

Mondo Realism, the Sensual Body, and Genre Hybridity in Joe D'Amato's 'Emanuelle' Films

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Abstract

This paper examines the place of Joe D'Amato's series of Emanuelle films within the context of Italian cinema, exploitation cinema, and genre studies—especially the pornography and horror genres. I will focus on what I have labelled D'Amato's Mondo Realist films that were made in a very short period between 1975-1978. I argue that D'Amato's films offer an expansive sense of genre hybridity, especially as his films from this brief period are rooted in the Sadean tradition, the cinema of attractions, the Mondo film, neorealism, and the horror genre. I also examine D'Amato's films in the terms set out by Linda Williams (2004a); namely, as an auteur of 'body genres' whose films must be considered in terms that move us beyond dominant scopocentric tendencies in film theory. D'Amato's films offer a way to open up these categories through the sensual and corporeal experience of his hybrid films.

Introduction

The opening credit sequence is constructed through a series of shots that showcase the sights of New York City from the air. The film opens with the name of Laura Gemser superimposed on the imposing skyline of the Twin Towers. Like a travelogue documentary, the sights of the city are showcased, from Central Park to the Empire State Building to the New York Harbour. The sequence ends with the credit 'Directed by Joe D'Amato' superimposed over an image of the Statue of Liberty with the Twin Towers in the background. This sequence introduces *Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals* (1977), a film that juxtaposes the colonial anxiety of 'barbarity' with one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. The sequence offers a window into the cinematic world of a unique Italian filmmaker already preparing the viewer for a juxtaposition between the civilized barbarity of New York City and the so-called primitive barbarity of Amazonian cannibals. Is this softcore pornography, as the first word of the title seems to indicate? The second part of the title seems to indicate another subgenre: the Italian cannibal film. But this juxtaposition of 'barbarities', both 'civilized' and 'primitive',

is not new to the landscape of Italian cinema: it is the main theme of *Mondo Cane* (Dir. Paolo Cavara, Gualtiero Jacopetti, Franco E. Prosperi, 1962), the film that set in motion another important Italian subgenre from the 1960s and 1970s: the Mondo film. However, I want to argue here that it is also the main theme of Roberto Rossellini's neorealist classic *Stromboli, Land of God* (1950). In this film, Karen (Ingrid Bergman), the sophisticated Lithuanian widow of an architect, attempts to find her footing in the harsh wilderness of the eponymous volcanic southern Italian island in a post-WWII Italy that experienced (and continues to experience) deep divisions between the so-called 'civilized' north and 'primitive' south. Nine years later, Rossellini made a documentary about India entitled *India: Matri Bhumi* (1959), which can also be understood as an early road map for the Mondo film. With these works, Rossellini stands in continuity with D'Amato—a connection I make not to elevate D'Amato's work to highbrow status, nor to make neorealist claims for the cannibal film; but to posit an appreciation of the heterogeneous connectivity, systemic openness, and creative risk in the academic study of

the paracinematic within Italian cinema.

The post-credit sequence of *Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals* begins with a series of disorienting edits of a modern building from skewed and imposing angles. Finally, D'Amato takes the viewer inside what seems to be a psychiatric ward where the famed photojournalist Emanuelle is taking pictures with a camera uncannily concealed behind the eyes of doll.¹ The doll with which Emanuelle takes pictures reminds the audience of the embodied nature of perception, especially in body genres like porn and horror. Patients seem to be wandering around aimlessly as Emanuelle snaps pictures. Suddenly, a piercing cry is heard and a nurse runs into a hallway, blood streaming from a mangled left breast. Nurses run to her aid while interns find the room where a woman is shown eating the flesh that she has bitten off. The violent patient is forced into a straightjacket and sedated. Emanuelle watches from outside the room, voyeuristically catching a glimpse of the scene as she has done so many times in previous films. But here it is not erotic voyeurism that is emphasized as in the classic softcore scene, but rather the embodied gaze from the horror genre, a gaze that is focused on the gory body, the abject, visceral, open body. Later the same evening, Emanuelle quietly makes her way to the 'cannibal' patient's room to interview her. However, she realizes that the patient is visibly distraught and cannot talk to her. Emanuelle then proceeds to slowly stroke her vagina to calm her down. In the opening six-minute stretch of *Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals*, the hybrid world of Joe D'Amato is laid out for the viewer: a Mondo-realist-porn-horror filmmaker in whose films meaning is carved from corporeal sensual matter.

