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<CT>What Do We Do with Vacant Space in Horror Films?</CT>

<CA>Karl Schoonover</CA>

Does horror make the potentiality of space available and extend the operations deeming vacated spaces empty ones, thereby making them imaginatively available for acquisition and for other endeavors, such as clearing agendas (gentrification, redevelopment, demolition, etc.)? Or does horror interrupt those processes, drawing an awareness to our complicity in the visual regimes that demand we see vacancy as an emptiness that must be filled? These questions need to be asked with an awareness of their geopolitical inflection in particular contexts, such as in Italy in the years during and just after the so-called economic miracle, the label given to the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s, a period characterized by the promotion of American-style consumerism and broader access to middle-class standards of living.

A landscape of redolent blankness provides the opening shot for the first Italian horror film of the postwar period, I vampiri / The Vampires (Riccardo Freda/Mario Bava, 1957) (Figure 1). After a montage of stills of Paris architectural landmarks during the credit sequence--postcards of the Hôtel de Ville, the Opéra Garnier, etc.--there is a long shot that begins with the Eiffel Tower and then slowly pans left, revealing a barren stretch of land. This flat expanse of marshland drained of texture and contrast provides a spectacularly unspectacular start to Italian horror's ur-text. The foreground of the shot reveals the banks of a river, and we find ourselves in a broad empty space, almost as if we have been returned to the Po River sequence of Paisà (1946), Roberto Rossellini's neorealist war film from eleven years earlier. As with that film, the I vampiri camera happens upon a drowned body found in the river, and people drag its limp form onto the shore.

<INSERT Schoonover Figure 1>

Pivoting on this scene of generalized vacancy, the film cues a reorientation of the gaze toward urban space. This shot is politically opaque, however, and as such it also introduces an undecidable politics that hovers over vacant spaces in Italian horror of the next decades. Is this shot a parable about embracing reconstruction or one that serves to unhinge modernity's hubris? In the camera's horizontal trajectory as well as in the real time of a single take, the film hedges its bets: The Eiffel Tower, ultimate product of European nineteenth-century modernity, gives way to fields of vacancy and finally to views of a construction site busy with cranes and teams of workers. Ending the shot here signals the seeming victory of progress, the colonization of a land left fallow. And yet this

location resembles a site of excavation, extraction, and/or demolition as much as it does a site of redevelopment. The unsettling discovery of a nameless corpse in broad daylight finds a subtle echo in the uncertain terms by which this land is being worked. The question of what happened to this body is overlaid with the question of what is being done to this place. Is this the scene of fallow land being filled? Or is this a once occupied neighborhood being appropriated and deemed empty in anticipation of future development? Wide-open space as neither decidedly vacant or emptied haunts this crime scene. This space, in fact, appears to yield the dead body, and thus a menacing unknowability opens up in the frame, a spatiality to which this genre will return and will exploit many times but will struggle to resolve.

The brutality of an anonymous unclaimed corpse and a random act of violence are interwoven with the horror of an irresolvable open space. Bava will repeat this opening shot of panning across a relatively clear horizon in Ecologia del delitto/Bay of Blood (1971). Adam Lowenstein argues that this later film's "treatment of landscape and death intersects with horror spectatorship in ways that may teach us something new about how the aesthetics and politics of horror function."¹ For Lowenstein, Bava chose Sabaudia in Lazio for the film's location as a retort to Benito Mussolini's appropriation of that area's land for development by the fascist state. It isn't details of the locations or anything topographical in the shots that serve this project; it is the process of revealing places as empty and how that process fosters and is fostered by a spectatorial compulsion to see the landscape as depopulated. Thus, Lowenstein characterizes the sensory engagement in horror's spectacles as a "subtractive spectatorship" that depends on the viewer "becoming landscape."² From the intersubjective imbrication of landscape and the death drive, this film excavates the dark underbelly of Italian modernity: "If two structuring discourses of post-war Italian cinema and society have been the politics of modernization and the national growth known as 'the economic miracle,' both often deployed to overlook or overwrite fascism's history, then Ecologia del delitto returns to the scene of the crime: land reclamation as economic engine."³

