

Mark of the Devil: On a Classic Exploitation Film

Conference Report by Thomas Hödl and Joachim Schätz



MARK OF THE DEVIL
ON A CLASSIC EXPLOITATION FILM

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The landmark film *Mark of the Devil* premiered in Europe in 1970. Although the film boasts an incredible cast, including Herbert Lom, Reggie Nalder, Herbert Fux and a young Udo Kier, and was successful enough, both in Europe and the U.S., to reach cult status and spawn a sequel, it faced controversy and censorship from the very start. Critics panned it for its excessive violence and exploitative nature. In 2014, genre film scholar Andreas Ehrenreich proved that the film was more than just a meaningless series of depictions of sex and torture and furthered the consideration of the film from other points of view. With the support of the Department of Theatre, Film and Media Studies of the University of Vienna, he organised a three-day conference in Tamsweg, Austria, a town in the Lungau region, which provided much of the gorgeous scenery for both *Mark of the Devil* and *Mark of the Devil Part II*. A group of twenty scholars from universities in continental Europe, Great Britain and the U.S. examined the films from various disciplinary angles, providing context and astute close readings.

While Deniz Bayrak and Sarah Reininghaus smartly analysed the topological system of the two movies, Marcus Stiglegger set them in relation to his concept of transgressive cinema as inspired by Georges Bataille. Julian Petley succinctly traced the history of *Mark of the Devil's* censoring in Great Britain. Michael Fuchs engaged with the question of authorship, which is an important point, given that the first film has two directors, one of whom – Austrian actor and 1950s heartthrob Adrian Hoven – also acted as the film's producer. (*Mark of the Devil's* other officially credited director Michael Armstrong, a relative newcomer from the U.K., who had previously made the 1969 proto-slasher *The Haunted House of Horror*, would go on to write seventies sex comedies such as blockbuster-director-to-be Martin Campbell's *The Sex Thief* and *Eskimo Nell*.) Sarah Held's presentation, informed by gender studies, investigated the various female characters in *Mark of the Devil* who range from mere victims to active heroines. The torture endured by one of these characters – the infamous scene where Herbert Fux pulls out a woman's tongue – provided the basis for Christine

Lötscher's lucid presentation on cultural imaginations of martyrdom. Bálint Kovács and Judit Szabó persuasively interpreted a scene involving a Punch and Judy show within the film as an allegory of the delicate relationship of voyeurism that exploitation films often build with their audiences. In a similar vein, Michael Lück read the film text as a meditation on the ethics of looking, assessing its focus on the revealing of witch marks and scenes depicting public acts of violence.

Going beyond close readings of the films, some of the scholars placed them within diverse film historical lineages and genres.

Drehli Robnik playfully examined the acoustic elements of horror movies about witches, encompassing such contributions as *Häxan*, *Suspiria*, and *The Blair Witch Project*. Daniel Illger's presentation focused, with poetic precision, on the aesthetic experience conveyed by exploitation films, while Arthur Lizie talked about the difficulties of teaching exploitation cinema at U.S. universities.

Xavier Mendik, however, made a convincing case for the layered historicity of European exploitation films, demonstrating the ways in

which German and Italian genre fare from circa 1970 reacted to and processed acts of left-wing terrorist violence.

Occasional comparisons to other forms of media were drawn as well. Janet S. Robinson looked into affinities and discrepancies between *Mark of the Devil* and the third, *witchploitation*-heavy season of current anthology series *American Horror Story*, whose tongue-in-cheek pseudo-feminism did not measure up well against the film's robust sense of enlightenment-via-sleaze. While theologian Gianluigi Gugliemmetto followed the films' iconographic appropriations from art history, Ivo Ritzer called attention to the recycling and rewriting of *witchploitation* in the cover-artwork and lyrics of metal bands.

Other speakers put the focus on the historical background of *Mark of the Devil*. Peter Klammer, a historian based in the region, elaborated on the witch trials that really took place in the Lungau area, making it a plausible locale for the shooting of the films in the first place. Legal scholar Marlene Peinhopf traced medieval witch trials and their imaginary

afterlife back to ancient Roman law and its enduring taxonomy of female troublemakers: *strix*, *venefica*, *adultera*.

Countering any preliminary impression that *Mark of the Devil* and *Mark of the Devil Part II* could prove too slim a topic to sustain a conference, the talks and discussions covered an impressive range of related matters – among them: the aesthetics and politics of horror cinema, production and reception cultures of exploitation film, imaginations of state power and female agency across different cultural forms and historical contexts – while never losing sight of the inciting two films, present in precise clip selections and slide shows.

