemeteries, full of deserted factories and empty stores' (2018: 70). At the social level, neoliberalism led to significant, and widening, wealth inequality in those countries where it took root. According to Harvey, 'The opening up of entrepreneurial opportunities as well as new structures in trading relations, have allowed substantially new processes of class formation to emerge' (2005: 34). Michael Siegel, in a discussion of *Tenebrae,* identifies the rise of the 'yuppie' as the primary indicator of this new type of class formation and explains how neoliberalism 'adds a key dynamic to the spirit of capitalism: namely, the care for the self, the notion that individual fulfilment is a physically, spiritually, and socially healthful endeavor, one that is not contrary to but fundamental to the structures of capitalism' (2014: 7). Neoliberalism made some rich and equated wealth with personal fulfilment. Meanwhile, the tranches of society less able to seize the new opportunities of the 1980s fell increasingly towards destitution. Life for those in New York's lower socio-economic strata became gruelling as restructuring of the economy around financial services, dominated by a small portion of the city's population, meant that 'Working-class and ethnic-immigrant New York was thrust back into the shadows, to be ravaged by racism and a crack cocaine epidemic'

(Harvey 2005: 47) and that 'Redistribution through criminal violence became one of the few serious options for the poor' (ibid: 48).[72]

Harvey's suggestion that the inequality of neoliberalism had reshaped New York's urban space offers a useful guide for reading the wide opening and closing images that bookend *The New York Ripper*, and *Tenebrae*'s early shots of Neal cycling to JFK airport. In the former, Manhattan's financial district is shot across the East River from a vacant space between the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges. Not only does the dilapidated, rubble-covered and weed-strewn space between the bridges offer an obvious contrast to the shimmering forms of the World Trade Center and its neighbouring towers (icons of globalised financial services) but the sense of a spatialised rich/poor divide is redoubled by the East River itself. The river figures a sort of moat, a forbidding physical separation between the spaces inhabited by those that engineer and profit from neoliberal accumulation, and those that have been dispossessed by economic restructuring. The bridges which span the river, framed high above the weary man who walks his dog on the Brooklyn side, seem literally unreachable, and transition between the two spaces (physically and socially) seems a virtually unattainable promise. The film ends with an aerial wide-shot of Manhattan island. The foreground is composed of a mix of vacant, squalid lots (Berardi's 'abandoned cemeteries'), dilapidated post-industrial buildings and housing projects, while in the background the financial district on which the shot freezes is veiled by a layer of haze (presumably serendipitous) which has the effect of walling off the city's neoliberal core from the wider metropolis.

The film's urban aesthetic is therefore governed by a mise-en-scene of separation through which the city is imaged/imagined in a state of fragmentation between heterogeneous spaces and socio-economic groups. Fulci's wider comments concerning the film suggest that the sense of isolation and loneliness that this visual composition gives the film reflects insidious assumptions that lie at the heart of neoliberal America's social attitudes. On various occasions, and in relation to this film specifically, Fulci has described America as operating according to a 'cult of success' (quoted in Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 305) in which 'being a winner is compulsory' and in which failure to succeed on an individual level may literally drive a person mad (quoted in Palmerini and Mistretta 1996: 62). When Williams approaches Davis in the hope of recruiting him to the investigation Davis asks, 'Who's paying? It's a fine art hedging. I'm quite busy and the time I'd dedicate to you I'd have to take away from my other work'.

[72] For a comprehensive and global history of neoliberalism see Harvey 2005. See also Pollard 2019 for an analysis of Dario Argento's depiction of neoliberal New York in his supernatural horror film *Inferno* (1980).

Williams promises that the police will be able to meet his fee. Davis asks, 'Any idea what a genius costs per hour?' Williams does not know: 'I just know what's in my paycheque.' The quick exchange serves to highlight on several fronts how deeply neoliberalism and the attendant individualism that Fulci laments have become engrained in the world that the film represents. On the one hand, Davis's reference to hedging demonstrates how the language of financial services has come to model all human activities in the neoliberal urban environment. On the other, his suggestion that his own genius is (highly) monetised further points to the self-interested integration of the individual into service-based commodity production, as does his concern that his time might be used unproductively.

Like the opening shot of *The New York Ripper, Tenebrae*'s initial moments lay important emphasis on the bridges which connect New York City's various boroughs. On his way to the airport, Neal cycles out of Manhattan over the 59th Street Bridge (Siegel 2014: 1), a short distance north of the industrial wasteland where Fulci's unnamed character walks his dog. The backdrop of Neal's ride is populated with similarly grimy industrial buildings, which verge on dilapidation in a visualisation of their diminishing economic relevance. This urban desperation does not seem to colour Neal as it does Fulci's dishevelled man. Neal — healthy, wealthy and full of neoliberal optimism (Bullmer later tells him that *Tenebre* has been on Italy's bestseller list for weeks) — enjoys an entirely different relationship to New York City's urban space. Where Fulci's man dawdles aimlessly on the shore of the East River, far below the bridges that span it, Neal cycles over one of those bridges. The two present as diametric social opposites: Neal the 'have' to Fulci's character's 'have-not'. Not only does Neal have access to the thoroughfares which appear unattainable for the dog-walker below, he enjoys a surfeit of mobility; he cycles to get on a plane, while his chauffeur follows with his luggage. New York City in *Tenebrae* is as dilapidated as it is in *The New York Ripper*, but Neal is distinct from Fulci's characters in his financially secured ability to master and transcend that space, which he soon does when he leaves for Rome.

It is important to note that while Peter Neal may depart from New York City, the neoliberal ethos travels with him. Although it did not form an international economic hub in the style of United States (or its key European counterpart, the United Kingdom), Italy in the early 1980s was an enthusiastic participant in the global neoliberal revolution. According to Ginsborg, 'Over the last twenty years [1980 to 2000] Italy has witnessed a socio-economic transformation as dramatic as that of the "economic miracle" of the 50s and 60s, but strikingly different from it in both content and consequences' (2001: ix). The magnitude of this claim

should not be underestimated. Ginsborg anchors his argument in the rapid expansion of the Italian services sector, particularly financial services, which benefited from advances in telecommunications and not only reaped huge profits but altered the fabric of the Italian cityscape as increasingly redundant industrial plants were replaced with skyscrapers (ibid: 7–8). Ginsborg also highlights the social ramifications of this economic metamorphosis: as in New York, while some got richer, many got poorer in relative terms and so wealth inequality increased markedly (ibid: 34). Yuppies, and a new elite of moguls, also proliferated in Italy as they did in the Anglophone countries: 'The new bourgeoisie was wedded to efficiency, lower taxes, and the absolute freedom of the markets; it hated cumbersome bureaucracy, the rigidity of Keynesian labour markets, the restrictive control of trade unions. It was as international as the old bourgeoisie had been national' (ibid: 48). Far from a mere prologue, *Tenebrae*'s early shots of Neal's journey from New York to Rome establish the film's entire socio-economic context; the sequence renders manifest Neal's neoliberal privilege and traces the hub-and-spoke international structure of neoliberal economics through which that privilege is accrued.

Tenebrae and the 'Neoliberalisation' of Italian Media

Ginsborg identifies television as the means by which Italy's economic transformation became social transformation during the 1980s and describes the television set itself as 'a passport to modern Italy' (2001: 84). Certainly, the history of *commercial* television in Italy is central to the country's experience of neoliberalism since it operated as both a symptom and a driver of that project. Up until 1974, the Italian state broadcaster RAI held a monopoly on the country's televisual and radio broadcasting. Two constitutional court rulings in 1974 and 1976, however, led to Judgement no. 202 which ruled RAI's monopoly illegal and paved the way for private stations to begin broadcasting at a local level (see Hibberd 2007: 75). Local television was thus suddenly rendered an open, and totally unregulated, field for the operations of opportunistic entrepreneurs (Hibberd describes it as the 'Wild West' [ibid: 77]), key amongst whom was the property developer (and future Prime Minister) Silvio Berlusconi. Berlusconi's first foray into television had been the TeleMilano station that he had started as a support service for his Milano 2 housing development, but following the court ruling he worked quickly to acquire local stations across the peninsula. In a move typical of his commercial cunning, Berlusconi instructed his stations to broadcast the same material simultaneously across the peninsula with the aid of video tapes couriered from his headquarters, circumventing the ban on nation-wide commercial broadcasting and effectively establishing a national, private channel which he

named Canale 5 in 1980 (Balbi and Prario 2010: 401). Following further acquisitions, his Fininvest holding company added two more national stations over the next four years — Italia 1 (1982) and Rete 4 (1984) — and opened a production company and a highly successful advertising sales company (Publitalia) to achieve autonomy through vertical integration (ibid: 396). By the middle of the 1980s, RAI and Fininvest (later via its subsidiary Mediaset) held a duopoly over national broadcasting, with three channels each.[73] The rise of commercial television in Italy, of which Berlusconi's Fininvest is a paradigmatic example but not the only one, was a direct result of neoliberal economics. Commercial television fed on market deregulation and speculation, it offered almost limitless potential for growth of profits (see Ginborg 2005: 33) and it made individual entrepreneurs fantastically rich through the exchange of ethereal, intangible products (principally onscreen advertising space). In this way, through television, neoliberalism entered Italy emphatically; as Pierre Sorlin writes, 'Broadcasting deregulation extended to most developed countries in the 1980s but nowhere was it as rapid and unsupervised as Italy' (1996: 145). Berardi argues (with Marco Jacquemet and Gianfranco Vitali) that 'Neoliberal policy burst onto the Italian scene in the 1970s under the banner of [media] "deregulation"' which handed control of public opinion to a tiny minority of mega-capitalists (2009: 12–13). Italian commercial television was not a neutral medium; it was suffused with profound socio-economic significance before one even sat down to watch it.

When one did sit down to watch commercial television, the neoliberal project was perpetuated further. This obtained on three fronts. First, commercial television accelerated neoliberalism's drive towards globalisation. Milly Buonanno explains that, since television now operated twenty-four hours per day via several channels, new audience segments appeared (such as late-night viewers) which advertisers could target and for whom new streams of content were needed. She writes:

> the commercial networks, which were to start producing a modest quantity of TV drama only in the second half of the 1980s, went ahead with massive imports; and the stimulus of competition induced public television to do the same, thus breaking its own 20-year-old tradition of resolute self-

[73] In 1984 Fininvest's effective violation of the ban on national commercial broadcasting led to a blackout of its stations by local courts in Rome, Turin and Pescara. Berlusconi's political ally Prime Minister Bettino Craxi was quick to intervene, temporarily overturning the decision three days into the ban and then passing a decree to legalise Berlusconi's operations (see Balbi and Prario 2010: 392–93).

> sufficiency. At the beginning of the 1980s the Italian television market had the dubious honour of being the biggest European importer of foreign programmes: primarily from the United States, as well as from Brazil and Japan. (2012: 40)

Buonanno writes, in summary, that 'The reshaping of the Italian televisual system […] was accompanied by a process of internationalization, more specifically of Americanization' (ibid: 7–8; see also Barra 2013). In particular, police dramas were imported in vast numbers:

> there was a 'disembarkation' in Italy of such series as *Ironside* (1970), *Cannon* (1974), *McCloud* (1975), *Kojak* (1976), *Colombo* and *Police Woman* (1977), *Ellery Quinn* [sic] and *Barney Miller* (1978) and *Starsky and Hutch* (1979). In the next decade, with commercial television now well established, the flow of police drama imports included *The Streets of San Francisco* (1980), *Hart to Hart* (1981), *Magnum PI* and *Hill Street Blues* (1982), *CHIPS* (1984), *The Equalizer* (1985), *Miami Vice* (1986), *Murder She Wrote* (1988), *Hunter* (1989) and many more. (Buonanno 2012: 114)

Once Italian audiences grew accustomed to American televisual products, Italian production itself began to mimic American formats and styles, which included daytime formats like chat and quiz shows as well as dramas and soap operas (ibid: 42; Barra 2013: 309–10).[74] Via the mechanisms of neoliberal business practices, commercial television brought globalisation to Italy on a virtual level: thanks to telecommunications and video technology, the world came to Italy as a spectacle to be consumed within the private home and foreign models (both narrative and formal) were eventually integrated into the country's 'domestic' media landscape.[75]

[74] See Buonanno 2005 for details of how Italian detective programmes eventually merged American and Italian elements in a complex process of hybridisation.

[75] It is important, however, not to approach his phenomenon with too Manichean a perspective. Many Italian viewers appreciated the increased range of programming available on commercial television in the 1980s, and particularly the pivot away from RAI's staid, pedagogic programming to a model geared more towards entertainment (Balbi and Prario 2010: 403; Buonanno 2012: 41).

Second, commercial television perpetuated neoliberal economics by aggressively promoting the consumption of consumer goods. Ginsborg points out that the skill of the entrepreneur in this sector was not in developing programming, but in developing audiences which could be 'sold' to advertisers. Ginsborg also states that by 1984 Italian television was screening around 1500 adverts per day: 'Italian commercial television advertisements in the 1980s were a noisy, endlessly repetitive, frontal attack' (Ginsborg 2001: 86). The carefully marshalled adverts of RAI's boom-era *Carosello* (see Chapter 1) were set free in an explosion and celebration of consumerism for its own sake and this drove new patterns of consumption (Balbi and Prario 2010: 404). Third, commercial television accelerated the move towards individualism and private living that was already becoming apparent at the end of the 1970s as the post-1968 social movements died off: 'Television of this sort [ie commercial] took hold of its viewers and rooted them to the home' (Ginsborg 2001: 110). Further, 'cities themselves changed shape: people abandoned the streets and piazzas and stayed home in the evening. The urban landscape evoked fear and sadness' (Berardi, Jacquemet, and Vitali 2009: 28). The development of Italy's commercial television sector is thus best understood as both a cause and an effect of neoliberalism and its attendant social transformations; it provided an insidious and fertile cultural ground upon which neoliberalism could grow and which neoliberalism nourished in turn.

The histories of neoliberalism and of Italian commercial television serve as more than just curious backgrounds to *Tenebrae*'s production history; they are important keys to unlocking the film's formal logic.[76] Argento himself has claimed that the film is 'hysterical', 'consumerist', and so typical of the age in which yuppies were replacing Italy's political activists (quoted in Costantini and Dal Bosco 1997: 143–44). Michael Siegel reads its protagonist in precisely the same terms:

> Peter Neal, in his combination of healthfulness, progressive values, urban sophistication, self-absorbed haute bourgeois privilege, professional drive and success, and conspicuous consumption, represents an emergent form of urban identity very specific to Western cities in the early 1980s: Peter Neal is none other than a Yuppie. (2014: 3)

[76] See Pollard 2020b for a discussion of how the formal logic of Argento's next film, *Phenomena* (1985), also displays the determining influence of commercial television, specifically that of the music video.