Lowenstein suggests that horror triggers and nurtures the "capacity to look otherwise,"^{3a} but, we can add, this seeing differently doesn't guarantee movement toward a more just or humane organization of the world. If Italian horror's vacancies do in fact open up the parameters of seeing, we need also to ask what the relationship is between Italian horror's vacancies and the reigning political economies of the second half of the twentieth century that define what is to be done to land (expropriating schemes such as "redevelopment," "eminent

domain," "nazionalizzazione"). Gentrification, for example, names a particular appropriation of urban space, one that requires an antecedent of seeing a space as empty. I believe that the vacant spaces of Italian horror of the 1960s and 1970s both utilize and undo the ways of seeing demanded by the "economic miracle."⁴

As a genre, horror has a fraught relation to place not just because its camera so often frequents uncertain and unstable spaces, but also because it depends on such spaces for generic demarcation, suspense, and other provocations.⁵ The horror image's vacancies are often threatening because they are dark and because that darkness rejects certainty, refuses full disclosure, and festers an illegibility that can contaminate borders in ways that make drawing discrete parameters difficult, obscuring the boundaries between things and beings. But as much as horror occurs in spaces replete with dark pockets of menacing vacancy--the neglected cellar, the shadows of dense woodlands, the abandoned city street, the corridors created by tall crops--it also occurs in expanses of wide-open space: the endless seriality of that same field of crops, the void of a still lake, the labyrinthine hollowness of the abandoned villa, the desert's limitless horizons of sameness, etc. Perhaps horror's privileging of such locations is trying to tell us something about the world and about the tensions that are overlooked when we leave such sites behind and out of purview. Perhaps we miss something crucial about horror if we ignore these voids or too anxiously seek to fill them. We lose the specificity of the genre--one of its central formal features. We also obscure some crucial features of this vacancy if we simply accept conventional definitions of what makes a space a place.

As with dirt for Mary Douglas, it is important to remember that the vacant spaces of horror are not about negation or even pure negativity. Horror's predilection for blank locations puts in relief how those unplaceable spaces, while never outside of meaning, suggest the quality that Douglas attributes to dirt as that which is outside of system.⁶ Placing the image or putting the viewer in spatial otherness creates a *mise-en-scène* in which the scene is off-scene and beyond what can be seen. The vacant spaces of horror are, to borrow a term from Douglas, an encounter with the "anomalous." For Douglas, such encounters are crucial for how they force the subject to engage with a kind of radical alterity that exposes the conventional course of things. They unstick the subject's vision.

If landscapes of vacancy define the spatial terms of the genre in the 1960s and 1970s in Italy, how should we critically approach these sometimes vague, unspecified spaces? In trying to

answer this question, this short essay blurs distinctions. It conflates interiors with exteriors, empty frame compositions with barren profilmic locales, uninhabited zones with barren landscapes. This deliberate recombination of types of space is, however, crucial to keep in play when trying to challenge a larger discursive field, one that exceeds the logic of categorical distinctions. My imbrication of diverse and incommensurate kinds of filmic images originates from my desire to undo those discourses that conspire to claim vacancy as emptiness--to insist that the emptiness of unclaimed space is a done deal and that its filling up is a necessity.

Discussions of place are not as prevalent in studies of the horror film as we might imagine.⁷ When analysis of horror's settings is offered, for example, the specificities of places, especially vacant ones, are downplayed. When scholars of the horror film do mention vacant landscapes or even interiors, these settings are rarely given central analytic focus and instead function within one of the following five rhetorics.

First, vacancy in the image (found in both compositions where space is left open in the frame and in a *mise-en-scène* of open space that also produces voids in the image) is seen as a genre-specific device for generating an anticipation of horror to come. One general film analysis textbook even includes horror's vacant spaces as its primary example of how a particular technique defines genre as a recognizable category. "In the horror film, empty screen space serves to indicate that there will be a fright. Often, the character is placed to the front and side of the frame, with the remainder of the frame in the background left empty of action. The conventions of the genre point to the potential filling of this space by an antagonist. The empty space creates suspense, as the audience anticipates the generic convention of the horror: the arrival of the monster."⁸ According to Richard Maltby, along with the extreme activation of areas "just offscreen," blank space in the image provides an engine for building suspense.⁹ In other words, spatial vacuity provides a key structural bolster to the formal integrity of narrative. Another scholar of horror, Julian Hanich, sees this same structural imperative repeated within the compositional protocols of the genre around how emptiness occupies space in the frame: "in dread scenes the unbalanced composition cues us to expect the space left free to be filled by the killer or the monster."¹⁰ In this first rhetoric, vacancy is established in relation to the contents of the frame, in tension with those parameters. It is a compositional space of negative or blank value.