The ambitious accompanying programme of the conference helped enrich the lectures and made for two varied days. On the first two days, both *Mark of the Devil* and its sequel were shown to the members of the conference as well as to other spectators. The audience turnout for the screenings proved the locals' enduring remembrance of the films' shoot in the Lungau region. Both screenings were

framed by talks with guest stars: Michael Holm, composer of *Mark of the Devil's* catchy, swelling soundtrack and a star of German pop in his own right, proved a charming, game and enlightening interviewee, as did Erika Blanc, the leading lady of *Mark of the Devil Part II* and Percy Hoven, son of producer/director/actor Adrian Hoven and actor in small roles in both films. (Indeed, in *Mark of the Devil Part II* Percy Hoven had played the son of Blanc's heroine, prompting a heart-warming reunion as they met again at the conference for the first time ever since shooting the film.) Beyond this public opportunity and further conversations in the evenings, your trusty correspondent Thomas Hödl was lucky enough to join a private interview that film historian Uwe Huber took with Signora Blanc. For hours, she recounted her work experiences with such genre film luminaries as Antonio Margheriti, Umberto Lenzi, Anthony Steffen, Siegfried Rauch or Gordon Mitchell, generally colored in a very positive light.

Following the public screening of the first film, Martin Nechvatal showed some

extremely rare behind-the-scenes footage he had found while researching for his upcoming documentary on *Mark of the Devil*. The recordings by a local who had worked on the production of both films include some astonishing shots of Hoven directing Udo Kier's death scene, providing evidence in the contested matter of the first film's authorship. (Most interviews suggest that he was directing the film for most of the shoot.)

To honor both the shooting of much of the film in the beautiful Lungau area as well as the tragic history of witch trials on which the film is based, Andreas Ehrenreich organized two excursions for the third, final conference day: The first took the participants to a hill near the conference location where suspected 'witches' and 'werewolves' had been tried and executed in real life. The second led to castle Moosham, which features prominently in both films. Touring the site, the visitors enthusiastically recognized the domicile of Herbert Lom's witchfinder general from *Mark of the Devil* – including the impressive balustrade where the final chase took place and the infamous torture chamber. They also found many other

locations from the films' topography inside the walls of castle Moosham, though often seeming on a much smaller scale when compared to their cinematic presentation.

The conference on *Mark of the Devil* was an extraordinary experience in many senses. Testing the 'knowledge' of the exploitation film, its aesthetic richness and depth of cultural allusions on a concrete example paid good dividends throughout. (Additionally, the attendants delighted in a chance to meet cinematic icons like Michael Holm and Erika Blanc in such a relaxed environment.) Last but not least, the lectures proved that there is no need to sanitize or stylize *Mark of the Devil* into a piece of canon art to make it an engaging subject for investigation. It may be exploitation, and art, precisely as such.

Spaghetti Cinema University of Bedfordshire (9-10 May 2014)

Conference Report

By Neil Fox



Devised by Dr. Austin Fisher and first held in 2013 *Spaghetti Cinema* is an academic conference and film festival that celebrates the history and contemporary reach of Italian genre cinema and has been held consecutively in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire, to date. The first event focused on Spaghetti Westerns and the follow up was a two-day event dedicated to the *Giallo* and Italian horror cinema. One of the main evolutions for the 2014 event, held over two

days in early May, was even greater expression of fandom amongst the convening academics due to the presence of key practitioners responsible for work being screened and discussed through the diverse panels and keynote.

The balance of academic rigour and cinematic appreciation is a key element of the *Spaghetti Cinema* approach and the event featured screenings of Dario Argento's *Phenomena* (1985), Lucio Fulci's *The Beyond* (1981) and

Ruggero Deodato's *Last Cannibal World* (1977). These screenings were set in context by the appearance of figures involved in varying degrees in the production of the films including Deodato himself alongside his *Last Cannibal World* actress Me Me Lai. The event also welcomed Luigi Cozzi who worked on the special effects for *Phenomena* and star of *The Beyond*, Catriona MacColl. The guests were present for the majority of the weekend and their presence at panels led to fascinating industrial practice insight that added degrees of weight and new context to the academic work being presented. The presence of such illustrious participants had the impact of reducing serious academics to gob-smacked fans at times and brought a real sense of passion to the proceedings, resulting in an intimate social and collegiate atmosphere amongst the audience of presenting academics, industry guests and genre fans.