Siegel identifies the ways in which neoliberalism has become congealed in the urban spaces foregrounded in the film. He dwells upon Argento's almost exclusive use of the EUR district of Rome, which by the 1980s had been repurposed as a business district by global corporations. The film was also shot in Casal Palocco, a purpose-built, American-style suburb. Siegel writes that '*Tenebre* engages with this specific [neoliberal] constellation of political, economic, and cultural elements by positing specific shifts in the lived, urban-geographic experience of Rome as forms of social violence and using the violent trajectory of Peter Neal to unfreeze, re-animate, and unleash that violence' (2014: 9).[77]

In the PhD thesis from which his article is derived, Siegel also gestures towards the importance of television to the film's form. In doing so, he draws upon the work of Domenico Monetti, who describes the film as 'apocalyptically televisual' and 'camouflaged' in the medium's *topoi* (Monetti 2008: 300). Though Monetti does not refer to the fact, it is noteworthy that Argento had previously made programmes for television. Following the success of his initial 'Animal Trilogy' Argento was commissioned by RAI to produce *The Door into Darkness* (*La porta sul buio,* 1973), a four-part *giallo* anthology series made up of one-hour episodes, two of which, *The Tram* (*Il tram*) and *Eyewitness* (*Testimone oculare*), he directed himself. (Argento would later return to television in the mid-2000s, making two episodes for the American anthology *Masters of Horror* [2005].) Although *The Door into Darkness* appeared before the rise of commercial television, the episodes directed by Argento demonstrate a marked sensitivity to the aesthetic specificity of the medium, and its formal distinction from cinema, and so *The Tram* in particular provides a useful key for reading *Tenebrae*'s engagement with its televisual context.

Siegel notes how *Tenebrae*'s awareness of television operates on several levels. On the one hand:

> Diegetic references to television abound […] Berti is, for example, a television critic, and one of the film's most

[77] Argento has frequently claimed that *Tenebrae* is set in the near-future, following an event that has led to a reduction in the world's population. The claim has baffled critics who have struggled to find any textual evidence to support it (see, for example, McDonagh 2010: 162; Costantini and Dal Bosco 1997: 144). Given the centrality of neoliberalism to the film's conception, and given that neoliberalism both encouraged a retreat into private life and was attended by a significant drop in birth rates in Italy (Ginsborg 2001: 69), it is tempting to read that unnamed 'event' as neoliberalism itself.

> memorable and narratively significant scenes takes place in his studio. In addition, Argento lampoons the television news' unique combination of banality, sensationalism, and watered down comic chatter. (2010: 204)

Televisions certainly figure prominently in the film's mise-en-scene. As the first victim, a shoplifter who has stolen a copy of Neal's book (Ania Pieroni), enters her apartment her television set is foregrounded by Luciano Tovoli's camera. Bullmer also has a video screen on his desk with which he can see his secretary when she calls his office, and stacks of monitors are wheeled through the television studio as Neal and Berti discuss their upcoming interview. The diegetic presence of the television screen is also reflected frequently by Tovoli's framing: Berti is often positioned within internal frames created by windows and doorways, which gives the impression that he is always 'on screen'. Neal, too, is shot through windows several times to similar effect, and when one of Berti's victims escapes from a dog by running into his basement the dog reappears on the other side of a tiled, glass wall that displays the spectacle of the animal's anger as if it were being broadcast to a wall of monitors in a studio or electronics store. *Tenebrae*'s Rome is a city in which both space and the people within it have become inescapably televisual.[78]

Argento is clear about the influence of imported television on *Tenebrae*'s bright, sleek aesthetic:

> We started from American television series like *Columbo* and *Charlie's Angels* in defining a realistic manner of lighting […]

[78] The 1980s were a decade in which cinema developed something of an obsession with its televisual cousin, both in Italy and further afield. For example, Umberto Lenzi's zombie sci-fi *Nightmare City* (*Incubo sulla città contaminata*, 1980) takes place largely in a television studio, while Fulci's dance-*giallo Murder-Rock* (*Murderock uccide a passo di danza,* 1984) takes as its premise the competition between a group of young dance students to secure television gigs. Ruggero Deodato has also discussed his *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) as, in part, a critique of television journalism's increasingly graphic depictions of violence (Dickinson 2008: 150). In the art cinema tradition, Fellini's *Ginger and Fred* (*Ginger e Fred*, 1986) tells the story of two retired dancers teaming up for a one-off television performance, and Maurizio Nichetti's *The Icicle Thief* (*Ladri di saponette*, 1989) revolves around a film director's outrage at the bastardisation of his film during a television broadcast. In terms of Anglophone horror cinema, David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983) and Paul Michael Glaser's *The Running Man* (1987) both reflect on the growing ubiquity of cable television. The diegetic treatment of television was thus a global trend but one to which Italian cinema (and Italian horror cinema specifically) was particularly attuned, possibly due to the explosion of commercial television in the country.

> a very precise aesthetic, produced in all these shows by the quick shooting schedules and the cathode light. This economically imposed standard and the conditions of projection are embedded in the style. (Quoted in McDonagh 2010: 166–67)

Taken alongside his claim that the film is stamped with the consumerist hysteria of the 1980s, Argento's interest in the aesthetics of imported television (an aesthetic which he explicitly links to its economic preconditions) suggests that such a style is the aesthetic of neoliberalism itself and that it provides a suite of formal strategies by which the social climate of the 1980s can be rendered manifest.[79] Further, the film's diegetic and stylistic references to television work in tandem and gesture to each other. Umberto Eco labels the Americanised, light entertainment that populated Italian screens in the 1980s 'neo-TV', and opposes it to the more arcane 'paleo-TV' delivered during the RAI monopoly (1984). He specifically argues that where boom mikes and cameras were kept out of shot at all costs during the paleo-TV era, they are incessantly foregrounded by neo-TV as a sign of veracity: 'Television no longer hides artifice, rather, the presence of the boom-mike [and the camera] assures (even when it's not the case) that the transmission is live' (ibid: 25). This is a convention which Argento and Tovoli mimic by framing Neal and Berti amidst several television cameras as they sit down for their interview; by foregrounding the apparatus of television the film does not merely posit it as a diegetic object of interest. By activating the reflexive connotations that Eco identifies, the film uses the television cameras as a way of conferring upon itself the aura of a televisual broadcast. By holding the apparatus of the television studio in its gaze, *Tenebrae* does not keep the medium at a distance but rather identifies with it in a warped, technological version of the Lacanian mirror stage.

As Argento's comments suggest, the film's mimicry of television is pervasive. Crucially, the chat show interview between Neal and Berti is never shown and as such it is never diegetically localised and contained. Rather, the form of the chat show interview, which Ginsborg argues had become 'the substitute for in-depth political or social analysis' on 1980s Italian television (2001: 112), spills out into the entire film. Siegel similarly notes television's derestricted presence in the film: television 'is no longer diegetically contained in any way, but

[79] The serendipity of the film's casting should also be noted here. Veronica Lario, who plays Jane, was conducting a secret affair with Silvio Berlusconi while *Tenebrae* was being filmed and the two married in 1984 (Ginsborg 2005: 28–29). Although really nothing more than a curious piece of trivia, in retrospect this fact surely renders yet more palpable the film's entwinement in the rise of Italian commercial television.

rather saturates the entirety of the film's diegesis' (2010: 205). Looking beyond mise-en-scene, he notes that the shot-reverse-shot technique is frequently used 'to banalize and normalize Peter — and therefore to persuade us not to suspect him — by depicting him within such a familiar, television-friendly discursive register' (ibid). As well as deflecting audience suspicion away from Neal, this technique, along with the film's equally extensive use of the conversational two-shot, serves to frame every conversation he has, whether with journalists, with the police, or with Anne, as one of an endless string of chat show interviews. Siegel's reading is restricted to the visual, but further analysis reveals the centrality of the voice to the film's interaction with the televisual aesthetic. Tovoli's camera displays an almost total loyalty to the speaking voice (though that 'almost' is vital, as discussed below). Not only are the majority of *Tenebrae*'s scenes dialogue-driven, the use of the shot-reverse-shot and two-shot techniques means that the film's visual centre of gravity is almost always the face of the speaker. This loyalty of image to voice lies at the heart of the televisual aesthetic. Chion explains:

> the difference between cinema and television lies not so much in the visual specificity of their images, as in the different roles of sound in each […] Television is illustrated radio. The point here is that sound, mainly the sound of speech, is always foremost in television. (1994: 157)

For example, although intricately and engagingly plotted, Argento's televisual debut *The Tram*, mentioned above, is a static and dialogue-heavy piece in which the talking head is ubiquitous and it serves as a model for much of *Tenebrae*'s audio-visual constitution. Sorlin traces the influence of television on Italian cinema of the 1980s precisely in such vocal terms. He argues that 'most television programmes are long-lasting chats' and that contemporary Italian cinema had assumed many of the same qualities, whether passively or by way of critique (1996: 150, 152). Beyond its diegetic interest in the television and the television studio, and beyond even its extensive mimicry of televisual shot composition, *Tenebrae* is most profoundly televisual in its invocation of an image-sound — or more specifically, camera-voice — relationship by which the former is obsessively united with the latter. It is this relationship that defines the televisual, above and beyond the visual strategies that derive from it as secondary effects. Owing to commercial television's prime importance to neoliberal

economics in Italy (and abroad), it is the spread of this aesthetic model that, consequently, testifies to the 'neoliberalisation' of media in the country. Like a dog called by its master, Tovoli's camera turns instinctively to the voice and so reifies its televisual, neoliberal conditioning. *Tenebrae*'s invocation of a televisual aesthetic is *not quite* total, however. Like the dog which chases one of Berti's victims into his basement, Argento/Tovoli's camera exhibits moments of madness where it refuses to be tamed by the voice. It is in these moments, in which the film rejects television's version of the image-sound relationship, that *Tenebrae* defines the cinematic against the televisual and constructs a formal game by which the two media are juxtaposed in a turbulent aesthetic dialectic.

Television programmes, as they are presented by Argento's film, are characterised by order. Neal's appearance on Berti's show is scheduled precisely, the background and lighting as he arrives on the set is precise. Berti tells Neal that he has only two slots per year for such interviews and he seeks to discuss the flow of their conversation in advance (leading to a narratively revealing conversation between the two about sexuality, murder and deviance). In terms of style and content, nothing appears left to chance. The dialogue-driven shot-reverse-shot and two-shot set ups used by the film — its visual loyalty to the speaking voice — also replicates television's need for 'coverage', for all available content to be foregrounded clearly so that no narrative links go missing. The formal game played by the film, however, involves establishing such a sense of order through its recourse to the televisual aesthetic, only then to rupture this order by suddenly and temporarily abandoning that aesthetic. Siegel argues that if 'television stalks the borders of Argento's earlier work […] then it positively infuses every molecule of *Tenebre*', but this reading is perhaps slightly too unitary (2010: 207). The film's televisual veneer is perforated by moments organised according to another logic, one perhaps more cinematic in nature. For instance, Siegel cites Domenico Monetti's claim that 'the frequent flashbacks do not merely interrupt the story like publicity spots, but shine with the aesthetic of a perfume advert' (Monetti 2008: 300). But the interruption staged by these interludes is less a shift between televisual registers than a shift away from the televisual altogether. The surreal and hazy scenes on the beach, bereft of diegetic sound and guided by dreamlike, affective logic, in fact betray an expressionistic subjectivity that is more redolent of the mid-century art film (see Bordwell 1979: 57–59). The ambiguities around both the scene's spatio-temporal setting and the identities, motivations and histories of those involved, together with the impressionistic nature of its visual form, ask the sorts of narrative questions typically suggested by the work of Antonioni, Fellini or Godard. These sorts of vague, implied

questions, to which the film offers only the sketchiest of answers, run counter to the mechanical, televisual order of the main thrust of the film, as does the aesthetic scheme through which they are asked.

In Chion's words, 'The properly televisual is the image as something extra' (1994: 159). The televisual aesthetic privileges sound, and speech, above all else. The cinematic, it would seem, implies the opposite and many of cinema's early critics and theorists explicitly take this position. Siegfried Kracauer argues that 'sound films live up to the spirit of the medium only if the visuals take the lead in them. Film is a visual medium' and that, 'emphasis on speech […] strengthens this tendency away from camera-life' (1985: 127–28). Similarly, Balázs writes that 'the art of the silent film is dead, but its place was taken by the mere technique of the sound film which in twenty years has not risen and evolved into an art' (1970: 194–95). Chion himself, in his extensive theorisation of the *acousmêtre* — the voice without a visualised source — suggests that cinema's ability and willingness to turn away from the voice characterises the medium virtually to the point of providing its ontological definition: 'sounds and voices that wander the surface of the screen, awaiting a place to attach to, belong to the cinema and to it alone' (1999: 4). To turn away from the voice, then, is to turn away from the televisual and towards the cinematic. Realised in the flashback scenes, the threat of this formal turn is a hallmark of Argento's work overall. *Deep Red* (*Profondo rosso,* 1975) opens with the camera roving around a theatre as it assumes the perspective of the as-yet-unidentified killer. Moreover, in *Suspiria* (1977) and *Inferno* (1980) Argento's photography (which in the former case was also directed by Tovoli) dispenses even with the justification of point-of-view, and the camera prowls around the corridors and corners of the Tanz Akademie dance school in the former, and a New York apartment building in the latter, according entirely to its 'own' motivation. Argento's cinema is a cinema of visual liberation, a cinema in which the camera is mobile and at large, often implicated in the events it records (see Luceri 2015: 29).