Second, empty space in horror films is understood to show off a certain kind of intertextuality and the shared use of devices across related genres in other media. For example, film

horror landscapes are understood to emerge from preexisting idioms of literature and art, such as the English gothic novel or French symbolist painting. Colette Balmain argues in this vein that the empty spaces in Japanese horror echo an iconographic tradition of empty space in the compositions of prints and screen painting.¹¹ Horror's vacancies borrow from established pictorial traditions in this second rhetoric. Third, setting is said to figure something about the spheres of the mythical. From this perspective, it functions as metaphorical or allegorical backdrop. In Planks of Reason, a pioneering collection of essays on horror, Jonathan Lemkin argues that horror participates in an idealization of the American landscape. Lemkin's example is *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975), and he discusses this film's wide-open spatiality as "mythic," "nostalgic," and "archetypal."¹² Landscape, then, has a symbolic functionality for Lemkin. Vacancies make prominent figuration, encouraging allegorical or metaphorical readings of the text as a whole.

Fourth, horror's settings have also operated as challenges to existing symbolic systems. By contrast to Lemkin but writing in the same collection, Christopher Sharrett discusses horror landscape as the implosion of the archetype. Vacancies represent the image's resistance to the hermeneutic impulses of the spectator, a refusal of symbolism or thematic figuration. Sharrett describes landscape in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Tobe Hooper, 1974) as a "wasteland of dissolution," one that bespeaks "the end-time of American experience" and, in particular, the bankrupt status of symbolism ("the general paucity of myth").¹³ Landscape here is not simply a symptom of the "entropy" that pulls against the progressive expansionist project of America.¹⁴ Landscape functions as entropy, a kind of semiotic collapse that leaves the viewer to confront the void opening up, a "chaos . . . where the sustaining forces of civilization are not operative."¹⁵ Sharrett's horror landscape registers a particular affect that overwhelms traditional hermeneutic impulses. Vacancy stands as a site of aesthetic intensity, triggering catharsis or sublime ecstasy. As such, landscape operates in a way akin to the sublime in classical accounts, and yet this modern sublime is charged with historical or political potency.

It is in fact within this fourth approach that horror's vacant locales most often surface. For example, there is Susan Sontag's idea that the vacancy of apocalyptic disaster films supplies their most menacing spectacle.¹⁶ For her, the central attraction of these films was "that great scene with New York or London or Tokyo discovered empty, its entire population

annihilated."¹⁷ The satisfaction of seeing a city deserted comes from its vision of a world suddenly vacated of its restrictive normality, emptied of hegemony. There is another crucial concept that emerges from Sontag's essay and stands as the fifth and final rhetoric of the horror landscape: the revision of the spectator's perspective. Sontag writes that "The lure of such generalized disaster as a fantasy is that it releases one from normal obligations."¹⁸

More recently, in her reading of Under the Skin (Jonathan Glazer, 2014) Ara Osterweil argues that the film "brilliantly demonstrates that for a woman to dare to look with desire radically transforms the everyday landscape and its power relations."¹⁹ For Osterweil, the expressionistic and affective qualities of this film are achieved via landscape and its treatment by the camera. This is the moral and political center of the film. "While the film's title advertises its concern with what lies under the skin, the film is actually committed to the degraded surfaces of everyday life."²⁰ Landscape emerges at key junctures, as the challenge of the ineffable. "The cinematography revels in penumbral shadow, rendering geography as mysterious as ontology. Fog drapes terrain."²¹ In these passages, Osterweil's argument would encourage us to find a means of accounting for the importance of the unmappable spaces in horror. As with Sontag's apocalyptic spectacles, Osterweil's landscapes unhinge the spectator's look. While Sontag remains cautious about how catastrophe revises vision, Osterweil suggests how the cinematic narration of landscape as a site of horror carries the capacity to dislocate traditional optics in important ways and also jolts the viewer into realizing that looking is always as political and social as it is purely perceptual.