This year's keynote was delivered by Professor Peter Hutchings and discussed the early work of Dario Argento and Mario Bava. By looking at the contemporary Italian film industry and culture when these filmmakers emerged Hutchings refigured the directors as

being closer to the mainstream of Italian filmmaking than may have been argued through revisionist study. The presence of a keynote speaker who is responsible for some of the original and pre-eminent research in a specialist field, akin to Sir Christopher Frayling and Spaghetti Westerns in year one, again resulted in the odd but welcome phenomenon in such surroundings of the presence of an academic who is both referenced at length across the event yet imparts immediate insight and analysis on the subjects being covered. The result of this is an elevation of the work and enhanced scope of the research.

There were three panels on day one and they were kicked off by the first, titled *Re-appraising Genre Histories*. The three papers presented foreshadowed the idiosyncratic and diverse approaches to the core subject that would emerge across the two days of the conference. Dr. Russ Hunter from Northumbria University started at the beginning, not only of horror cinema but the form itself in a paper titled *Mostruoso! Italy's Silent Horror Cinema*. Hunter looked at how

early Italian cinema engaged with tropes that would become regarded as horror conventions and created work that was aligned with emerging expressionistic movements across Europe suggesting that there were antecedents to the traditionally regarded beginning of the Italian horror form in the 1950s. This repositioning of commonly held ideas to draw threads throughout wider cinematic culture proved to be one of the most engaging elements of the academic proceedings.

Andreas Ehrenreich from the University of Mannheim delivered a close reading of the film and screenplay of Sergio Martino's *Next! /Blade of the Ripper* (1971) to create a fascinating argument that the *Giallo* is a form of adaptation when aligned with the screenplay due to the production practices and industrial contexts that contribute to the creation of the films. Ehrenreich argued his case by revealing where the final version of the film differed to the screenplay in ways that were predominantly driven by practical and potentially commercial decisions as opposed to creative. Dr. Mark Duffett from the University of Chester closed the first panel by investigating how Dario Argento's personal

rock fandom inspired the collaborations with rock bands, particularly Goblin, that became somewhat of an Argento signature. Duffett discussed how Argento used his celebrity and public fandom to be able to merge heavy metal and heavy rock with horror in a way that has since become wider common practice in not only Italian horror but across the genre's spectrum.

Panel two looked beyond the borders of Italy and film to focus on routes of influence for the Italian horror form. The panel was titled *Transnational Routes of Influence* accordingly. First up Dr. Leon Hunt from Brunel University delivered a paper titled *Kings Of Terror, Geniuses Of Crime: Giallo Cinema and Fumetti Neri*. The *Fumetti Neri* was a cycle of Italian comics aimed at adults. They grew out of the successful emergence of the comic book *Diabolik*. Jackson looked at how *Diabolik* but also the emergence of Mario Bava as a *Giallo* filmmaker influenced the *Fumetti Neri* and also how the influence flowed the other way. A paper titled *Remakesploitation: Transnational Borrowings between Turkish and Italian Exploitation Cinema*, which was

delivered by Dr. Iain Robert Smith from University of Roehampton, followed this. Smith brought his trademark insight and almost archaeological zeal to uncovering links between Italian genre exports and little seen Turkish exploitation content, including some adaptations of Italian comic book films. The paper brought the adaptation/remake elements of the Italian form into new light by focusing on the Turkish versions of what are ostensibly generic re-workings of Anglo-American fiction forms. Dr. Johnny Walker, the second participant of the day from Northumbria University closed out the panel with the paper *Between 'Italianate' and 'Italian' Horror Cinema*. Walker's paper discussed how the legacy of classic Italian horror cinema is contemporarily felt in the wider horror field, focusing on recent films including H el ene Cattet and Bruno Forzani's *Amer* (2009) and *The Strange Color of Your Body's Tears* (2013). Walker discussed how the influence of Italian horror cinema is felt across Europe and the U.S. but has little impact on the style and aesthetics of contemporary Italian horror output in an astute paper to end the session.