This paper will examine the place Joe D'Amato's series of Emanuelle films within the context of Italian cinema, exploitation cinema, and genre studies. I will focus on what I have labelled D'Amato's 'Mondo Realist' films that were made in a very short period between 1975-1978: *Emanuelle and Françoise* (1975); *Emanuelle in Bangkok* (1976); *Emanuelle in America* (1977); *Confessions of Emanuelle* (1977); *Emanuelle and the Last Cannibals* (1977); *Emanuelle and the White Slave Trade* (1978). Except for the earliest film in 1975, these films were made with 1970s softcore pornography

icon Laura Gemser in the titular role, and are often understood simply within that narrow genre specification. However, this series of films offers a fascinating challenge to neat divisions that characterise film scholarship, such as realism/exploitation, softcore/hardcore, and art-house/cinema of attractions. These divisions arise out of wide-ranging binaries associated with gender asymmetries (male/female) and via different critical discourses, such as Cartesian devaluations of the body (mind/body). D'Amato's cinema is important to film scholarship because it offers an opportunity to examine issues of genre hybridity by a filmmaker who has received little academic scholarship in the English language. While I will not develop this term here, Xavier Mendik's notion of the 'cine-erotic' is of interest to me because it offers an expansion outside of the softcore/hardcore dichotomies that includes a 'wide range of cult cycles' (2012: 2). Mendik does not use this term as a way of distancing the cine-erotic from academic interests in pornography or porn studies, but rather as an opening-up to films which would be perceived to narrowly occupy other genres and subgenres.

It is no accident that D'Amato has received little critical attention in cinema studies in the English language. Along with Danny Shipka (2011), Mendik has written one of the few academic pieces on D'Amato's cinema in the English language. While Mendik's appraisals of the place of the Marquis de Sade in D'Amato's work are significant, he includes only the first of the filmmaker's Emanuelle series, the non-Gemser-starring *Emanuelle and Françoise*, a rape-revenge film that is quite removed from the narrative arc of the Black Emanuelle cycle. Mendik focuses the rest of his article on examining D'Amato's hardcore films of the 1990s, eliding D'Amato's softcore output. D'Amato's association with softcore films at a time when softcore was not popular, and his long-standing working relationship with softcore icon star Laura Gemser, are important reasons why the first two decades of his career have not been addressed seriously. Often, the cache of hardcore 'realism' trumps what is perceived to be the dreary soft-focus excess of softcore films. Yet D'Amato's softcore films deserve serious attention because they propose a realist style already established in the

tradition of neorealism in Italian cinema, a movement seldom discussed in relation to softcore pornography. D'Amato generates his softcore output within an Italian tradition of realism that has been shifty and difficult to categorise or generalise, especially considering its attractions sensibility, its courting of sensation, and its derivation from traditions of melodrama and pulp fiction. Simona Monticelli argues that 'the Neo-Realist corpus does not display the degree of stylistic coherency that would allow for easy categorization' (1998: 456). I will argue later, for example, that some of Rossellini's realism is imbued with an attractions sensibility; the most obvious of such moments are the lingering, Mondo-like scene in *Stromboli* (discussed below) where a caged ferret kills a rabbit, and the iconic, sublime tuna fishing scene later in the film. Like Rossellini's attraction-based realism, I argue that D'Amato's films are expansive, even daring, generic hybrids, especially as his films from this brief period from the 1970s are grounded in the Sadean tradition, the cinema of attractions, the Mondo film, Neorealism, and the horror genre.