We see these same five rhetorics of space repeated by scholars working on specifically Italian horror. Mary P. Wood, for example, notes how vacancy in the image creates a compositional asymmetry that defines the affective parameters of Italian horror's aesthetic.²² Austin Fisher argues that we have overlooked the variability of landscape in Italian horror, pointing in particular to the scholarly assumption that the giallo is an urban genre. In an essay looking at the politics of the "rural giallo," Fisher proposes that the subgenre's specificity "registers preoccupations, confusions and ambiguities arising from its cultural moment."²³ As much as and even more than its urban counterparts, the rural giallo reflects the contradictions of Italy as a nation during the anni di piombo, the years of domestic terrorism. The use of landscape in his central example, Non si sevizia un paperino/Don't Torture a Duckling (Lucio Fulci, 1972), "[sets] up a series of thematic and symbolic contrasts" concerning the regional, social, and

political schisms plaguing the nation in this period.²⁴

While abandoned interiors and vacant exteriors reflect the decadence and decay of the ancien régime for a canonical description of Italian gothic horror,²⁵ Alexia Kannas defines the Italian giallo film as a series of interiors, describing the spaces of the genre as not only "sparsely furnished," "anonymous," and "desolate" but also "disinterested," "ambiguous," and inherently "ungraspable." Extending Kracauer's conception of horror to the giallo, Kannas writes how this genre is set in "void-like, impersonal spaces [that] become symbolic of the conditions of modernity," spaces where "togetherness . . . has no meaning."²⁶ In one of the most cited works on the giallo, Mikel J. Koven argues that it is a cinema of ambivalence, specifically "ambivalence towards modernity. . . . These films problematise the roles and spaces Italians occupy within the world, and the roles others play within Italy. . . . More significantly, they open up a discursive space wherein modernity itself can be discussed and critiqued."²⁷ Another key scholar of Italian horror, Michael Siegel, suggests that the giallo responds to the specificity of Italian modernity, uncovering archival correlations among urban planning, social politics, and an aesthetics of "nonplace" in the films.²⁸ He writes that against the ever-present monumentality that looms over the city of Rome, Dario Argento was able to introduce a contestatory mode of nonspace through his use of location in his film L'uccello dalle piume di cristallo/The Bird with the Crystal Plumage (1970). As he puts it, "The film pries open--and leaves open--a series of questions about the future of the city in the face of the new spatialities, temporalities, and power structures of a postmodernity that was really beginning to take root in Rome at this time. . . . Not only Rome, therefore, but also urban cinema itself appears at the end of the film to be precisely a location that has no location."²⁹ Though Siegel focuses on how the misleading transparency of glass surfaces disrupts the ideology of panopticism and surveillance coming to dominate Roman public space in the period, we might easily take his comments also to be about the politics of about emptiness.

The studies tracking the locations of diegetic spaces in Italian horror face a particular challenge, because often the identifiable markers of places were downplayed in the mise-en-scène of these films, since they were targeted more to foreign markets than to the domestic box office. As Stefano Baschiera and Francesco Di Chiara point out, they were "made mainly for export, and were often consumed by Italian audiences as foreign movies."³⁰ This was cinema made in Italy more than it was cinema all'Italiana per se. So when Kannas and Koven connect Italian

horror to the nation's inconsistent and vexed relationship to modernity and modernization, the trajectory from urban space onscreen to Italy's geopolitical situatedness in relation to modernity may be even more vexed than first thought.

As if to compensate for the instabilities raised by the space of landscape in these horror films, there is a book cataloging the locations in Argento's films, juxtaposing frame grabs with photographs of those sites as they exist today.³¹ Equally compensatory is the thoroughness with which the locations of many giallo films are listed on IMDb. The scene locales on these IMDb lists are clickable, linked to specific locations on Google Maps. In a sense, then, these links operate to verify cinematic spaces as actual places that exist today. But what exactly do links corroborate about space in the films? They do not substantiate the urban spaces in Argento, since those cannot be mapped in any one city from one shot to the next (e.g., in Four Flies on Grey Velvet/Quattro mosche di velluto grigio (1971) the detective moves from a street in Turin to one in Milan as if they are only blocks away). As Baschiera and Di Chiara remind us, "Argento often uses a patchwork of different spaces from different cities in order to create his urban locales; through abstraction, the locations become almost unrecognizable and thus open to different locational interpretations and identities."³² The modern settings of giallo tell us as much about the nonidentity of location as they tell us about any actual geography; they are, in these authors' terms, "a fake topography made from real spaces."³³ The structuring of urban space through the experience of the gazing subject so central to theories of modernity from the flaneur and the man in the crowd forward would thus be evaded by these projects, since that gaze does not travel in existing spaces.