The final panel of the day shifted the focus into industrial practices and was titled *Italian Horror Cinema's Distribution Tails* accordingly. Mark McKenna of the University of Sunderland's paper was first. Titled *Coming Back from the Dead: Zombie Distributors and the Unofficial Franchise* discussed the ethically spurious practice of giving standalone films sequential titles to popular or recognised genre franchises and the factors that made it possible and successful in exploitation cinema circles. This was followed by De Montfort University's Lewis Howse with his paper titled *Is There Anybody Out There? Decline, Television and the "Death" of the Spaghetti Nightmare Film*. The paper looked at a similar area to Johnny Walker's earlier paper, focusing on the influence of classic Italian horror on modern filmmakers, but took a deeper look at industrial and indigenous factors that have hampered recent Italian horror cinema's efforts to regain the idealized cult status it held in the 1970s and early 1980s. Part of Howse's paper looked at changes in and the impact of Italian television and this theme was continued in the next paper. Michela Paoletti from the University of

Bologna delivered the paper *What Ever Happened to Them? Brivido Giallo, Alta Tensione and Houses of Doom: The Horror Cable Series of Reteitalia*. Paoletti discussed the attempts of Italian company Reteitalia to bring *Giallo* and *Giallo* inspired content and filmmakers to television with varying degrees of success. Dr. Stefano Baschiera from Queens University, Belfast brought the panel and the strictly academic business of the day to a close. His paper titled *Italian Horror Cinema On Demand* looked out how recent moves in VOD and streaming services had provided an outlet for Italian horror to move beyond the realms of cult appreciation and gain a wider audience. The paper was nuanced in its discussion and looked at the categorisation and ‘cuts’ of the films in question, delivering a detailed comparison of the distribution opportunities to the films presently and at the time of their production and release. The after-panel conversation took a fascinating turn with guests Ruggero Deodato and Luigi Cozzi providing extra insight and context into some of the industrial contexts being discussed on the panel, resulting in a discussion between

academics and practitioners, translated and moderated by Dr. Baschiera.

The first screening of the weekend, Argento’s *Phenomena*, and a lively conference dinner attended by staff and volunteers, academics and attendees, and the event’s special guests followed the panels.

Day two begin fiercely with a panel chaired by conference director Dr. Austin Fisher. Titled *The Politics of Perverse Desire in Italian Cinema* the panel ensured that the momentum of the event was continued with some no holds barred papers. Anglia Ruskin University’s Andreas Charalambous started proceedings with his paper *Monsters and Facial Perversion*. Charalambous gave a fascinating Deleuzeian reading of several Italian horror films and their use of facial close-ups. Professor Colin Gardner from University of California, Santa Barbara followed this. His paper, titled *The Twilight of the Idols: Perversity as Eternal Return and Will-To-Power in Antonio Margheriti’s ‘The Virgin of Nuremberg’*. Gardner picked up threads from Charalambous’s paper but added a fascinating

analysis by way of Nietzsche that found layers of perversity and desire within Margheriti's film and redefined the 'monstrous' in illuminating ways. The last paper was an entertaining and rigorous examination of necrophilia in three films, delivered by Professor Patricia MacCormack from Anglia Ruskin University. MacCormack discussed through incredible insight and thorough examination the 'liberatory potentialisations of unraveling perverse desire' in Massaccesi's *Beyond The Darkness* (1979), Bava's *Macabre* (1981) and Margheriti's *Flesh For Frankenstein* (1973).

The strictly academic proceedings were brought to a close by the *Stylising Violence* panel. Anthony Page from the University of Hertfordshire's paper *Black and White Nazis* sought to recontextualise the controversial *Nazisploitation* genre by discussing the cycle of films in the context of the contemporary situation in Italian society around their production, particularly the Peteano bombings. Dr. Calum Waddell from the University of Aberdeen followed Page with his paper *Tropical Thunder: The Italian Cannibal Film*

and The Art of Misinformation. Waddell looked at how Italian cannibal films deployed deliberate mistruths, verging on Orientalism, to present a cultural distinction that became symptomatic of the short lived genre. The final paper, by Sheffield Hallam University's Shelley O'Brien, was titled *Scoring Violence: The Importance of Riz Ortolani's Music in Don't Torture A Duckling and Cannibal Holocaust*. The paper almost brought the conference full circle by looking at the role of music in some of the most famous and celebrated films within the Italian horror canon. O'Brien astutely and passionately revealed how the music complements the visuals to devastatingly unsettling effect to end the academic panels in style.

Following the academic proceedings there were two screenings and industry panels. First, a screening of Fulci's *The Beyond* was bookended by conversations with Luigi Cozzi and Catriona MacColl and then to close the second *Spaghetti Cinema* event Ruggero Deodato and Me Me Lai were in conversation with Dr. Calum Waddell following a screening of Deodato's *Last Cannibal World*.