Tenebrae's flashback scenes thus represent an eruption of the cinematic into the televisual and this eruption is marked specifically by the camera's sudden abandonment of the voice as its guide and master. As the flashbacks demonstrate, these moments often come without warning, as the film's murders similarly intrude suddenly into the narrative. The film's shift to a cinematic register, to an image-sound relationship where the former is no longer guided by the latter, often occurs during its murderous set pieces. Most notably, Tilde (Mirella D'Angelo), a journalist and friend of Neal's, is murdered along with her lesbian partner in a

scene that is famous for a long take of roughly four minutes during which Tovoli uses a Louma crane. The shot is reminiscent of the final shot of Antonioni's *The Passenger* (*Professione: reporter,* 1975), also photographed by Tovoli. It begins with the camera surveying Tilde through a window, before crawling up the wall of her building, over its roof and down another wall, stopping at several windows along the way and finally settling on one through which the killer is seen beginning to break into the house. Similarly, Berti's house, the location for several of the film's murders, including his own, is a polyhedral example of modernist architecture which Argento and Tovoli frequently frame in a manner that emphasises its verticality, its angularity and its glass architecture. Such framing is, of course, in stark contrast to the pragmatic, dialogue-serving televisual framing used as a default in the film. Speech is often literally removed from the film's soundtrack during these scenes of violence, replaced by Goblin's instrumental synth-rock numbers and, ultimately, by the victims' screams, which serve to further stress the fact that these cinematic moments represent a decoupling of the camera and the speaking voice.[80] Here, the film seems conscious that, in Kracauer's words, 'The significance of verbal argumentation, verbal poetry, threatens to drown the significance of the accompanying pictures, reducing them to shadowy illustrations' (1985: 128). *Tenebrae* thus exhibits a precise symbiosis of content and form: as the killers abruptly trigger explosions of violence within the narrative – *at precisely* those moments – the cinematic aesthetic, one characterised by an abandonment of the speaking voice as a formal lynchpin, suddenly disrupts, ruptures, and does violence to the televisual order that otherwise dominates the film.[81]

Chris Barber and Stephen Thrower write that '*Tenebrae*'s structure is built on a play between the rigid formal structures of the detective thriller and a variety of weird, jagged displacements', but a dualism of structure and displacement also obtains at an aesthetic level (2000: 179). In a formal game of cat-and-mouse, *Tenebrae* presupposes a televisual aesthetic logic only variously to interrupt and undermine that very model; in a sense, perhaps, the film posits cinema as the Hyde to television's Jekyll. The film's form echoes its diegetic themes: McDonagh writes that Neal and Berti are dark doubles (2010: 160). As well as doubling Berti, Neal is internally doubled through the splitting of his personality into a smooth-operating

[80] See Dickinson (2008: 119–54) for an in-depth and wide-ranging analysis of the use of synthesised music in *Tenebrae* and other 'Video Nasties'. Dickinson is particularly attentive to this music's moral ramifications, and argues that the cold, inhuman sound of the synthesiser encouraged these films' vilification by couching their depictions of violence in an atmosphere of indifference.

[81] Appropriately, in this context, some of the film's murders must still be edited for televisual broadcast in Italy (Monetti 2008: 300).

yuppie and a psychotic killer; Jane, too, tells Anne that she feels she is two people in one body. These instances of thematic doubling are not just reflected but are undergirded by the fundamental dialectic between the televisual and the cinematic that prevails in the film's form. By juxtaposing the acoustic aesthetics of cinema and television as oil and water, by putting them into tense relation, the film serves to define and delineate the borders between the cinematic and the televisual by intermittently assimilating and rejecting television's voice-camera paradigm. In this way, *Tenebrae* plays at the aesthetic level with the infiltration of Italian socio-cultural space by American(ised) commercial television and the neoliberal paradigm by which it was sustained. The voice again reifies the film's socio-cultural context as form, as a palpable principle of its material constitution, but it does so in order that it may reflect upon it and toy with that context. Like *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, *Tenebrae* engages its socio-cultural milieu on its own discursive terms: the film's voices overreach the border between cinema and television so that it can explore that border by variously establishing and transgressing it. The film's modulation of the image-sound or camera-speech relationship explores the aesthetic norms of neoliberal televisual production without ever *fully* adopting them as its own formal blueprint. The film thus insists upon the persistent distinction of cinema at a time when television was coming to dominate the spheres of media and culture in Italy and around the world.

The New York Ripper and Mediated Alienation

Television does not provide the kind of narrative anchor in *The New York Ripper* that it does in *Tenebrae*, but its importance is nonetheless flagged in the film's diegesis. Ann-Lynne's landlady deduces the time at which she must have last seen the woman alive because she had 'just turned on *Dallas*. You know, that TV series about that family that has money coming out their ears?'. This fleeting reference to *Dallas* ties Fulci's film to the same matrix of commercial television that criss-crosses *Tenebrae* since the American soap opera was one of Italian commercial television's most popular imports in the 1980s. Berlusconi's Canale 5 'made it the event of the season, turning it into an important weekly appointment […] and promoting it with an unprecedented volume of publicity' (Buonanno 2012: 43; see also Ginsborg 2005: 41).[82] Berardi, Jacquemet and Vitali go further, boldly arguing that by importing *Dallas* Berlusconi 'began to create the psychological, emotional, moral and ideological conditions' for his later political victories (2009: 39). *Dallas* not only reshaped Italy's media landscape,

[82] *Dallas* (1978–91) was hugely popular in many countries in the early 1980s.

but reshaped its culture more broadly. The landlady's comment posits the show as a symptom of how everyday life was becoming increasingly mediatised. Where industrialisation saw chronological time overtake daily and seasonal cyclicality as society's primary temporal logic, the landlady's televisual reference point suggests that chronological time has in turn given way to media rhythms. That she refers to *Dallas*'s broadcast as a common temporal marker essentially suggests that the mediated cultural matrix *is* reality now. Her statement is translated identically in *The New York Ripper*'s English and Italian dubs and so illustrates *Dallas*'s global cultural ubiquity; it may be American-made but it holds cultural resonance for both Anglophone and Italophone audiences of the film. The film's reference to *Dallas* also shows how the project of commercial television was bringing the American and Italian mediascapes closer together and integrating the two nations' cultural reference points. Ginsborg writes: 'On Berlusconi's channels there was a lot of entertainment but little room for the real world' (2005: 44). Berardi, Jacquemet and Vitali go further to claim that 'Italy has come to represent the clearest example to date of the society of the hyperspectacle, in which television is the most consumed cultural product and the imaginary energies of the viewers are channelled away from real life to fill the dreamlike world of spectacle' (2009: 12). The medium was becoming the message. As the film's fleeting mention of *Dallas* illustrates, neoliberalism's international commercial television project had ushered in an age of virtuality and simulation in which (globalised and globalising) media products were coming to *constitute* rather than *communicate* quotidian experience.

The overtaking of reality by media is diegetically well established in the film. In an early scene, Jane, a wealthy woman and one of the duck-voiced killer's eventual victims, watches a live sex show in a grimy theatre in a corner of Times Square. As the show's stars perform their sexual labour in front of her, Jane takes a Dictaphone out of her pocket and clandestinely records their utterances. Later, Jane's husband, Dr Lodge, is shown sitting in his study, pallid and erotically mesmerised, listening to the tape. Jane comes in and, with a smile that suggests the familiarity of this scenario, takes the Dictaphone from him but gives him back the tape. As she leaves, Lodge drops the tape into a desk drawer where it joins a pile of other tapes containing (by implication) similar recordings: she is happy to have 'made plans' for that evening, while he is happy to be alone with his tapes. This interaction, the couple's only face-to-face encounter in the film, effects a clinical disembodiment of the sexual voice within their relationship. This operation is particularly stark since, as pre-linguistic utterance unfettered by the abstraction of logos, the vocalisations of sex might be expected to exemplify how, in

Cavarero's words, 'The voice belongs to the living; it communicates the presence of an existent in flesh and bone' (2005: 177). As the performers' copulating voices are both isolated and anonymised by the recording media, and thereafter 'consumed' by Lodge in solitude, they represent not so much the *presence* but the *absence* of the tangible body from the couple's model of reciprocity.

The mediation and mediatisation of the Lodges' sexual relationship is a function of the wider prevalence of audio technology in the film: the killer makes taunting calls to Williams, who records them and plays them to Davis; a radio announcer appeals for the murderer to stop his rampage; radio-chatter fills the soundtrack of a shot of Times Square taken from a squad car. According to Harvey, the pervasiveness of telecommunications technology was central to the spread and success of the neoliberal paradigm (1989: 159, 161; 2005: 47) and, interestingly, the early 1980s saw a boom in premium rate telephone sex-lines following the breakup of AT&T's telecoms monopoly in the United States, a neoliberal gold-rush similar to the commercial television boom in Italy (Smith 2008: 237). Anthropologist Amy Flowers, who conducted an extensive ethnography of sex-line call centres in the early 1990s, writes that the phenomenon 'illustrates a tertiary phase of human relations, one that is mediated by technology […] While facilitating distant communication, these machines minimize personal contact and mediate interactions between individuals, so that communication is conducted from person to machine, machine to person' (1998: 1). The increasing prevalence of auditory technology in the 1980s has subsumed the voice into the neoliberal paradigm by inserting 'the machine' between interlocutors and turning their voices into isolated and monetised aural fragments rather than tangible indexes of physical bodies. The overtaking of the sex act by its mediated simulation was an increasingly familiar phenomenon in neoliberal society, and the Lodges stand less as diegetic fetishists than as symptoms of the wider social change that the film intersects. During the neoliberal revolution, in Harvey's words, 'The narcissistic exploration of *self* […] became the leitmotif of bourgeois urban culture' (2005: 47. Emphasis added). The mutation of sex into a simulation meant for individual consumption can perhaps be taken as a cynical parody of this leitmotif; the film's soundscape of performed and recorded aural orgasms suggests that the rising tide of individualism has human sexuality firmly in its grasp.[83]

In the parlance of the early 1980s, *The New York Ripper* could be read as a dark depiction of the global North/West's shift into postmodernity, neoliberalism's cultural offshoot

[83] For an account of how the neoliberal project was also able to co-opt feminism see Fraser 2009.

(Harvey 2005: 47). Fredric Jameson has described postmodernism as, in part, 'the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense' (1992: 9) which has led to a pervasive 'waning of affect' (ibid: 10). Jameson's interest in flatness speaks to the dynamics at play in *The New York Ripper*'s economy of voices, which are severed from the body in a denial of their unique corporeal origins and in turn perpetuate a waning of emotional investment between the people who listen to them. For Jameson, 'The waning of affect is […] best initially approached by way of the human figure' which has been commodified to the point of being decathected (ibid: 10–11). Fulci's film adds that this phenomenon may be heard in voices emptied of their human specificity.[84] In a scene towards the end of the film, a prostitute named Kitty (frequented by Williams) is murdered in relentlessly graphic detail. The attack is overheard by Williams and his team when Peter phones them during the act. This would seem an instant where the bodily indexicality of the voice *is* specific and graspable, but such is not the case. Williams and an army of police charge across the city only to find (too late) that the call is coming from an unattended phone booth in which the receiver has been placed against a walkie-talkie, itself relaying the sounds from an unknown location. Despite knowing the identity of the voice, this technological relay renders Kitty's voice a multiply mediated copy as divorced from the tangibility of her body as the voices on Jane's tapes. Kitty's body seems to have disappeared into an ungraspable, postmodern hyperspace and her telephonic screams form flat, autonomous aural objects.

The Vocal Simulacrum

The effort with which *The New York Ripper* severs the link between the voice and the tangible body speaks directly to one of postmodernism's core concepts, that of the simulacrum. In *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994 [1981]), published as Fulci was shooting his film,[85] Jean Baudrillard argues that the global North/West's movement into postmodernity has seen a frenzy of images come to dominate the cultural landscape causing a collapse of real, medium and message into a single 'nebula' (1994: 83). This collapse is in part due to the increasing pervasiveness of advertising and entertainment media operating through increasingly sophisticated networks of global telecommunications and has given rise to the simulacrum, the copy-without-original or, in other words, the signifier that refers only to a wider network of

[84] For full accounts of postmodernism's characteristics and development see Lyotard 1984; Harvey 1989; Jameson 1992.

[85] There is no evidence that Fulci was aware of Baudrillard's work however.

signifiers and has no basis in the 'real'. The real here is replaced by simulation. He writes, 'the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials — worse, with their artificial resurrection in the systems of signs' (ibid: 2). In the era of the simulation, in which simulacra circulate without connection to a grounding reality, society has entered a state in which 'reality no more exists outside than inside the limits of the artificial perimeter' (ibid: 14). Rather, as signifiers have come to refer only to other signifiers in a referential short-circuit, reality has been replaced by a simulated hyperreality: 'It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real' (ibid: 2).

Kitty's final relayed screams, copies multiply divorced from the original body-as-referent, are thus a vocal simulacrum. Jane and Lodge's tapes, too, are paradigmatic of the simulacrum's prominence in *The New York Ripper*'s sound design. Lodge's drawer contains a collection of taped voices that constellate with each other as equivalents, each sound 'never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference' (Baudrillard 1994: 6). In short, as aural simulacra, the voices of *The New York Ripper'*s soundtrack find their anchorage not in bodies, but in other voices. Of course, Peter's appropriation of Donald Duck's voice is the most palpable instance of this phenomenon. It is entirely fitting that the voice of Donald Duck utilises 'the buccal airstream mechanism' that forces air out of the cheeks rather than the lungs and forms words using the palette of the mouth rather than the larynx (Shell 2004: 100). Donald Duck's voice, then, originates from the very edge of the body, circumventing its deeper corporeality entirely. This voice refers not to Peter's body but to the fantasmatic body and voice of a cultural icon, as illustrated by the toy duck shown prominently on Susy's bedside table.[86] This is a voice that relies upon a wider, media landscape; it gestures outwards to a cartoon figure drawn from a global cultural milieu rather than inwards to a specific body in the same way that the voices on Jane's tape constellate with the other tapes in Lodge's drawer rather than the bodies from which they came. Notably, where characters on the film's English dub refer to the voice as sounding like a duck, the Italian dub uses the word *paperino,* the name by which Donald Duck in known in Italian and which thus underscores the network of references that constitute the character.