These examples prompt us to think in more detail about Italian horror's locations and their refusal of the particular logics of modern space as well as the economic relations and social metrics of those logics. What if the spaces that we most needed to learn about and learn from are those that do not qualify as places (i.e., those that couldn't be verified by mapping cinematic space to profilmic places) but nevertheless manage to register something crucial about the politics of vacancy? Writing about neither horror nor Italian cinema but Renaissance frescoes, French philosopher and art historian Georges Didi-Huberman seems drawn to empty spaces, pushing himself and other art historians not to avoid that which is visual without being fully visible. "The history of art will fail to understand the visual efficacy of images so long as it remains subject to the tyranny of the visible."³⁵ There is for Didi-Huberman a violence that follows from making the artwork fully knowable. He is eager to attend to those aspects of the

work of art that resist description and definition. As an example, he chooses a field of light in the center of a Fra Angelico painting. Confronting its whiteness, its blankness, and its emptiness is a necessary challenge for anyone trying to understand this work of art and yet is something that Didi-Huberman feels art history's methodologies cannot help describe.

A similar challenge strikes me as being central to the problem of how to describe our encounter with vacant space in film without reconciling it to the known and safe structures of the postmodern sublime, vernacular modernist tropes or even as simply a backdrop that serves the needs of a dystopic diegesis. In horror there are spaces not unlike those described by Didi-Huberman peeking through place-ness, spaces where the "visual" is not equated with the "visible."³⁶ These are spaces that "hollow[] out all spectacle."³⁷

What would it mean to allow for how these vacant spaces visually frustrate our impulse to recognize, to discern in them something legible? My suspicion is that horror's emptiness contains the same potential that Didi-Huberman finds in the blankness of the Fra Angelico painting, as it "offers nothing for the grasping: it offers . . . [the] ungraspable, which is to say productive of an inextricable loop of knowledge and not-knowledge."³⁸ Here we might note how grasping is part of the structure of horror; so often grasping is the gesture that initiates horror's most terrifying vectors of motion.

I have recently written about the role of waste in Argento's films from the 1970s and 1980s, arguing that his camera's predilection for scenarios of abandoned buildings, forgotten city lots, and other spaces left to waste does not signal an impulse toward pure modernist abstraction but instead functions to make us horrifically uncomfortable with precisely the uncontrollable grasping impulses within us that Didi-Huberman describes.³⁹ Confronting the numerous vacancies in Argento's mise-en-scène, including both his audaciously desolate compositions and his narrative refusals, I suggest that emptiness works two ways. On the one hand, Argento's vacancies can bring us to the limits of representation, asking, for example, whether the photographic image represents emptiness and whether films can image the empty and remain visual. Charlotte Brunsdon has argued in another context that empty spaces in films bespeak a representational "hesitation."⁴⁰ Argento's vacancies amplify this hesitation. In frustrating our longing for cinematicity, they provoke us to think about what that longing and its expectations may demand of cinema and of our sense of the world.

On the other hand, Argento's nearly emptied images can also

ask us to question, as Brunsdon does, the politics of offering up a space as empty rather than simply vacant. There is a politics of the vacant image that forces us to encounter otherness and confront anomaly, as Douglas suggests dirt does, without trying to systemize it into an emptiness. Does horror use vacancy to amplify the spectator's impulses to empty and thereby clean up space so that it may be filled or developed? Or does it instead use vacancy to test and reform our affective relationship to spatial otherness? In perhaps more terrestrial terms, what are the politics of empty spaces in horror? Do they support or interrupt space-clearing agendas and expropriation schemes?

In direct contrast to Argento stands the more ordinary horror film L'isola degli uomini pesce/Screamers (Sergio Martino, 1979), which demonstrates how the emptying of vacant space can have conservative and even retrograde effects. Directed by Sergio Martino, perhaps better known for his slightly earlier features I corpi presentano tracce di violenza carnale/Torso (1973) and La montagna del dio cannibale/Slave of the Cannibal God (1978), this other use of vacated locales puts a different politics into play. This particular film makes the landscape of Sardinia lack specificity--empties it--in a way that reflects the geopolitics of the redevelopment of the Costa Smeralda, a massive luxury real estate scheme conceived in 1961 and spearheaded by the Aga Khan. The disarticulation of spatial specificity in Sardinian locations in 1960s and 1970s cinema has a distinct connection to the island's socioeconomic history in the late twentieth century. Sardinia's appearance as a space nearly emptied of contents and possessing inconsequential specificity raises questions, pace Brunsdon, about the politics of offering up space as empty. The refusal to grant locations their specificity coexists too comfortably with commercial development of the island's coastal communities. What we might call the "ambiguation" of the Sardinian landscape is clearly of geopolitical consequence. It may even be seen as contributing to real estate speculation and to the logic that supports Sardinia's transition to a service economy as well as its role in Berlusconi's power and wealth.