Dr. Fisher's ambition for *Spaghetti Cinema* to "increase the international visibility of serious scholarship on popular Italian cinema and its ongoing influences on [...] contemporary culture" seems to have taken a giant leap with this second event. It fuses fandom and scholarship in symbiotic ways that put the event at the forefront of developments in academia towards increasingly diverse forums for presenting academic research and scholarship. The blend of industry practitioners and academics is further enhanced by the inclusion of scholars from all levels of research practice, ranging from Masters students through to chair holding professors. A passion for cinema and all its potentialities is evident across the entirety of the *Spaghetti Cinema* brand from the promotional material design, through the scholarly reach of the academic content and the attendant screenings of genre classics introduced and contextualised by those involved in their creation.



Gorizia Spring School 2015

A Review By Oliver Carter

The Gorizia Spring School, more formally known as the MAGIS International Film Studies Spring School, has been in existence since 2003. Organised by the University of Udine, Italy, and commonly held at the Gorizia campus, it is arranged for MA students, PhD students and early-career researchers. The School has a number of differing strands, including cinema and visual arts, post-cinema, film heritage and porn studies, which offer inter-disciplinary seminars and workshops presented by leading international scholars. Following the 2014 event, there was some doubt as to whether a future iteration of the School would be feasible, as the traditional stream of funding had dissolved. Fortunately, School coordinator

Leonardo Quaresima, was able to secure funding from a consortium of colleagues located at other European academic institutions, enabling the event to be held for its twelfth year.

The Porn Studies strand of the School has been a highly significant strand in developing the academic study of sexual cultures. The organisers should be commended for their commitment to developing this emphasis, particularly when the subject of pornography as a legitimate field of academic enquiry tends to raise eyebrows, induce sniggers and dissent, not just in Italy, but other countries. Academic interrogation of popular culture still remains a minority activity in Italy. Fortunately, thanks

to the efforts of organisers such as Giovanna Maina, Federico Zecca and Enrico Biasin, there is a wave of very impressive young Italian academics studying subjects such as transnational media fandom, 1960s popular cinema and the teenage reception of pornography. Scholars such as these are continuing to challenge the intellectual hegemony of Italian academia. For the past five years, Maina, Zecca and Biasin have curated the porn studies strand of the Spring School as a space for postgraduate students to engage with issues and debates surrounding pornography, but to also bring together scholars from across the world to present, network and collaborate on projects. The successful *Porn Studies* journal, edited by Professors Feona Attwood and Clarissa Smith and published by Routledge, was ‘conceived’ during the 2013 edition of the School. On a personal level, I value the event as the most important in my calendar, as it has aided the development of my research career more than any other conference I have attended since commencing my academic journey ten years ago.

Now, as this edition of the *Cine-Excess* journal is focusing on European erotic cinema, I will focus specifically on the porn studies strand of the School. Each year, there is usually a broad theme, past editions focusing on Eurasian pornography and pornographic audiovisual production in Southern and Eastern Europe. The theme for 2015 focused on the relationships between sex, commerce, media and technology. In total, there were four workshops, the subject of the first being ‘New media and public exposure: the politics, ethics, and discourses of Web 2.0 porn’. Fittingly, the first paper was presented by Professor Clarissa Smith from the University of Sunderland, which shared some of the early findings from Smith’s research into the reception of online pornography, conducted in collaboration with Professors Feona Attwood and Martin Barker. This rich empirical study once again contests many of the assumptions made by the media about the reception of pornography, but also raised interesting questions about how academics might approach the study of fantasy, a sufficient framework not currently existing.

Smith's paper was followed by two papers presented by PhD students. Using the recent example of 'The Fappening', Evangelos Tziallas of Concordia University, questioned the existence of a "pornoicon", where sex and sexuality and sexuality is controlled by surveillance technologies and a discourse of security that is proffered by the media.

Allesandra Mondin, also from the University of Sunderland, presented the results from her questionnaire based research into feminist pornography audiences, discussing how the dominant mode of consumption is of images, GIFs and videos shared on the blogging platform *Tumblr*.

The second workshop was titled 'Researching Vintage Porn', and was organised by my colleague John Mercer and myself. The purpose of this workshop was to involve the postgraduate students attending the event in identifying issues of debate surrounding vintage pornography, which is becoming an increasingly popular area of academic enquiry.