Peter's voice participates in the perpetual replication of a mediatised object which has no original reference point or basis in concrete reality but is instead rooted in an ever-expanding matrix of iterations of which its use in *The New York Ripper* is just the latest. The Disney character's voice could not be a more fitting choice to stand as the film's primary vocal

[86] The toy is similar to, but not, Donald Duck. No doubt this is for copyright reasons.

simulacrum: Baudrillard explicitly identifies Disneyland as one of postmodernity's quintessential simulacra (1994: 12), as does Harvey (1989: 300). As well as being a globally ubiquitous presence on everything from breakfast cereal to toys to sports mascots, Donald Duck even stages an intertextual reference to Fulci's own *Don't Torture a Duckling* (originally titled *Don't Torture Donald Duck* but changed for legal reasons [Thrower 2017: 139]).[87] In short, when Williams is told that someone with the voice of a duck has phoned for him and he asks, 'A duck… Where have I heard that before?', the implied answer is clearly, 'everywhere'. It is noteworthy that Donald Duck is mentioned twice in Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's polemical essay 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception'. The Frankfurt School theorists read Donald Duck as exemplary of how the latent violence inherent to capitalist society is normalised for consumers via the ubiquitous spectacle of the suffering cartoon character: 'Donald Duck in the cartoon and the unfortunate in real life get their thrashing so that the audience can learn to take their own punishment' (1997: 138. See also ibid: 136). Adorno and Horkheimer take Donald Duck to be not only exemplary but metonymic of the entire capitalist cultural industry. The killer's voice, in *The New York Ripper*, is thus not just an aural simulacrum anchored in countless other instances of that voice; it is an invocation of the entire sphere of industrialised, capitalist culture that operates across media and across countries, a limitless network into which the film weaves itself. The intertextuality of the voice in early *giallo* cinema, discussed in Chapter 1, explodes here as Peter's duck-voice hails an indiscriminate mass of other texts the parameters of which are impossible to define. *The New York Ripper*'s vocal engagement with the wider media landscape within which it was produced is consequently more insidious than *Tenebrae*'s. Whereas Argento's film plays with and carefully juxtaposes the formal models of television and cinema but ultimately insists upon the distinction of each medium, Fulci's text assimilates unsystematically the traces of other media. *The New York Ripper* does not delineate itself from other media, but rather joins a postmodern chain of (vocal) simulacra without beginning and without end so that the borders between those media come under threat.

The imbrication of *The New York Ripper* and its ambient media landscape is underlined in the specificity of accent in the film's English dub. Williams, the burnt-out

[87] As well as being a longstanding protagonist of Mondadori *fumetti* comics (thanks to a licencing deal between Mondadori and Disney), Donald Duck is also a surprisingly recurrent feature of post-war Italian cinema. His image is clearly visible, for example, both on the walls of a children's hospital ward in Francesco Rosi's *Hands Over the City* (*Le mani sulla città*, 1963), and on the walls of a bedroom in Enzo Milioni's pornographic *giallo The Sister of Ursula* (*La sorella di Ursula,* 1978).

detective, is dubbed with a working-class New York accent; Ann-Lynne's landlady has the caricatured accent of an elderly Jewish lady; two Hispanic pool players with whom Jane has an ambiguous sexual encounter have strong Latino accents (as they do in the Italian version); and the film's minor characters have appropriate New York accents. This stands in marked contrast to the English dub of *Tenebrae*, in which the characters share a chaotic mix of British, American and Italian-inflected English with no discernible logic guiding their distribution (Giermani has an Italian accent while Neal's assistant Gianni speaks distinctly British English, for example). *Tenebrae*'s haphazard English dub is typical of the *giallo*'s English-language versions, and begs the question as to why so much attention was given to accent in Fulci's sound design.[88] The film's distribution strategy may provide an answer; Dardano Sacchetti, one of the scriptwriters, explains that 'it's easier for a producer to get money if he cashes in on the success of another film. […] it's up to you to profit from the occasion to make something different and personal, or to choose to make a bad copy of the original' (quoted in Thrower 2017: 198). Sacchetti's reference to bad copies signals that *filone* films are, in a sense, simulacra in themselves, copies of films that are in turn exploiting other films. The act of generic copying surfaces concretely on *The New York Ripper*'s English soundtrack in accents which exploit the vocal clichés of American film and television. Producer Fabrizio De Angelis has said of the film, 'I had to make a film based not on actors but on the genre, and obviously a genre that could be sold in America and abroad' (quoted in Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 305). A contemporary reviewer in *Corriere della Sera* described it as 'a typical hybrid product made partly for export […] attempting, in its coarseness, to imitate foreign successes' (quoted in ibid: 311). This imitation is glimpsed elsewhere too: the setting of course, but also the theme tune which bears a striking similarity to that of the television series *Kojak* (1973–78). The film must be understood as an attempt to replicate specifically American cinematic and televisual formulas for the sake of being exported *to* America as well as succeeding in a domestic marketplace increasingly shaped by foreign television imports. Putting aside, momentarily, the film's domestic release, the specifically accented voices dubbed onto the film's English soundtrack are aural simulacra that refer to the similarly accented voices employed by American television and film production and that in turn stem from the cultural-vocal stereotypes generally at play in American popular culture. The soundscape created by these voices is an aural manifestation of what Baudrillard calls 'the map that precedes the territory

[88] For example, Hedley, who was English and spoke with a strong middle-class English accent, was dubbed by American *filone* dubbing veteran Edward Mannix (Howarth 2015: 253 n.4).

— [the] *precession of simulacra* — that engenders the territory' (1994: 1. Original emphasis). In the ever-deferred reference the film's dubbed voices make to vocal norms found elsewhere in the Americanised cultural matrix, the bodies of both the onscreen actor and their voice double become as incidental as the bodies of the sexual actors on Jane and Lodge's tapes.

It is not the case that the film's onscreen bodies are not implicated in this simulacra-soundscape, they are. At issue is the hierarchy often assumed to underlie the voice-body relationship. As the map replaces the territory, the film's dubbed voices confer identities onto bodies rather than expressing the uniqueness of the bodies themselves. As with the use of cinematic and televisual stereotypes in general, this precession of aural simulacra figures a sort of shorthand characterisation on the part of the film's makers: the viewer knows immediately that Williams is worn out and jaded *because* he talks the way he does. Thrower describes Detective Williams as a character 'we're familiar with from countless American TV cop shows', for example (2017: 293). Likewise, the viewer knows immediately that Ann-Lynne's landlady is a Jewish busybody *because* of her voice. More overtly, the scene between Jane and the pool players is introduced with an establishing shot of the street where the bar is located accompanied, in the English dub, by agitated background chatter in Spanish. This inclusion of a language foreign to the language of the dub in question is extremely rare in *giallo* cinema and, critically, is both absent from the film's Spanish version and rendered at a reduced volume in the Italian version. The Spanish chatter is presumably unintelligible to most of the film's English-speaking audience (as, in its quietened form, it would be to an Italian audience, for whom it might be partially intelligible if played at full volume). This vocal chatter is pure, pre-linguistic vocality that identifies the pool players as clichéd working-class Latinos before their bodies appear on screen. The absence of this chatter from the Spanish dub, where it would be intelligible and thus carry different, or no, significance as an acoustic cultural label, epitomises the way in which the sonority of the voice is used by the film to project cultural identities onto bodies. Again, the voice resounds across the border of the diegetic and the extra-diegetic, speaking to both the film's narrative and commercial imperatives. The sonorities of *The New York Ripper*'s English dub facilitate shorthand characterisation in the service of narrative efficiency, and in the same breath invoke aural stereotypes familiar from the increasingly global, and increasingly multi-media landscape within which the film needed to find a place. To find such a place for the film, the voices of its soundtrack straddle other borders too: although Italian, the film depends on American vocal shorthand to facilitate export; although a film, it depends upon the vocal tropes of television. In staking a claim for itself within the

global media landscape, *The New York Ripper* speaks of, and perpetuates, that landscape's homogenisation.

Schizophrenic Audition

The New York Ripper's reliance on vocal simulacra drawn from a global media landscape has significant implications for accepted models of cinematic audition. Koven has suggested that part of the reason for the film's controversy may be the absurd combination of Donald Duck's voice and images of extreme violence during the murder scenes. Sound and image work in such divergent cultural registers that the natural audience response is one of laughter, and the perceived solicitation of laughter during moments of sexualised violence against women has left the film open to justified claims of misogyny (Koven 2006: 102). However, Koven suggests that Fulci's staging of this sound/image juxtaposition may also be read as a reflexive turning of the audience's laugher back onto itself, a simultaneous solicitation and condemnation of their enjoyment in the face of violence (ibid). Ian Olney has gone further and ambitiously proposed that Peter's use of the duck-voice represents 'a recognizably feminist effort to deconstruct the figure of the male killer' (2013: 117). Either way, what is fundamentally at stake here are the structures of identification between audience and killer which the film may offer, and the ways in which these structures are complicated by the killer's substitution of his own voice for a vocal simulacrum.

Film theory's most comprehensive account of the voice's role in cinematic identification has been put forward by Kaja Silverman in *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988). Silverman takes as her starting point Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975) which argues that Hollywood's visual regime tends to offer two loci for the male gaze. The first is the body of the passive female star, who is placed on screen to be looked at and thus provide the male viewer a scopophilic pleasure. The second is the figure of the active male character, who also gazes at the female body from within the diegesis. This duality stages an automatic alliance between male viewer and male character, whereby the male viewer may both enjoy the pleasure of gazing on the female body and, in so doing, identify with the active power of the male character (so disavowing the castration threat bound up in the female body). This operation shores up the audience member's ego, his sense of an ability to act in the world and possess the object of desire, and so constitutes another form of cinematic pleasure. Silverman builds on this model by transposing it to the auditory dimension of the cinematic text. She argues that the classical cinematic soundscape strives to bolster the male viewer-

auditor's ego by 'working to identify even the embodied male voice with the attributes of the cinematic apparatus […] through a complex system of displacements which locate the male voice at the point of apparent textual origin, while establishing the diegetic containment of the female voice' (1988: 45). Silverman demonstrates that cinematic sound design uses a range of techniques to align the male viewer-auditor with the diegetic periphery and thus to confer on him a sense of discursive mastery over the text.

The duck-voice's constant marginality to, and murderous control of, the film's mise-en-scene positions it as the film's primary object of acoustic identification for the viewer, hence the centrality it is granted in discussions of the film's controversy. Koven and Olney's inability to form concrete conclusions around the effects of viewer-auditors' identification with the duck-voice, however, indicates how the substitution of the normative male voice for a vocal simulacrum troubles Silverman's model. In short, stable identification with this voice is impossible because 'who', or even 'what', the voice stands in for as an audible presence is so nebulous. Until Peter's reveal it is virtually impossible to visualise the killer as anyone other than Donald Duck himself; hat, blue jacket and all. Bizarrely but logically, the question now becomes: What does it mean to identify with the voice of a murderous cartoon duck? Initially it means that any identification with the killer is necessarily fractured and refracted. As the invitation to visualise the killer as Donald Duck indicates, to identify acoustically with Peter's vocal simulacrum rather than a stable, identified or coherent voice is to cathect not only the killer but the entire cultural field he draws on. Silverman's model presupposes the stability of textual elements: A (the female voice) can be contained and disarmed because B (the male voice) is available as a single, coherent aural object with which the viewer-auditor can identify throughout the text. When B becomes a simulacrum however, it is fractured across a limitless media landscape; rather than a singular coherence, Peter's voice collects traces of Donald Duck's uncountable iterations in film, comic books, television, merchandising, product endorsements, and so on. It is a multiple voice, and thus ungraspable.

The implications that Fulci's vocal simulacra have for classical models of cinematic audition advance *The New York Ripper*'s active contributions to its postmodern cultural milieu. Jameson suggests that the era of postmodernism leaves the individual in a state of schizophrenia, a term which he invokes not in clinical terms but in those borrowed from Jacques Lacan for whom the condition marks 'a breakdown in the signifying chain' (Jameson 1992: 26). Jameson argues that 'meaning on the new view is generated by the movement from signifier to signifier' and that 'when the links of the signifying chain snap, then we have

schizophrenia in the form of a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers' (ibid). When that breakdown occurs 'the schizophrenic is reduced to an experience of pure material signifiers' (ibid: 27). The schizophrenic, then, is one who perceives only simulacra, signifiers divorced from any grounding signified. The postmodern cinematic auditor who listens to vocal simulacra like Peter's duck-voice and finds themselves referred ever-outwards into a chaotic and nebulous media landscape rather than towards a stable, concrete character identification thus enters a state of aural schizophrenia. *The New York Ripper*, that is, suggests that aural schizophrenia is postmodernism's way of listening.

Dubbing the Global City

As discussed throughout this thesis, the automatic dubbing of *gialli* into multiple language versions was entirely standard practice for Italy's *filone* film production of the 1950s onwards, especially for films that were conceived as export commodities from the start. One remarkable curiosity of Fulci's film, though, is that its 2011 Shameless Entertainment DVD release offers no fewer than five different dubs from the 'Audio Settings' menu (English, Italian, French, Spanish and German). By contrast, most recent DVD re-releases of *gialli* have simply offered films in English and/or Italian. It is important to note the difference between dubbing as it was used by Italy's *filone* production system and dubbing used as a means of post-release translation. In the latter, an 'original' soundtrack can be said to exist in the sounds recorded on location and incorporated into the film's edit for its initial release. Dubbing tracks are then produced as secondary derivations of this original when the film is exported to a given language-region; they are copies, but copies anchored in a clear original. *Filone* dubbing worked differently since these films were shot without location sound and during post-production several different dubs, each in a different language, were produced simultaneously so that the film could be exported as soon as possible. In this model, there is no original/translation divide, but rather a collection of distinct dubs functioning as parallel iterations that do not have recourse to an auditory origin point.[89] In Mark Betz's words, 'there is no "original" sound track to speak of for any of these films: they are always already dubbed in any release print one can see and hear' (2009: 56). Tessa Dwyer argues that dubbing in

[89] Since almost all of Italy's cinema relied on the combination of silent shooting and post-dubbing, this system also applied to many art films of this period. As Betz argues, the significance of the auteur figure in art cinema means that the dub in a director's native language (usually the language of the script) is often credited as the 'original'. Consequently, reluctance to grant the makers of films like *gialli* auteur status has denied their films this solid anchorage (2009: 69).

general 'expos[es] the shifting, unstable nature of "originals" […] Translation submits screen "originals" to the logic of versioning: the so-called "original" becomes one sub-category in a broad set of versions' (2017: 188). The profusion of vocal options available from the Shameless DVD menu illustrates emphatically that a dubbed voice track in *giallo* cinema is another paradigmatic acoustic simulacrum, only ever one version amongst many, endlessly interchangeable and without anchorage in an original. It is highly fortuitous that *The New York Ripper*'s re-release should be the instance where Shameless have showcased this element of *giallo* production since it brings to the fore an important consequence of the film's wider use of vocal simulacra.