The Island of the Fish People draws heavily from Island of Lost Souls (Erle C. Kenton, 1932) and perhaps its remake, The Island of Dr. Moreau (Don Taylor, 1978). The Island of the Fish People depicts a remote island run by an evil despot who has enslaved a voodoo cult to protect him while at the same time keeping a mad scientist on the island. This mad scientist creates a human/fish hybrid species to protect and extract the underwater treasures of Atlantis. Sardinia is never named in the film except in the credits. The island performs in disguise. This unnamng goes hand in hand with emptying out the

specificity of Sardinia as a place inhabited by people, as an agent of history, as a producer of culture. The island remains outside of time, premodern, even prehistoric. The elements of Sardinian landscape are used compositionally to create zones of emptied space with an almost aggressive blankness within the image, one that threatens to devour representation, leaving only white space via blankness brought on by mist and fog, expanses of pale sand, or liquid lime bubbling up. In imagistic terms, these zones of blankness visually articulate a space that needs controlling, taming, containment. This filmed landscape thus carries a specific political cadence not only in what it manages to keep offscreen or frames out but also for how it produces a kind of longing in the spectator, simultaneously for escape and retreat from modernity, as well as for a kind of disciplining of the premodern and its despotic forms of power gone awry. What gets wrapped up, then, in this figuring of landscape is a reshaping of independence, a rewriting of the actual sovereignty of the island, perhaps even a renegotiating of the terms by which Sardinian people get to determine the island's destiny. This is a Sardinia without history, without a distinct autonomy, and largely without a people or indeed seemingly any people. What may seem like an otherwise innocent backdrop produces Sardinia as a nonplace. This process interacts in this period with the redevelopment of the island.

The real challenge that I see these films pose and that their study demands is how we might unsee the landscape as gentrifiable. The Island of the Fish People partakes in a clearing of space that parallels demolition and resettlement schemes under way to render fully Sardinia's potential as tradable real estate. The vacancies exposed in I vampiri's opening shots might retain a more unsettling blankness, but they too nevertheless anticipate the postwar redevelopment of Paris aligned with a more market-driven and outward-facing economy. How can we see vacancy without grasping, to borrow Didi-Huberman's term--without reaching for meaning, value, or real estate potential?⁴¹

<A>Conclusion

Several years ago, I was asked to contribute an essay to an anthology on landscape and the city of Venice. The book's editor had invited me as a film scholar, and she responded with excitement when I delivered an essay about space in Monster of Venice/Il mostro di Venezia (Dino Tavella, 1965). When the essay reached the press's editorial team, however, it was rejected before being sent to readers. They overrode the book editor and said that since the volume was part of a series on the specificity of urban landscapes, with Venice just one city on

their long list, my essay didn't fit "the remit" because it failed to describe a location that could be found. The editorial team said that when they tried to locate one of the exterior shots in the film, they could not find it. The majority of my essay concerned depictions of Venice's water in the film, including the photographic registration of the water's ominous moving surface, its darkness, swirling reflections and deep blankness. The press felt that water didn't qualify as place. Since I had not described an identifiable location and since therefore the book's readers would not be able to find it on a map, my essay couldn't be included in the book. They urged me to write about a place in Venice that could be pinpointed with certainty, a locality with cartographic coordinates, tourist access, and development potential. I was aware that my choice of location had been a provocation, but it surprised me that a book on Venice's landscapes didn't allow for a discussion of water, since water is--at the risk of invoking cliché--life and death in Venice.

As I look back now, I have come to think that it may have been equally important that this was not just any film about Venice but a horror film and not an arty classic, such as Don't Look Now (Nicolas Roeg 1973), but a fairly typical example of the low-genre productions that emerged from Italy in the mid-twentieth century, which were destined for export and made on the cheap. In the context of several new book series that map locations for famous films, this editorial decision leads me to ask, once again, what counts as a locatable landscape for film scholars and film buffs?⁴² What are the goals of mapping a film's locations, of locating its landscapes? What can we learn from such work? In scholarly studies, in fan books, and on the locations tab on IMDb.com, could it be that the process of cataloging occludes certain other places that no GPS or developer can find? Do such projects allow for the vital particularities of spaces defined by their transience, evanescence, and lack of milestones or monuments? Should we make findable blank or vacant spaces whose placeness was unsettled in the profilmic moment? What about spaces whose emptiness may have been contested? How can we assume to know a city if before starting to map it we already exclude certain kinds of space from ever achieving recognition as a place? And do such mapping projects inadvertently reify the film image, obliterating the dynamic interactions with place that the image allows? What if the accounting and reconciling process suggested by these new books on Italian locations actually block what we need to learn from the space(s) of Italian horror?