This would form a series of 'proposal abstracts' for a possible edited collection on the subject of vintage pornography. To stimulate student thinking, Mercer discussed

the concept of the vintage erotic image in relation to the history of gay pornography, highlighting the differing époques of gay porn. I then followed, giving a case study relating to vintage pornography that focused on the recent Blu-Ray restoration of vintage porn film *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* (Radley Metzger, 1976). I argued that the remediation of the film on differing home video technologies, challenges the way that audiences perceive pornography, the HD restoration of the film allowing for the aesthetic qualities to be appreciated in a way that was not before possible.

Archiving pornography is a subject of growing interest in field, as evidenced by the recent publication *Porn Archives* by Tim Dean, Steven Ruszczycky and David Squires (2014).

The third workshop was devoted to this topic, commencing with a paper by the French filmmaker and author Frédéric Tachou (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), who discussed his new, and much needed, publication *Et Le Sexe Entra Dans La Modernite: Photographie Obscene Et Cinema Pornographique Primitif, Aux Origines D'Une Industrie* (2014), which considers the

emergence of French pornographic photography and film 'loops'. The two papers that followed this excellent discussion of vintage French erotica were presented by archivists. Firstly, Ronald Simons from Eye Institute in Amsterdam talked about the challenges he faces when archiving the Institute's collection of pornography and, finally, Paolo Caneppele, from the Österreichisches Filmmuseum in Vienna, presented catalogues and ephemera relating to Austrian pornography taken from the archive he helps to curate. Both papers revealed that pornography is not given the attention other film genres are, often being neglected by archivists for its supposed lack of cultural value. It was encouraging to find that archivists such as Simons and Caneppele are devoting their time and efforts to ensure that their holdings of pornography are being preserved for future access.

The final workshop consisted of papers from the organisers: Giovanna Maina, Federcio Zecca and Federico Biasin from the University of Udine. This workshop gave attention to contemporary US pornography. Maina's paper was based on the subject of alternative

185

pornographies and how they move from communities to markets, Zecca examined contemporary amateur pornographies while Biasin considered the relationship between film studies and the cultural industry of porn.

In addition to the workshops were a series of separate panels and an evening of screenings. Professor Feona Attwood of Middlesex University, presented an excellent paper that debated the term 'mainstream' and its relationship to pornography. Attwood calls for greater attention to what mainstream pornography might consist of, as the mainstream that is oft referred to by the media and campaigners such as Gail Dines appears to differ to the viewing habits of the popular porn tube site *PornHub*. University of Padua PhD candidate Marco Scarcelli, a last-minute replacement, ably presented preliminary findings from his research into teenage female perceptions of pornography, provoking discussion about research design and ethics. Lynn Comella from the University of Nevada Las Vegas considered the impact of Measure B, a safer sex law introduced in LA that requires performers to use condoms and take other health-related precautions, and how this

has led to several porn producers moving production to Las Vegas. Finally, Kevin Heffernan of Southern Methodist University, Dallas presented his chapter from the new edited collection *New Views on Pornography: Sexuality, Politics, and the Law* (Comella and Tarrant, 2015), which discusses the adult film industry's historical framework and foundations. This was a rich, thorough presentation that offered a unique insight into the distribution of vintage pornography.

As with every edition of the School, there are accompanying screenings shown at the local cinema. The porn studies strand curated one evening of screenings, which began with two restored loops of vintage erotica that were brought by Ronald Simons of the Eye Institute. It is always quite an eye-opener to view erotica on such a cinema large screen, particularly coming from the UK where this practice is very rare, and when one of the loops was announced to be the infamous *Sister Vaseline* (1913), where a gardener, a monk and a nun partake in an afternoon of shared pleasure, I knew we were in for a treat. The main screening was of Alberto Cavallone's *Blue Movie* (1978), which has recently been

released on DVD by Raro Video, albeit in a truncated version, and was unfortunately the source for the screening despite the best efforts of the organisers to locate a print. I had the privilege of being asked to introduce this unique film, which I always describe as a cross between Pasolini's *Salò* (1975) and Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966), outlining the context for the film's production and its importance as a forerunner of Italian pornographic cinema.

Overall, the School was once again a resounding success, thanks to the efforts of the organisers and the participation of the students. As soon as the 2015 event was complete, the co-ordinator was once again seeking partners willing to co-fund the 2016 edition of the School. I am pleased to report that the Spring School will return for the thirteenth time from the 9 – 14 March, 2016. The overall theme for the 2016 iteration of the School is titled 'Bodifications: Mapping the Body in Media Cultures'. More information about the Gorizia Spring School, including a call for papers, can be found at the following link: <http://www.filmforumfestival.it> .