As Harvey and Jameson make clear, the coming of postmodernity inaugurated profoundly revised notions of global space, centred around spatial compression. This spatial compression collapsed the sort of distinction between places which is still apparent (even if coloured by permeability) in most 1970s *gialli* and replaced it with the image of the 'global village' (see Harvey 1989). At first glance *The New York Ripper* seems uninterested in the birth of global space: it is set in one city and features no recently arrived foreigners amongst its cast of characters, so even the Italian-abroad or foreigner-in-Italy structure that is so central to the *giallo* formula is unobserved. This is not to say that the film reinvests faith in the solidity of geographical distinctions. Before settling on New York Fulci had wanted to set the film in Boston due to the city's association with the Boston Strangler (Albiero and Cacciatore 2015: 307). The very distinction between the two cities gives way, though, when the first victim crashes her bike into a car as she boards the Staten Island ferry and shouts, 'Sorry, I was thinking of Boston!'. The woman is played by Cinzia De Ponti who had won Miss Italia in 1979 and was Italy's entrant into Miss Universe in 1982, the year of the film's release (see below). The scene of her murder therefore presents a subtly chaotic image of national (in)distinction whereby a woman who literally embodies Italy assumes the identity of an American who physically cycles through New York while her mind, somehow, occupies Boston. The scene elucidates a very postmodern understanding of space, in which the permeability of borders between countries and cities has been replaced by their collapse into each other. It thus highlights one subtle but important point of distinction between Fulci's film and Argento's *Tenebrae*: the latter maintains a faith in international borders. Peter Neal's journey from the United States to Italy is heavily belaboured by the airport scene that precedes his trip, and although totally at ease in neoliberal Rome, Peter is still a distinct foreigner. In *The New York Ripper*, an American detective, Latino pool players, a Greek gigolo and an

(unseen) Italian sex theatre owner occupy the city's various corners and alleyways, and national distinctions begin to seem unclear. Americanness is rather displaced onto the flags that adorn Davis's office, Williams's police station (both filmed on Roman soundstages) and the frontages of Manhattan's buildings. These flags are abstractions that show how notional, decentralised and disembodied the idea of an American citizen is within the film (Howarth 2015: 250). 'The American' is replaced by a litany of 'Americans', each occupying a contingent position in the urban landscape and exercising a provisional claim on the city.

As well as a diegetic melting pot, in the early 1980s New York City was becoming an increasingly malleable production location. Fulci shot six films there between 1979 and 1984 (he also filmed others in Louisiana and Boston during the 1980s).[90] New York City had become an urban ready-made in Fulci's work; his recurrent use of the city testifies to its value as a recognisable, omnipresent signifier in the global media landscape (and the deluge of US television assured as much in the Italian case) as well as to its malleability. As a space which could be cinematically reshaped to the requirements of multiple films exported to multiple markets, New York City becomes a sort of enormous soundstage. Ready-made profilmic New York is itself a sort of global village, an urban space that represents the gold-standard of cinematic locations and one with global currency.[91] As the mediatised image of New York City is woven into the cultural landscapes of many nations, New York itself becomes a location diffused across the world and assumes a global rather than local identity. *The New York Ripper*'s five parallel dubs, each interchangeable and without an original version, accordingly cast New York as a cinematic space over which multiple sets of voices have an equally valid claim. New York City is what Ascheid describes as 'a space in which foreign audience's fantasies of an American imaginary, be it utopian or dystopian, can be lived out. In an act of ventriloquism, the imagination of one nation or linguistic group thus speaks its own interpretation of the cultural utterance of another' (1997: 36). The film's multiple sound designs reveal that 1980s New York is always already located within the imaginary of a given spectator, audience or language. By 1982 the dubbed-over image of New York City was

[90] The other five New York films are: *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (*Zombi* 2, 1979); *City of the Living Dead* (*Paura nella città dei morti viventi,* 1980); *The House by the Cemetery* (*Quella villa accanto al cimitero,* 1981); *Manhattan Baby* (also 1982); and *Murder-Rock* (*Murderock uccide a passo di danza,* 1984).

[91] New York City was, of course, a city with a specific relationship to Italy. Speaking of the Italian Western, Frayling emphasises that of the millions of immigrants that went to the United States from Italy in the first part of the twentieth century (many to New York) over half came back (1998: 41). From an Italian perspective then, New York was both a foreign city and, for many, a familiar one.

equally 'at home' in American, Italian, French, Spanish or German media landscapes and thus questions the division of such landscapes on national grounds.

The analysis of *Short Night of Glass Dolls* above (see Introduction) argues that, in that film and in early *gialli* more widely, the dubbed voice encompasses a paradox by simultaneously betraying transnationalist and nationalist impulses. *The New York Ripper* illustrates that, by 1982, the cultural porosity of national borders has begun to invalidate this paradox given that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the national from the transnational in terms of the voice. The interchangeability of the film's dubs not only underlines the globalisation of New York City as both a physical space and a media image, but suggests that, at a time when vocal simulacra were engendering a truly global media landscape, the voice was no longer a structure by which space could be nationalised. Shortly after Fulci's film was released, Benedict Anderson published his seminal study of nations and nationalism, *Imagined Communities* (2006 [1983]) and his work offers a critical perspective from which the denationalising effects of the vocal simulacrum may be understood.[92] Anderson traces the development of the nation (a term which, he recognises, eludes stable or absolute definition) to the rise of print-capitalism. Before the development of the printing press, he argues, global society was predominantly divided into trans-territorial groups which were often religious in basis; Christendom and Islam, for example. These religious groupings were partly rooted in the use of a proprietary, sacred language that manifested an unproblematic claim to truth; Latin, in the case of Christendom and Qur'anic Arabic in the case of Islam. The rise of printed media, however, popularised vernacular languages and led readers to form 'imagined communities' not defined by a trans-territorial sacred order, but by fellowship amongst readers of a common vernacular ('imagined' as this community was taken to extend self-evidently beyond those people that one knew personally). These imagined communities became the genesis of the nation (2006: 1–46).[93] On the one hand, Fulci's film suggests that by 1982 the recorded voice may have taken over from the printed word as the catalyst with which territory, alchemically, becomes nation. The specificity of accent on the film's English dub seems to make of the voice an acoustic flag, conferring an audible Americanness onto the profilmic landscape (and the

[92] As with the concurrence of *The New York Ripper* and Baudrillard's work, the timeliness of Anderson's text is serendipitous though perhaps suggestive of a *zeitgeist* in which certain ideas were manifesting simultaneously in very different cultural spheres.

[93] Anderson's historical theory is, of course, more complex than this summary might suggest, and lays emphasis on other factors operating alongside print-capitalism. However, the development of vernacular print media is the central anchorage of his argument.

phonos of accent here takes up some of the role played entirely by the logocentric word in print capitalism, since the English language is not specific to a single country). On the other hand, the film's recourse to global vocal simulacra cuts these aural flags from their masts, and leaves profilmic space nationally unstable. The global circulation and interchangeability of voices is less international than anti-national and the vocal simulacrum brings to bear the antithesis of the sacred order described by Anderson, who writes that in Latin Christendom 'there is no idea […] of a world so separated from language that all languages are equidistant (and thus interchangeable) signs for it' (2006: 14). This is precisely the world that obtains in the hyperreality of the vocal simulacrum. As print capitalism divided the world into territorial groups, the vocal simulacra of an ever more global media landscape question the discretion of these territorial units and posit a single world spoken to and about by an infinitude of unbounded voices. In all their forms — the duck-voice, the stereotyped accents, the film's multiple dubs more widely — *The New York Ripper*'s vocal simulacra are sounds without borders in the most profound form. These vocal simulacra emerge from the film to resound across a mediated hyperspace, they do not so much transcend as disavow geopolitical borders. The vocal simulacrum is perhaps the voice of mediated globalisation itself — the voice, that is, of neoliberalism and postmodernism.

The Specificity of the Body

Yet traces of concrete national specificity persist in *The New York Ripper*. In contradistinction to the globalising soundscapes engendered by the film's various levels of vocal simulacra, it is in precisely the image of the uttering body, the particularity of which the vocal simulacrum disavows, that the (Italian) repressed returns. The film's first victim is played by Cinzia De Ponti, who literally embodies Italian national identity as conceived in opposition to (and competition with) other national identities. Whatever Fulci and De Angelis's motivation for employing De Ponti,[94] the overdetermined national significance that her body carries compared to the many other more anonymous options that must have been available represents a specific intervention of Italian national identity and national culture into a film that otherwise seems to witness the dissolution of the national. (Even in the English dub, the woman taunts the owner of the car she has just damaged by shouting 'Ciao!' as she rides away, and the maintenance of the Italian salutation seems to belabour the nationality of her body.) Shortly after De Ponti's

[94] To speculate, the logic of the *filone* system would suggest that she was cast so that the film's Italian distribution could cash in on her short-term star appeal.

character's murder, Williams discusses the case with the Chief of Police. The Chief is played by Fulci himself and, even where his appearance goes unrecognised by audiences, Fulci's cameo assimilates the contingencies of the film's Italian genesis into its Americanised image and 'means' something Italian. His body's specificity as a national signifier is particularly clear when he deploys a specifically Italian use of embodied gesture; as Fulci's Chief pleads with Williams to crack the case he places his hands together in front of his chest, fingertips touching and pointing forward, and slowly waves them up and down. This gesture is a ubiquitous Italian gesticulation employed in moments of imploring or questioning, and inscribes onto his body that Italian specificity which it always already denotes latently. The effect is that Fulci's body, like De Ponti's, returns that national identity that is repressed by the various vocal simulacra dubbed onto it; its visualisation figures (paradoxically) a blind spot in the process of national dissolution at work in the film's soundtrack.[95]

It is appropriate that the bodies of De Ponti and Fulci should figure the primary sites at which Italian specificity re-emerges in the film, since it is the violence done to the body that hampered the film's negotiation of national borders after its release. In the UK, the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) refused to approve the film for distribution due to the extreme and sexualised nature of its violence. After extensive deliberations, the BBFC's secretary James Ferman wrote to the film's British distributor Eagle Films in February 1984 to say:

> We are unable to give a certificate to *The New York Ripper* for cinema exhibition in the United Kingdom […] we must advise you that all copies of the film should be re-exported to Italy forthwith. […] I can only urge you in future not to seek to distribute in Britain films which link sex and violence in this unhealthy and sadistic manner. (Quoted in Thrower 2017: 383)

Fulci has said that 'Violence *is* Italian art!' (quoted in Thrower 2017: 11. Original emphasis). In doing violence to onscreen bodies, Fulci understands them as canvases onto which he inscribes a particularly Italian text. In turn, the body's articulation of this Italian text calls into

[95] There is also a 'return of the Italian repressed' in the film's cinematography: the opening pan across the East River, broken up decayed wooden posts and bridges, closely mimics the opening shot of Visconti's *Obsession*, a film that stands as a forerunner of the *giallo*.

play the reaffirmation of the hard, defined (Italian) national borders questioned by the film's vocal simulacra but within which the BBFC demands the film be contained. The culturally definite articulations of the body, in other words, reaffirm the physical, geopolitical borders questioned by the films hyperreal soundscape. The global soundscape crafted by *The New York Ripper*'s various vocal simulacra finds its contradiction in the silenced, overdubbed bodies that in various ways discretely dictate a very specific sense of the national and which consequently suggest that the contingencies of the individual as flesh and blood may present, if not a resistance, a thorn in the side of neoliberal postmodernity's global project.

The case of *Tenebrae* provides an opportunity to situate late *giallo* cinema in the context of Italy's changing media landscape and the neoliberal political economy of commercial television that underlay those changes. This was a landscape, Argento's film suggests, that afforded cinema a benchmark against which to assert its ontological self-awareness afresh. *The New York Ripper* engages an altogether more overtly global media landscape than Argento's, one characterised not by the persistent heterogeneity of media but by their increasing collapse into one another. This is a collapse evidenced and perpetuated by the film's repeated assimilation of voices from cinema, cartoons, television programmes and even 'silent' media such as comics and toys that resonate internationally but are particularly drawn from America, the film's key export market. In contrast to *Tenebrae*, by introjecting the vocal traces of other media products, Fulci's film brings into question the borders between different media in the age of postmodernity, and by participating in a global media landscape it questions (though without fully dismissing) the borders between nations. From their different perspectives, the films testify to the sustained centrality of the voice to both the *giallo*'s textual logics and its involvement in widespread contextual shifts. As in the previous chapters, the voice in these films tethers the texts to the commercial, social, cultural and economic contexts from which they emerge and draw sustenance. Both films, too, allow for the periodisation of a profound aesthetic shift that obtained within cinema and television, in Italy and abroad, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This was a period in which the relationship between the image and the voice shifted so that the latter became the hub around which the former increasingly revolved. Given how this shift resonates with the concerns about the sound film raised by Balázs and Kracauer decades earlier (and television would seem to be the realisation of those critics' worst nightmares), one might suppose that the broad rise of a vococentric aesthetic was an evolution as significant for screen media as the coming of sound itself. The return to these debates also renders apparent how, despite the ocular focus of much film criticism and theory,

cinema is so frequently and fundamentally defined and questioned in terms of how it treats sound.

Conclusion: Open Borders

Given the importance of the voice to *giallo* cinema, it is entirely fitting that the *filone* should culminate with a film that thematises the voice per se: Dario Argento's *Opera* (1987).[96] Clearly defining the *giallo*'s endpoint is, naturally, a thorny endeavour given that Italy's cinematic *filoni* did not so much conclude as dissipate through gradual processes of hybridisation and formulaic evolution (see Chapter 3). The nebulousness of the *giallo*'s evolution means that other films could reasonably be picked as its last stand: Vittorio De Sisti's *Crimes and Perfume* (*Delitti e profumi*, 1988) and Dario Piana's *Too Beautiful to Die* (*Sotto il vestito niente 2,* 1988), both virtually forgotten, are arguably later *gialli*, for example. Surveyed broadly, however, the influence of the North American slasher (itself heavily indebted to the *giallo*) was already coming to influence Italian horror-exploitation filmmaking by this point, alongside the cannibal and zombie *filoni* which grew apace throughout the 1980s.[97] This thesis takes *Opera,* the last of Argento's films that can truly be classified as a *giallo*, as representative of the end of the *filone*'s generic cycle rather than its absolute chronological conclusion.[98] Given Argento's governing and determining influence over the *giallo,* the evolution of his career may reasonably be taken to stand in for that of the *filone* which had largely grown up around attempts to exploit his films.