This brings us back to the depth of the blankness of water in the film Il mostro di Venezia. This film's shots of water stress the instability of cinema's images: emptied out and

blanked out almost to the point of total darkness, these images challenge our sense of the representational prowess and exactitude of the photographically generated view. By foregrounding such blankness, this film makes us confront the cinema's places. Those places ask us to question whether landscape onscreen will ever qualify as a terra firma and whether it can in this sense ever be developed. When we agree to map a film's locations, we overlook the challenges of the image. We ignore its politics of space--its refusals of governmentality, eminent domain, property rights, and narratives of development.

<A>Notes

<NT>1. Adam Lowenstein, "The Giallo/Slasher Landscape: Ecologia Del Delitto, Friday the 13th, and Subtractive Spectatorship," in Italian Horror Cinema, ed. Stefano Baschiera and Russ Hunter (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 133.

2. Ibid., 140.

3. Ibid., 136.

3a. Ibid., 140.

4. Victoria De Grazia describes the economic miracle's boom years as the time during which Italy struggled to negotiate two contrasting models of being: the European vision of the social citizen and the American notion of the sovereign consumer. See De Grazia, Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 342-43. Angelo Restivo finds this tension registered in how the films of the period contrast movement in different kinds of spaces, static heavy ones versus those associated with mobility:

<NEXT>The word "miracle" condenses into a temporal coup, a process that obviously occurs over time; it thus expresses at the level of lived experience--the lived experience of the Neapolitan artisan working from a basso in the dilapidated central city, or the displaced day-laborer of the rice fields of the Po Valley--the quality of shock that such sudden change effects. . . . We see in the years of the economic miracle a shift of power away from the traditional "structures of dominance"--that is, the essentially regionalist bourgeoisie and intellectual class--toward the "emergent structure" centered on technocrats who are administering this miracle, and one of whose essential features is the new mobility across the national space. Thus, as we shall see, the road becomes not only a new reality in the physical

landscape of Italy, but also becomes a central trope in the construction of a new Italy based on a culture of consumption.</NEXT>

See Restivo, The Cinema of Economic Miracles: Visuality and Modernization in the Italian Art Film (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 46.

5. Horror's appropriation of a real location--its taking of place, so to speak--has always been fraught with tension and delicate negotiation. Locals protest if a film uses their community as a recognizable location. Nantucketers refused Steven Spielberg the right to shoot Jaws (1975) because they anticipated that it would forever mar the reputation of the island's beaches and townspeople.

6. Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 2, 6, 7.

7. Interesting exceptions here include the other essays in this dossier as well as Nina K. Martin's "Dread of Mothering: Plumbing the Depths of Dark Water," Jump Cut, no. 50 (Spring 2008), and Saige Walton's ecologically inflected discussion of landscape in "Air, Atmosphere, Environment: Film Mood, Folk Horror and The VVitch," Screening the Past, no. 43 (April 2018).

8. Mark de Valk with Sarah Arnold, The Film Handbook (New York: Routledge, 2013), 146.

9. Qtd. in Barry Langford, Post-Classical Hollywood: Film Industry, Style and Ideology since 1945 (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 91.

10. Julian Hanich, Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers: The Aesthetic Paradox of Pleasurable Fear (London: Routledge, 2012), 164-65.

11. Colette Balmain, Introduction to Japanese Horror Film (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 2-3.

12. Jonathan Lemkin, "Archetypal Landscapes and Jaws," in Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film, ed. Barry Keith Grant, 277-89 (Metuchen/London: Scarecrow, 1984).

13. Christopher Sharrett, "The Idea of Apocalypse in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," in Planks of Reason, 272, 273.

14. Ibid., 255.

15. Ibid., 262.

16. Susan Sontag, "The Imagination of Disaster," Commentary, no. 40 (October 1, 1965): 42-48.

17. Ibid., 45.

18. Ibid., 45.

19. Ara Osterweil, "Under the Skin: The Perils of Becoming Female," Film Quarterly 67, no. 4 (June 1, 2014): 47.

20. Ibid., 45.

21. Ibid., 44.

22. Mary P. Wood, Italian Cinema (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2005),

57.

23. Austin Fisher, "Political Memory in the Italian Hinterland: Locating the 'Rural Giallo'," in Italian Horror Cinema, ed. Stefano Baschiera and Russ Hunter (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 163.

24. Ibid., 168.

25. Mikel J. Koven, "The Giallo and the Spaghetti Nightmare Film," in The Italian Cinema Book, ed. Peter Bondanella (London: Palgrave Macmillan/British Film Institute, 2014), 204.

26. Alexia Kannas, "No Place Like Home: The Late-Modern World of the Italian Giallo Film," Senses of Cinema, July 4, 2013, <http://sensesofcinema.com/2013/uncategorized/no-place-like-home-the-late-modern-world-of-the-italian-giallo-film/>.

27. Michael J. Koven, "La Dolce Morta: Space, Modernity and the Giallo," Kinoeye: New Perspectives on European Film, October 27, 2003, <http://www.kinoeye.org/03/12/koven12.php>.

28. Michael Siegel, "The Nonplace of Argento: The Bird with the Crystal Plumage and Roman Urban History," in Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image, ed. John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel, 211-31 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

29. Ibid, 228.

30. Stefano Baschiera and Francesco Di Chiara, "A Postcard from the Grindhouse: Exotic Landscapes and Italian Holidays in Lucio Fulci's Zombie and Sergio Martino's Torso," in Cinema Inferno: Celluloid Explosions from the Cultural Margins, ed. Robert G. Weiner and John Cline (Toronto: Scarecrow, 2010), 119.

31. Mauro D'Avino and Lorenzo Rumori, Dario Argento, si gira! Insieme al maestro del thriller sui luoghi della paura (Rome: Gremese Editore), 2014.

32. Ibid., 115.

33. Ibid.

35. Georges Didi-Huberman, "The History of Art within the Limits of Its Simple Practice," in Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art, trans. John Goodman (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2009), 52.

36. Ibid., 17.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 21.

39. Karl Schoonover, "Scrap Metal, Stains, Clogged Drains: Argento's Refuse and Its Refusals," in Italian Horror Cinema, ed. Stefano Baschiera and Russ Hunter, 111-26 (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

40. Charlotte Brunsdon, "Towards a History of Empty Spaces," Journal of British Cinema and Television 4, no. 2

(November 1, 2007): 221.

41. Didi-Huberman uses the French word insaisissable, which means ungraspable as well as unseizable in legal terms, denoting that which cannot be repossessed by the state in bankruptcies, criminal proceedings, or divorces. I thank James Leo Cahill for bringing this second meaning to my attention. In her book Dead Pledges: Debt, Crisis, and Twenty-First-Century Culture (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), Annie McClanahan makes a crucial intervention into the politics of space in horror, arguing that certain recent films "use the horror genre to capture the spectacular nature of both the bubble and the bust and to expose the seismic shifts in conceptions of property ownership that have followed as a result of real estate speculation and the foreclosure crisis. Engaging with changing accounts of property rights, these horror films dramatize noncontractual understandings of ownership grounded in ideas of sentiment and utility rather than market exchange and legal formalism".

42. Ludovica Damiani, Set in Cortina: Il cinema e le Dolomiti; Scatti protagonisti racconti (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2010); Damiani, Set in Venice: Il cinema a Venezia scatti protagonisti racconti (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2009); Mauro D'Avino and Lorenzo Rumori, Roma, si gira! Gli scorci ritrovati del cinema di ieri, 2 vols. (Rome: Gremese Editore, 2012); Mauro D'Avino and Lorenzo Rumori, Venezia, si gira! Gli scorci ritrovati del cinema di ieri (Rome: Gremese Editore, 2013); Mauro D'Avino, Lorenzo Rumori, and Simone Pasquali, Napoli, si gira! Gli scorci ritrovati del cinema di ieri (Rome: Gremese Editore, 2014); Mauro D'Avino, Lorenzo Rumori, Simone Pasquali, Roberto Giani, and Andrea Martinenghi, Milano, si gira! Gli scorci ritrovati del cinema di ieri (Rome: Gremese Editore, 2012); Gabriel Solomons, World Film Locations: Rome (Bristol: Intellect, 2014); Alberto Zambenedetti, World Film Locations: Florence (Bristol: Intellect, 2014).</NT>