The opportunity *Opera* presents to think opera and the *giallo* together brings into focus an array of generative, if ostensibly unlikely, intersections and points of comparison between the two forms. These points of contact lay bare the complexity of the voice in *giallo* cinema, and allow for consideration of the voice's complexity in opera (which has, unsurprisingly, received more critical attention). *Opera'*s superimposition of the two audio-visual models — opera as diegetic content refracted through the formal prism of *giallo* cinema — makes it clear that both are engaged in a pursuit of the voice in pure form. Opera's fixation on the voice as pure sound, freed from language and even from the uttering body, finds its satisfaction in the ecstatic high notes of the aria; the *giallo*'s in the scream. The comparisons afforded by

[96] In some instances, the film's English dub was released as *Terror at the Opera*.

[97] It should be noted that the term *giallo* is still used in Italy to refer to mystery fiction in general, independently of its association with the body of films discussed in this thesis. See Introduction above.

[98] From the 1990s onwards, Argento shifted towards literary adaptations, fantastical horror and increasingly banal thrillers. *Sleepless* (*Non ho sonno,* 2001) is a possible exception, standing as an overt attempt by Argento to rekindle the *giallo* format for which he was most famous. However, the film is, essentially, a pastiche and this precludes it from truly standing as part of the *filone* which by that point had disappeared.

Argento's film reveal that, at their extreme points, the song and the scream may amount to the same thing. As Michal Grover-Friedlander writes, 'death is immanent in the operatic voice' (2005: 4). Song and scream both trace the limits of the human voice. Both locate that limit in coincidence with the limits of embodied human existence; these limits must be overcome for the voice to, fleetingly, gain autonomy as pure sound. *Opera* is heavily invested in the overlap between opera and the *giallo* and caricatures their shared pursuit of the autonomous voice by graphically depicting acts of violence done to characters' mouths and throats. This violence figures a physical/physiological pursuit of the voice to its supposed origin point, but the mutilated corpses that remain reveal only voids, empty and silent cavities. The voice's interstitial nature is thematised by the film. What *Opera* puts on display in its mise-en-scene are the corporeal gaps within which the voice resounds, contingently and temporarily: the gap between lungs and mouth, body and mind, inside and outside, individual and society. These are the gaps from within which the voice stages cross-border negotiations between these binary categories, and many more. In its materiality, however, *Opera*'s juxtaposition of opera and the *giallo* underscores how, in both, the negotiations staged by and in the human voice extend far beyond the diegetic or profilmic body. Myriad and expansive, these negotiations tie textual aesthetics to contextual imperatives on a range of levels and transmute often nebulous socio-cultural phenomena into tangible artistic form. The complexity of the voice in *Opera* figures a neat synecdoche of its significance in *giallo* cinema and, indeed, in audio-visual culture more broadly.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Argento's atypical privilege as a director renders his personal ambitions a greater factor in *Opera*'s constitution than was typical for a *filone* that tended to be led by commercial expediency. The film is loosely indebted to Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1910) and the film adaptations it spawned. (Argento had been obsessed with Leroux's story as a child and would go on to adapt it directly in 1998 [Argento 2014: 20].) It was also influenced by more recent events: in 1985 Argento had been hired by the Sferisterio Theatre in Macerata to direct a staging of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, but once the theatre's management learned that he was planning an avant-garde version that portrayed the Duke as a perverted vampire he was removed and replaced by Mauro Bolognini. Argento was left with both an axe to grind and an interest in opera's shadowy backstage world (Jones 2016: 159). The film also taps into a wider obsession which Italian cinema has had with the country's national art since the silent days.[99] To give a few examples made during the *giallo*'s lifecycle,

[99] See Ladd 2018.

Pasolini's *Medea* (1969) features opera superstar Maria Callas who, tantalisingly, is never heard singing in the film; Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On* (*E la nave va,* 1983) thematises the death of an opera star; and Bertolucci's *Before the Revolution* (*Prima della rivoluzione,* 1964) and *La luna* (1979), as well as Argento's own *Inferno* (1980), prominently feature operatic music.[100] If *Opera* represents the *giallo*'s crescendo it also stands as the *filone*'s final reflection on the centrality of the voice to Italy's cultural heritage, its cultural industries and, perhaps, its cultural relationships to the wider world. The film renders audible both the extent of the voice's reach, in cinema and in opera, and the profundity of its socio-cultural, economic and political resonance.

Opera opens during the final rehearsal for an avant-garde staging of Verdi's *Macbeth*. Prima donna Mara Cekova storms out of the opera house following an argument with the opera's director Marco (Ian Charleson), who insists on incorporating live ravens into the performance. She is immediately hit by a passing car. The role of Lady Macbeth then passes to her young understudy Betty (Cristina Marsillach) who, despite initial self-doubt, performs the role on opening night to rapturous acclaim. The opera's opening is also the starting point for a series of murders that take place in and around the theatre: an usher is killed during the first performance, and shortly afterwards the killer intrudes upon Betty and her boyfriend Stefano after they unsuccessfully attempt to make love. The unidentified killer ties Betty up, gags her and attaches a row of pins below each of her eyes so that she is unable to close them and is forced to watch as he graphically stabs Stefano to death. Detective Alan Santini (Urbano Barberini), an opera lover who was enchanted by Betty's opening-night performance, picks up the case, but his interventions do little to stop the killings which claim several of Betty's friends and colleagues. In each case, the killer binds and gags Betty, and forces her to watch with his pin strips. Throughout the course of the film, Betty is also haunted by the memory of her mother being killed by a similarly disguised figure. She eventually seeks shelter with Marco, who hypothesises that the ravens, several of which have been killed by the murderer during their tirades of violence, will be able to identify the assailant if they see them again. Assuming, also, that the killer will return for the next performance, Marco releases the birds into the auditorium during one of Betty's solos. As expected they gravitate to the killer, who is revealed to be Santini himself. The birds gouge chunks from his skin and eat one of his eyes. Bleeding, Santini

[100] Interestingly, *Opera* was released in the same year as Don Boyd's *Aria* (1987), which 'consists of ten segments drawn from different operas, each filmed by a different director […] any way they wished' (Citron 2010: 58). Argento's film perhaps intersects not only an interest in opera extending throughout Italian cinematic history, but one that spans multiple countries.

(who was also responsible for Cekova's accident) explains that he was previously in a relationship with Betty's mother, who derived an erotic thrill from watching him kill but whom he eventually murdered for fear of where her urges might lead (the remembered murder witnessed by the young Betty). He is now trying to relive that relationship with Betty, and hopes that by forcing her to watch him murder he will kindle within her a sort of familial bloodlust. After a brief altercation, Santini appears to die in a fire and Betty and Marco escape to the Swiss countryside. Santini reappears in their remote chalet, however, and kills Marco before Betty can subdue him long enough for the police to arrive and save her.

Giallo and Opera, *Giallo* as Opera

Opera opens with an extreme close-up of a raven's eye, with the auditorium of the Reggio di Parma opera house reflected across its vitreous surface.[101] This shot condenses object and subject of the gaze into a single image and signals the film's interest in spectatorship, an interest demonstrated further by the pin-strip conceit employed to ensure that Betty witnesses Santini's crimes. More covertly but just as emphatically, this overture signals the film's interest in the voice, in the pure voice as unalloyed sonority. The camera lingers on the raven as it perches above the stage. Unseen, a male baritone and female soprano (Cekova) rehearse, while the bird caws its own unwanted accompaniment. The involvement of birdsong in the operatic aria draws attention to an idealisation which is manifest in both opera and the *giallo*'s approach to voice. In the first instance, the bird's cry stands as vocalisation freed from any alliance to the word (suggesting, perhaps, the cry of the bird-like sirens in Homer's *Odyssey*). The raven's call invokes the 'pure, harmonious, powerful, and irresistible voice that is almost like an animal cry' towards which the unseen singers strive (Cavarero 2005: 103). The theorisation of opera unambiguously and almost universally stresses the centrality of the pure voice to its form, above and beyond the libretto (story), physical performances, costume or mise-en-scene. According to Grover-Friedlander, 'the aesthetic foundation of opera is the operatic voice. Opera's voices and, with them, *the idea* of the operatic voice are unique to its world; the medium conceives of itself through its voices' (2005: 3. Original emphasis). She elaborates, 'opera is essentially about the wish for the autonomization of voice or an attempt to approach voice as detached object' (ibid: 23). Jeongwon Joe intriguingly points out that 'The incompatibility between the vocal excess of the operatic singing and textual clarity is a

[101] Argento had wanted La Scala, but the success of the 1986 season there meant there was no available downtime for the film to use (see Argento quoted in Maiello 1996: 63).

scientific fact, considering that high-pitched singing makes intelligible verbal articulation impossible' (2013: 52). What is most fundamentally at stake in opera is the human voice freed from the shackles of language. The operatic voice is the voice returned to birdsong.

Both singers remain unseen as cinematographer Ronnie Taylor's camera lingers on the crow. Mara Cekova is never shown on screen: her argument with Marco and exit from the theatre are shown from her point of view, and a later insert during which she screams at a television broadcast of Betty's performance shows only her plaster-casted leg. It is as if her voice has transcended or negated her body to exist in a permanently acousmatic state and achieve total autonomy. The *giallo* too, strives towards the birdsong-like pure voice: the scream. Following the Toranis' first murder on the Spanish Steps in *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, countless *giallo* scenes of suspense and death find their crescendos in non-verbal outbursts of pure vocal affect, screams that shatter language and break free from the bodies in which they originate as if physically excised by the infliction of violence. The closing moments of Argento's *Tenebrae,* in which Anne screams uncontrollably, unstoppably and endlessly as the film fades out, presupposes the scream as the film's, and the *giallo*'s, final auditory destination. The *giallo* is built around what Chion terms 'the screaming point', which he defines less as a specific sound than a 'black hole' to which a film is narratively drawn and which manifests 'the fantasy of an auditory absolute' (1999: 77). The *giallo*'s murder scenes and opera's arias are both formal set pieces designed to extract a pure vocalisation and realise a fantasy of aural plenitude. They thus display an unlikely, even uncanny, similitude. The affinity of the scream and the song is perhaps unsurprising when one considers that several theorists of the voice have suggested their intimate concurrence. Brandon Labelle argues that 'all shouts, songs, and cries in general […] no doubt have as their ultimate horizon that of the scream' (2014: 58). Michel Poizat, whose *The Angel's Cry* (1992) remains the seminal theorisation of the voice in opera, argues at length that everything in opera moves 'toward that supreme mark of the failure of speech and the signifying order, the cry' (ibid: 39) because 'when language disappears and is gradually superseded by the cry, an emotion arises which can be expressed only by the eruption of the sob that signals absolute loss' (ibid: 37). *Opera* itself suggests the fragility of the border between song and scream when, during the opening performance, Santini's murder of an usher causes a light to fall from a box into the stalls below.

Betty's voice slides, momentarily, from the note she is holding to a short cry of surprise and back again, and traces the diaphanous border between the two vocal modes.[102]

In both opera and the *giallo*, the ecstatic excess of vocal extremis extends beyond the strict realm of the acoustic and becomes closely associated with the collapse of the visual. Poizat points out that:

> there is something inescapably paradoxical about opera: producers sink enormous sums of money into […] creating sumptuous sets and costumes only to have the spectators, in those great moments, close their eyes to the display, the better to be ravished by the diva's singing. The collapse of the visual order in these instants […] is constitutive of opera. (1992: 33–34)

Although perhaps less constitutive, the coincidence between the pure vocality of the scream and the occlusion of the visual is equally typical of the *giallo*, a fact that *Opera*'s governing conceit consciously and self-reflexively comments upon. Argento explains:

> I film these images because I want people to see them and not avoid the positive confrontation of their fears by looking away [sic]. So I thought to myself, 'How would it be possible to achieve this and force someone to watch the most gruesome murder and make sure they can't avert their eyes?' The answer I came up with [the pins attached beneath Betty's eyes] is the core of what *Opera* is about. (Quoted in Jones 2016: 158)

Despite intense aesthetic (not to mention financial) investments in baroque visuality, both opera and the *giallo* engage so ardently in the pursuit of the pure voice that they ultimately risk the temporary fragmentation of the audio-visual text itself. At a fundamental level, they share a self-destructive fixation on the voice. *Opera* is not simply *about* opera. Rather the film and

[102] Argento's use of non-diegetic heavy metal music, replete with highly distorted vocals, during the murder scenes also questions the divide between song and scream.

the *giallo* more widely ask to be read *as* operatic.[103] Jones describes the film as 'Virtually plotless […] an excuse to garnish one glittering set piece after another' (2016: 167). *Opera*'s narrative thus mimics the 'opera libretto [that] may almost be said to center about the episodes […] that contribute little or nothing to characterization or to development of the action' of which the aria is the clearest example (Grout and Weigel Williams 2003: 3). What matters for opera is the attainment of the high note, what matters for *Opera* is the attainment of the scream. In each case, the (acoustic) end justifies the (narrative) means.

As in so many *gialli*, *Opera*'s formal mechanisms and its narrative events achieve a close resonance. As the diegetic opera extracts an autonomous voice from Betty's body, the film's wider mise-en-scene likewise hunts for the voice. In several scenes, Taylor's camera collects close-ups and extreme close-ups of the sound equipment that adorns Betty's bedroom, where she prepares for her performance by listening to both operatic recordings and spoken-word relaxation tapes. As she does so, the camera explores these devices: a green light labelled 'voice' that illuminates when a tape is played; moving equaliser bars on her stereo's display; the turning spools of a tape; play, fast-forward and rewind buttons. Like an opera fan, the film's visual narration grasps after the voice. The voice is always slightly out of reach, however, and its ostensible location is concealed from the film's view by prophylactic technological barriers that translate it into abstract visual symbols and analogues.[104] As if in recognition of this futility, the film conducts its search for the voice at a far more visceral level as well. Much has been made about the violence done to characters' eyes in *Opera* and the *giallo* in general: Adam Knee points out that, in the *filone*, 'The eye itself is particularly privileged, figured as a site of both potential victimization and violation' (1996: 218) while James Gracey argues that in *Opera* specifically the shots of the raven's eye, Santini's own ocular violation, Betty's eye pins and the frequent inclusion of opera glasses in the mise-en-scene all emphasise the eye's soft vulnerability (2010: 105). (Betty's friend Mira [Daria Nicolodi] is also shot through the

[103] Intriguingly, the affinity between opera and horror cinema has been leveraged by more recent theatrical ventures. Joe writes that 'Fresco Opera Theatre's intriguing piece, *Ding Dong, the Diva's Dead* (2010), seems to be a theatrical enactment of the cliché of opera's kinship with cinematic death […] Premiered at Overture Center Playhouse in Madison, WI, in October of 2010, this imaginative work stages famous death scenes in opera as those in celebrated horror films' (2013: 180).

[104] One might, here, think of Argento's claim that 'In *Opera* love is haunted by the spectre of AIDS […] relations between people are generally cold, people are distant with each other. This is surely the personification of the AIDS nightmare' (quoted in Palmerini and Mistretta 1996: 16). If the voice is a primary structure of human reciprocity and togetherness (see Cavarero 2005), its ungraspable quality in the film speaks to Argento's wider concern with human alienation.

eye by Santini after looking through the peep-hole in Betty's door.) The equal preponderance of violence directed towards characters' mouths and throats in both this film and the entire *giallo filone*, however, has gone seemingly unnoticed. In *Opera*, Stefano is killed, in part, by being stabbed through the floor of his mouth. As he screams, Taylor's camera reveals the blade of Santini's knife sticking up through his tongue and filing his oral cavity. Later, costume mistress Julia (Coralina Cataldi-Tassoni) inadvertently swallows an incriminating bracelet as Santini kills her. He first attempts to recover it by prising open her mouth, but when that fails he cuts open her throat and retrieves it directly from the area around her voice box. (This recurrent throat and mouth violence is foreshadowed when Cekova sends Betty a bottle of perfume as an opening night gift. As Betty pours the noxious liquid down the drain, Stefano grabs his throat and boisterously pretends to choke.) *Opera* caricatures the pursuit of the pure, autonomous voice staged by both opera and *giallo* cinema by physically/physiologically tracing and chasing the voice all the way to its supposed origin point.[105]

Process over Product

Opera's hyperbolic suggestion that the voice might be excised from its corporeal wrapper is doomed to failure, resulting in nothing but brutalised cadavers. The film illustrates, with recourse to the *giallo*'s typically extreme style, the voice's essential ephemerality. This ephemerality charges the voice with its affective power in both opera and the *giallo*. Grover-Friedlander writes that 'Moments of beautiful singing are always already being mourned, since one knows that they will have gone by at the very moment they appear' (2005: 4). The scream's emotional charge is surely driven by the suggestion that it will shortly cease, forever (see Chapter 2). The voice has no afterlife, it exists in an ungraspable present which passes as soon as it manifests. The voice cannot be pinpointed (to use an appropriate metaphor in relation to this film) because it exists as a process rather than a product; as Connor writes, 'my voice is not something that I merely have, or even something that I, if only in part, am. Rather, it is something that I do' (2000: 4). What is revealed when one searches for the voice as a locatable object per se is the space in which the process of voice occurs: the interstice. *Opera*'s displays of ruined oral and tracheal cavities make clear that, between mouth and lungs, body and mind,

[105] It is worth noting that operatic singing itself carries a risk of trauma to the throat. In his *Treatise on Singing* written in 1857, Italian singing teacher Paolo Pergetti repeatedly warns that 'To force the voice by excess of study on that part forming the "break," produces the so-called "cracking" or "breaking" of the voice […] it might thereby be completely lost' (1857: 3). In a sense, the operatic voice itself contains the potential for violence.

inside and outside, the voice resounds in the gaps. It is in these gaps that myriad categories, concerns, impulses and imperatives meet and interminably negotiate as sound. The voice stages a dissolution of borders through which the seemingly distinct audibly merge.

The idea of the voice as a combinatory process is already present in the set-up for the film's murder scenes. In addition to attaching pins to Betty's eyes, Santini is careful to gag her. The film draws a clear link here between the sights 'entering' Betty through her eyes and the voice 'leaving' through her mouth and recognises implicitly that by flooding Betty with certain stimuli Santini will elicit a certain type of utterance. The film's thematisation of the voice extends beyond its incessant interest in the fetishised and ultimately ungraspable pure sound of the aria or the scream, to the point of acknowledging the voice's generative engagement with the wider context in which it manifests itself. Stefano jokes with Betty that opera singers are known to have sex before big performances because 'it relaxes the voice, sweetens it up a little'. His joke implies, again, that the voice represents the consequence of an ongoing negotiation between the stimuli (visual, aural, physical and emotional) which precede it. In other words, the voice's true origins must be sought prior to its aural manifestation as sound. As an ephemeral and contingent process of multiple mediations and negotiations, the voice exists not in a finite place but in suspension between input and output, cause and effect. Though in the most physiological terms it may temporarily resound in certain spaces of the body, the voice always already overreaches those borders. Even the lone utterance stands as a sort of conversation, one staged between the various influences which give rise to it and which condition and determine its form. The primary value in attending to the *cinematic* voice for the study of film inheres in its making manifest a multitude of contextual conversations that are in process within the film text itself. These are conversations that imbricate the aesthetic, commercial and social and that reveal a film's simultaneous and interdependent status as aesthetic document, commodity and cultural object.

Text as Echo Chamber

The operatic voice occupies a dense network of interstices between the textual and the contextual. The particular networks of interstices occupied by the voice in opera and the voice in *giallo* cinema bear a striking similarity, and comparing them points to the broad applicability of the methodology adopted by this study, its potential value as a tool for reading the socio-cultural and historical imbrications of texts that lie far beyond the *giallo* itself. To offer an initial example, as is the case with the *giallo,* the voice in opera straddles the national and the

international. *Opera* draws specific attention to this fact by staging a work by Verdi. Although opera is anyway widely held to have originated with Florentine court performances of the early seventeenth century (see Grout and Weigel Williams 2003: 83) and is interpreted by many as the closest thing to a national Italian art form (see Dyer 2013: 71), its national(ist) overtones reach their zenith with Verdi.[106] Donald Grout and Hermine Weigel Williams write that:

> Italy during the *Risorgimento* — the Italian nationalist movement (c. 1815–70) — was seething with revolution, and Verdi's early operas came to play an important part in the patriotic movements of the 1840s and 1850s. Though their scenes and characters ostensibly had no connection with contemporary events, the librettos were filled with conspiracies, political assassinations, appeals to liberty, and exhortations against tyranny, all of which were readily understood in the intended sense by sympathetic audiences. (2003: 402. See also Crisp and Hillman 2002)

One need only look to Luchino Visconti's *Senso* (1954) for an articulation of the national and nationalist gravitas granted to the composer by Italian culture. The film is set in 1866 and opens with a staging of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* that inspires clashes in the stalls between Italian nationalists and Austrian troops. Even in Argento's film, costume mistress Julia claims that she is carrying out Marco's belligerent backstage orders not for him but 'for Verdi', a love of whose work she expresses several times in the film in a clear signal of the veneration he is assumed to inspire in Italy. And yet, for all its Italian specificity, opera was soon an international artistic and cultural form. Daniel Snowman writes that, 'By the late nineteenth century, a typically

[106] A comment by Federico Fellini establishes Italy's vital relationship to opera:

> It is a kind of Italian ritual, an emblem of Italianness, our most accurate reflection. It has gone on throughout Italian history: the Wars of Independence, the struggle for Unification, Fascism, the Resistance. It is the form of spectacle that most resembles us, that most directly expresses our psychology, our mentality, our sense of style. It's as inaccurate, superficial, shoddy, distracting, stupefying—that is to say, as Italian—as one can imagine. (Quoted in Costantini 1995: 123–24)

"Anglo-Saxon" patron of the New York Metropolitan Opera, that archetypal product of Gilded Age America, might have caught a French work sung by a Czech, Polish and Italian cast led by a German conductor' (2009: 3). Opera was both specifically Italian in origin and profoundly transnational in manifestation; the *giallo* retraces and reiterates this transnational formation. Snowman's description of the operatic performance as a national melting pot closely echoes the description of *Short Night of Glass Dolls*' transnational constitution offered in the Introduction to this thesis, and Argento has stated that *Opera* itself was shot in English to facilitate both an international cast and international distribution (2014: 279–80).[107] The voice in both the *giallo* and in opera therefore resounds in national and international contexts and addresses, in the same breath, Italy and the world beyond it. By drawing this paradox into the text and crystallising it as a matter of form, the voice in opera and the voice in the *giallo* underscore the cultural porosity of Italy's borders at times when Italy's self-image and its relationship to the rest of the world (as a unifying country, as a rapidly industrialising member of an integrating Europe) were shifting profoundly. By giving material form to context in this way the voice in opera and in the *giallo* textualises context itself, granting nebulous socio-cultural shifts a tangibility through which they are both registered and reified.

Other such parallels should be noted, too. Like the *giallo*, opera spans high and low culture, and questions that distinction. John Storey describes how in the early stages of its development opera was frequently enjoyed by large numbers of the working classes in Italy and abroad. He explains:

> opera as 'high culture' is therefore not a universal given, unfolding from its moment of intellectual birth; rather, it is an historically specific category institutionalized (depending on which cultural historian you find most convincing) by the 1860s, 1900s, or 1930s […] it did not become unpopular, rather it was *made* unpopular. […] In short, opera was transformed from *entertainment* enjoyed by the many into *Culture* to be appreciated by the few. (2002: 36–37. Original emphasis)[108]

[107] The film's final soundtrack was dubbed, however, even in English.

[108] Snowman quotes the British eighteenth-century tourist Samuel Sharp's observation, written in 1767, that 'it is so much the fashion […] through all Italy, to consider the opera as a place of rendezvous and visiting […] they do not seem in the least to attend to the musick [sic], but laugh and talk through the whole

Lawrence Levine points to the more recent marketability of Pavarotti and other opera singers as evidence that opera's popular appeal has persisted (1990: 102). *Opera* suggests the same. As Betty performs on opening night the film cuts to a young girl who lives in her apartment building and is watching Betty live on television, as, elsewhere, is an irate Cekova (and, later, Santini, who strokes Betty's televised image with a knife). The diegetic television broadcast makes it clear that Betty's voice extends simultaneously through the spaces of so-called high culture (the opera house) and those of popular culture (the television-adorned private apartment). Allied to both yet loyal to neither, the voice transcends the supposed border between high and low, elite and popular, and occupies an interstice between the two from which it mediates their interrelation.

The *giallo* also troubles the border between elite and popular culture and it is in Argento's work that this tendency is most patent. Peter Hutching's writes that 'There is some basis for considering Argento's work in relation to an "art film" tradition' (2003: 137), and Marcia Landy that, with Argento, 'it has become possible to rethink connections between film history, its modes of production and reception, and through critical writings on them blur taxonomic boundaries between canonical, auteurist and popular forms' (2016: 94). The circumstances of Argento's career have granted him the ability to reach beyond the borders of the exploitation film industry and the *terza visione* cinema into the world of art cinema throughout his career. Other *giallo* directors managed this leap at times too; Bava's films occasionally received brief *prima visione* releases, for example, as did Martino's (Kannas 2020: 43). Perhaps most notably, the *giallo* has recently been welcomed into the institutions of high culture. For example, Mark Betz describes having screened *gialli* including the *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* while working as a programmer at New York's George Eastman House in the late 1990s (2009: 48), and in 2016 London's Barbican ran a four-week programme titled 'She's So *Giallo*: Women of 1970s Italian Thrillers' which screened *gialli* by Argento, Fulci, Martino and Piero Schivazappa. A similar season took place at the Gallery of Modern Art in Queensland, Australia in 2018 (Kannas 2020: 63). *Opera* itself was partly funded by RAI through television presales, though it premiered at the Cannes Film Festival — its distribution straddled prestige and mundanity from the outset.

performance, without any restraint' (quoted in Snowman 2009: 44). The resemblance of this description to Wagstaff's description of the post-war *terza visione* cinema (see Introduction) is remarkable.

The voice provides a neat handle through which the *giallo*'s complex negotiation of the elite and the popular can be apprehended at a more material level. Although the dialogue that accompanies Marsillach's onscreen performance was dubbed by various voice actors for the film's various release prints, the vocal tracks for Betty's songs were provided by prolific and well-established Norwegian-Italian soprano Elizabeth Norberg-Schulz. As an element of *Opera*'s soundtrack Betty's 'voice' ('voices' might be more apt) is a complex composite of elements derived from both 'popular' and 'elite' culture. When Betty speaks, her voice contains the resonance of a cinematic/televisual cultural space shaped by financial expediency and a broad, expansive distribution market (it literally carries this resonance in the hollow, studio-recorded tone which characterises much of her dubbed dialogue). When Betty sings, however, her voice bears the traces of an operatic cultural space shaped by artistic/musical priorities and a narrower (if no less financially significant) target market. By interweaving Norberg-Schulz's song with the utterances of Marsillach's uncredited voice double(s), Betty's voice merges high and low culture and calls into question their mutual distinction.[109]

Heard as an active, dynamic *process*, the voice in both the *giallo* and opera reveals itself as a mediator between a range of aesthetic, commercial, social, cultural and economic imperatives. As it proceeds from one utterance to the next, shifting its sonorous qualities and its structural role in the text as it does so, the voice enacts an ongoing conversation between text and context(s), resonating through the network of interstices between them and performing their imbrication. Opera and the *giallo* are both well placed to render this fact apparent because both foreground their own textuality through their baroque aural and visual form, and because they are both so sensitive to commercial and social concerns. Snowman writes simply that, 'in addition to being an art form, opera has always been a social, economic and political phenomenon' (2009: 2). Grout and Weigel Williams explain:

> Of all the musical forms, opera is the most immediately sensitive to changes in political, economic, social, and general cultural conditions. Its very nature as a complex and costly public spectacle largely dependent on official patronage or private

[109] Snowman notes that, as it expanded in the 1920s and 1930s, cinema 'offer[ed] millions of Italians an inexpensive version of the warm, romantic fare their parents used to seek — rather more expensively — in the opera house. The cinema was to become an even more potent rival to the opera house in Italy after the arrival of the "talkies"' (2009: 310). Perhaps it should be no surprise, then, that parallels between opera and popular cinema present themselves so clearly.

> subsidy makes it especially vulnerable to political dictates and economic vicissitudes […] its form, content, and idiom are all affected by changing ideals. (2003: 577)

For both opera and the *giallo*, the economic motivations behind a production emboss themselves, and the social phenomena from which they stem, upon its material form. A final example of this fact, drawn from *Opera*, provides for a neat summary. James Gracey explains that, 'When the film premiered at Cannes, it wasn't well received due to the atrocious dubbing — especially that of Detective Santini […] whose rather effeminate and inappropriate dub suited neither the actor nor the character. His voice was re-looped and, as a result, much of his dialogue sounds echoic and quite odd' (2010: 102). In Santini's 'echoic' voice one thus hears a negotiation between aesthetic/generic models of what an appropriate voice sounds like for a certain character type, the multiple flows of labour performed in multiple sound studio sessions, and the institutional influence wielded by a prestigious film festival and marketplace. In Santini's voice — as in both the *giallo* and opera — form *is* context.[110]

Fade Out

This thesis has aimed to contribute both to the study of the *giallo*, and to the theorisation of the cinematic voice in general. In the first instance, it shares Vitali and Fisher's reservations about the 'social reflectionist' approach that has dominated the study of *giallo* cinema and that reads these films as transparent reflections of supposed social attitudes. These social attitudes are in turn assumed to be both uniform across all of the *giallo*'s disparate audiences and accessible to scholars working several decades after the films' initial distribution. For example, Andrea Bini flattens the *giallo*'s nuanced social significance when he claims that 'The woman's pivotal role [in the *giallo*] reflected the ongoing cultural changes and the growing male angst and insecurity in the face of women's emancipation' (2011: 54). Flavia Brizio-Skov's argument that 'a filmic text tends to mirror attitudes and sentiments that are already there consciously and/or unconsciously', displays a similar bluntness which is over-simplistic and teleological

[110] There are several other intriguing parallels between opera and the *giallo* which are beyond the scope of this discussion as they do not pertain directly to the voice. These include: a shared interest in baroque spectacle; a shared interest in scenes of death, particularly female; a shared fascination with innovative technology; a shared history of finding themselves on the receiving end of moralistic censure; a shared celebration of the narratively ridiculous.

(2011: 3). The social reflectionist methodology also risks reading films as passive texts and overlooking the ways in which they may actively intervene in the contexts within which they are produced; in Vitali's words, 'This matters because a film's relation to its context is not a one-way affair' (2016: 166). The same approach is also frequently inattentive to the specifics of film form and the role that form plays in those interventions. Form is necessarily central to any attempt to seriously account for the interaction between *giallo* cinema and the social contexts within which it was produced. Vitali's important analyses are beset only by the fact that she tends to start with the contextual — specifically, the increasing flows of speculative capital that entered Western economies in the second half of the twentieth century — and then hunt for the presence of that context in the text. By starting with the aesthetic and prioritising formal analysis as the foundation of its investigation, this thesis has attempted to realise more fully Vitali's claim that context exists within the text. This methodology reads context not as something which scholars must connect to the text, but something which is truly always already there. In other words, it subtly reverses Vitali's methodology and asks not how context may be detected in elements of the text, but how elements of the text can be explained contextually.

More importantly, perhaps, this thesis has attempted to further scholarship's understanding of the *giallo*'s historical significance by pushing back against the ocular-narrative focus that dominates all existing research on these films. The value of the voice to the study of the *giallo*'s contextual situation lies in its dynamism and in its frequently unabashed commercial pre-conditioning (of which dubbing manifests the clearest example). As the cinematic voice moves from utterance to utterance, sonorous mode to sonorous mode (often adopting and shifting modes in response to commercial exigencies), the nature of the relationship it stages between text and context changes. It is in this way that this thesis has most widely framed the voice as process rather than object, as both a *conversation* and a *negotiation* between film text and film industry, *giallo* and society. The voice's ever-shifting dynamism grants it a complexity capable of rendering manifest the intricacy of the text-context interaction. Crucially in the case of the *giallo,* these text-context negotiations not only register films' historicities, but actively contribute to the historical moments in which the texts were produced. To return to Fisher, the complexity of the voice in the *giallo* signals how, for *filone* cinema, 'the very processes of mediation that grew around [historical] events were inseparable from, and entwined within, those events themselves' (2019: 52). Historically speaking, *Short Night of Glass Dolls*' overt use of dubbing not only reflected a moment in which Europe was becoming more economically and politically integrated, but participated in and therefore

perpetuated that process. *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*'s erratic voice-over signalled the increasingly multi-national and multi-media character of Italy's post-boom cultural landscape, but in doing so it contributed towards the hybridity of that landscape. At the other end of the *giallo* cycle, *The New York Ripper* brought to prominence the televisual cacophony that accompanied the neoliberalism of Italian media, and simultaneously added its own voice tracks to that roar to make it all the louder. More conservatively, *Don't Torture a Duckling*, in its formal concern with silence, not only perpetuated picturesque representational traditions concerning the Italian South but served to shore up socio-geographical distinctions at a time when the country was changing apace. These are text-context engagements that, because they are rooted in films' concrete materiality, are not contingent on the presumed knowledge (in any case impossible to acquire comprehensively) of audience responses to the texts. Vitali lays emphasis on 'the issue of how [one may] read historical dynamics in films beyond the allegorical model […] as the very pressures at work in the film-text' (2016: 26). This thesis offers as an answer the attentive study — at once formal and historical — of the voice.[111]

This thesis has also aimed to offer film studies and the humanities more broadly a new way of hearing the cinematic voice itself. Anthropologist Amanda Weidman writes that, 'As a phenomenon that links material practices with subjectivity, and embodied sound with collectively recognized meanings, the voice is a crucial site where the realms of the cultural and sociopolitical link to the level of the individual' (2014: 38). When humans use their voices the intimately personal and the fundamentally social — the mouth of the utterer and the ears of the listener(s) — are invoked and interlocked. The individual utterer therefore automatically takes up position in a range of wider networks. The voice is always already in-between, in multiple places and yet, somehow, in none of them. It is always 'at' and 'between' each point in the networks that it mediates. The voice's diffuse, interstitial nature is nowhere so clear as in cinema, where it serves as a cornerstone of a film's acoustic aesthetic, yet also represents the tangible product of the sound studio, the result of multiple flows of distinct labour and specific commercial priorities. These commercial priorities are in turn frequently shaped by wider social, cultural, economic and political phenomena. The voice's negotiation of these three levels of resonance — formal, industrial, social — therefore renders audible, within the

[111] Made around twenty-five years after the last *gialli*, Peter Strickland's *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012) is a psychological horror that stars Toby Jones as an English sound engineer hired by an Italian producer to record the sound tracks for an obscure *giallo*. The film suggests that it is the *giallo*'s uncanny voices, and the extra-diegetic dimensions of the texts which they unwittingly foreground, that continue to fascinate audiences.

text, the milieu(s) from which a film emerges and by which it is conditioned. The comparison of the *giallo* to opera pursued above has sought in part to demonstrate the portability of this theorisation of the voice. By haunting and transgressing the borders between text and context(s) across the spectrum of audio-visual art and culture, the voice offers scholars working throughout the humanities a way of opening those borders as part of the critical process.

Theorising the voice as a sound without borders, a sort of aural bridge running across film text, film industry and society, provides a method for identifying the forces that shape a text's form. The seamlessness of classical cinematic form fetishistically disavows these forces and presents hermetic textual boundaries that occlude the influence of contextual factors and agents. The voice tracks of the more baroque, less classically constructed *giallo* do not recognise these borders. Rather they shout out, with virtually every utterance, these films' contextual specificity and their socio-cultural contingency. Given that the makers of *filone* films maintained an astute awareness of the wider socio-cultural contexts in which their work circulated and in which it was consumed, these texts can be read neither comprehensively nor accurately when they are isolated from the specificity and contingency of their production. It is for this reason that the *giallo* must be heard as well as seen.

Filmography

Alfred Hitchcock Presents, dir. by various (Revue Studios / Universal Television, 1955–65)

And the Ship Sails On [*E la nave va*], dir. by Federico Fellini (Gaumont, 1983)

Aria, dir. by various (Miramax, 1987)

Bay of Blood [*Ecologia del delitto*], dir. by Mario Bava (Nuova Linea Cinematografica, 1971)

Before the Revolution [*Prima della rivoluzione*], dir. by Bernardo Bertolucci (Cineriz, 1964)

Berberian Sound Studio, dir. by Peter Strickland (Artificial Eye, 2012)

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage [*L'uccello dalle piume di cristallo*], dir. by Dario Argento (Titanus, 1970)

The Black Belly of the Tarantula [*La tarantola dal ventre nero*], dir. by Paolo Cavara (Cinema International Corporation, 1971)

Blood and Black Lace [*Sei donne per l'assassino*], dir. by Mario Bava (Unidis, 1964)

Cannibal Holocaust, dir. by Ruggero Deodato (United Artists Europa, 1980)

Carosello, dir. by various (RAI, 1957–77)

City of the Living Dead [*Paura nella città dei morti viventi*], dir. by Lucio Fulci (Medusa Distribuzione, 1980)

Crimes and Perfume [*Delitti e profumi*], dir. by Vittorio De Sisti (Consorzio Italiano Distributori Indipendenti Film, 1988)

Dallas, dir. by various (CBS, 1978–91)

Deep Red [*Profondo rosso*], dir. by Dario Argento (Cineriz, 1975)

Don't Torture a Duckling [*Non si sevizia un paperino*], dir. by Lucio Fulci (Medusa Distribuzione, 1972)

The Door into Darkness [*La porta sul buio*], dir. by various (RAI, 1973)

The Ear [*Ucho*], dir. by Karel Kachyňa (Ústřední půjčovna filmů, 1990 [1970])

The Earth Trembles [*La terra trema*], dir. by Luchino Visconti (Compagnia Edizioni Internazionali Artistiche Distribuzione & Victor Film, 1948)

Footprints on the Moon [*Le orme*], dir. by Luigi Bazzoni (Cineriz, 1975)

Fulci for Fake, dir. by Simone Scafidi (Severin Films, 2019)

Ginger and Fred [*Ginger e Fred*], dir. by Federico Fellini (Istituto Luce-Italnoleggio Cinemtografico, 1986)

The Girl Who Knew Too Much / The Evil Eye [*La ragazza che sapeva troppo*], dir. by Mario Bava (Warner Bros, 1963)

The Gospel According to Matthew [*Il vangelo secondo Matteo*], dir. by Pier Paolo Pasolini (Titanus, 1964)

Hands Over the City [*Le mani sulla città*], dir. by Francesco Rosi (Warner Bros, 1963)

Hawks and Sparrows [*Uccellacci e uccellini*], dir. by Pier Paolo Pasolini (Consorzio Italiano Distributori Indipendenti Film, 1966)

The House by the Cemetery [*Quella villa accanto al cimitero*], dir. by Lucio Fulci (Medusa Distribuzione, 1981)

The House with Laughing Windows [*La casa dalle finestre che ridono*], dir. by Pupi Avati (Euro International Films, 1976)

The Icicle Thief [*Ladri di saponette*], dir. by Maurizio Nichetti (Bambú & Reteitalia, 1989)

Inferno, dir. by Dario Argento (20th Century Fox, 1980)

Kojak, dir. by various (CBS, 1973–78)

L'avventura, dir. by Michelangelo Antonioni (Cine del Duca, 1960)

La dolce vita, dir. by Federico Fellini (Cineriz, 1960)

La luna, dir. by Bernardo Bertolucci (20th Century Fox, 1979)

Location Hunting in Palestine [*Sopralluoghi in Palestina per il vangelo secondo Matteo*], dir. by Pier Paolo Pasolini (Distributor Unknown, 1965)

The Lonely Villa, dir. by DW Griffith (Biograph, 1909)

The Man Who Knew Too Much, dir. by Alfred Hitchcock (Gaumont, 1934)

The Man Who Knew Too Much, dir. by Alfred Hitchcock (Paramount Pictures, 1956)

Manhattan Baby, dir. by Lucio Fulci (Fulvia Film, 1982)

Masters of Horror, dir. by various (Showtime, 2005–07)

Medea, dir. by Pier Paolo Pasolini (Euro International Films, 1969)

Murder-Rock [*Murderock uccide a passo di danza*], dir. by Lucio Fulci (Compagnia di Distribuzione Europea, 1984)

The New York Ripper [*Lo squartatore di New York*], dir. by Lucio Fulci (Fulvia Film, 1982)

Nightmare City [*Incubo sulla città contaminata*], dir. by Umberto Lenzi (New Fida, 1980)

Obsession [*Ossessione*], dir. by Luchino Visconti (Industrie Cinematografiche Italiane, 1943)

Once Upon a Time in the West [*C'era una volta il West*], dir. by Sergio Leone (Euro International Films, 1968)

One on Top of the Other / Perversion Story [*Una sull'altra*], dir. by Lucio Fulci (Fida Cinematografica, 1969)

Opera, dir. by Dario Argento (Compagnia Distribuzione Internazionale, 1987)

The Passenger [*Professione: reporter*], dir. by Michelangelo Antonioni (Cinema International Corporation, 1975)

Phenomena, dir. by Dario Argento (Titanus, 1985)

Psycho, dir. by Alfred Hitchcock (Paramount Pictures, 1960)

Roman Holiday, dir. by Billy Wilder (Paramount Pictures, 1953)

The Running Man, dir. by Paul Michael Glaser (TriStar Pictures, 1987)

Senso, dir. by Luchino Visconti (Lux Film, 1954)

Short Night of Glass Dolls [*La corta notte delle bambole di vetro*], dir. by Aldo Lado (Overseas Film Company, 1971)

The Sister of Ursula [*La sorella di Ursula*], dir. by Enzo Milioni (P.B.C., 1978)

Sleepless [*Non ho sonno*], dir. by Dario Argento (Medusa Distribuzione, 2001)

Story of a Love Affair [*Cronaca di un amore*], dir. by Michelangelo Antonioni (Fincine, 1950)

Sunset Boulevard, dir. by Billy Wilder (Paramount Pictures, 1950)

Suspiria, dir. by Dario Argento (Produzioni Atlas Consorziate, 1977)

The Sweet Body of Deborah [*Il dolce corpo di Deborah*], dir. by Romolo Guerrieri (Variety Film Production, 1968)

Tenebrae [*Tenebre*], dir. by Dario Argento (Titanus, 1982)

Too Beautiful to Die [*Sotto il vestito niente 2*], dir. by Dario Piana (Artisti Associati (II), 1988)

Torso [*I corpi presentano tracce di violenza carnale*], dir. by Sergio Martino (Interfilm, 1973)

Videodrome, dir. by David Cronenberg (Universal Pictures, 1983)

Zombie Flesh Eaters [*Zombi 2*], dir. by Lucio Fulci (Variety Film, 1979)

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