It is difficult to find a home for D'Amato in the narrow disciplinary frameworks of academic research. Accordingly, I turn to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987) to posit a 'rhizomatic', or transversal, approach to film theory. I am influenced by their notion of 'lines of flight', as a way to crack open what is perceived in this view to be 'closed' milieu of genre studies. As Deleuze and Guattari posit, 'at any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order' (1987: 7). The rhizome is for Deleuze and Guattari non-hierarchical and non-linear, open to new permeations and connections: 'it has no beginning and no end, but only a middle from which it grows and overflows' (1987: 21). Hence the notion of 'lines of flight'. The rhizome is like the Internet as it pushes outward—never really ending, but inviting mobility, serendipity and new associations along the way. While I write within the tradition of horror genre scholarship, I acknowledge the importance of heterogeneous elements that challenge narrow understandings of genre, that expand lines of

experience, and that hold together perceived oppositions. Horror genre scholarship has always been exceptionally innovative because it was forged in the productive space between historically contextual fan-based scholarship—from Carlos Clarens' ground-breaking *The Horror Film* (1967) to Tim Lucas' excellent *Mario Bava: All the Colours of the Dark* (2007), and more theoretical scholarship such as the work of Robin Wood (1979), Carol J. Clover (1992), and Joan Hawkins (2000). My work is the product of this liminal critical space. The rhizomatic approach is one that purposefully writhes in this in-between space. It departs from the limiting binary that categorizes scholarship as either historically contextual or theoretically abstract. The rhizomatic approach encourages new theoretical horizons that allow for a focus on sensation, affect, and the corporeal that is central to a paracinematic tradition that much horror scholarship wants to view through a largely historical lens. In this way, the rhizomatic approach is at once both inside and outside of the field of horror studies, hence creating a new space where the boundaries between Mondo cinema, neorealism, pornography, and horror are dissolved.

I also examine D'Amato's films in the terms set out by Linda Williams; that is, I seek to understand him as an auteur of 'body genres' whose films must be considered in terms that move us beyond a scopocentric tendencies in film theory (2004a: 728). And while I will address issues relating to the gaze, as it is important in the porn genre (and in horror), 'body genres' are a type of cinema that affectively engages the bodily senses. I engage D'Amato's films through the notion of affect, which is a pre-personal form of intensity. Affects are not emotions, as they are social projections of feeling, but they are of course linked (Shouse 2005: 3). Affect is an important analytical tool for the hybrid cinema of D'Amato insofar as it operates along a continuum of arousal, shock, and disgust. It is not an exaggeration to say that the experience of a D'Amato film comes from the gut, and the gut produces meaning as it has its own grammar. Hence, D'Amato's films are experienced in a space Susan Paasonen has located between meaning and mattering, that place where making sense (signification) and sensing (somatic)

become fused (2014: 140). Additionally, I examine D'Amato's films in relation to the history of Italian cinema, such as the impact of neorealism and the Mondo film, which continue to be understood in almost mutually exclusive terms: the former associated with realism and proximity, the later with genre attractions and distancing. Hence, the 'Mondo Realism' of my title seeks to challenge relationships within genres that are usually perceived as an oxymoron. D'Amato's films offer a way to open up these categories through the sensual and embodied experience of his hybrid films.

D'Amato: Genre Filmmaker

Born in Rome in 1936, Joe D'Amato (real name: Aristide Massaccesi) created a body of work that includes approximately 200 films in multiple genres and subgenres, including horror, the giallo thriller, the western, the sword-and-sandal film (the peplum), historical epics, documentary, comedy, as well as softcore and hardcore pornography. While D'Amato is primarily known for his horror films, *Beyond the Darkness* (1979) and *Anthropophagus* (1980), which have gained a cult status among horror fans, his body of work was primarily in the porn genre. D'Amato's first film was *More Sexy Canterbury Tales* (1972), or, as they are known in Italy a decamerotici—namely, films riding on the success of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Decameron* (1971). In a series of films based on Giovanni Boccaccio's fourteenth-century tales which mix erotica, humour and tragedy, Pasolini sought to depict the subversive force of Eros in pre-modern times. Pasolini completed his so-called 'Trilogy of Life' films with the equally successful *The Canterbury Tales* (1972) and *The Arabian Nights* (1974), and typical of the Italian film industry at that time, many very creative exploitation versions and sequels followed suit. D'Amato made another decamerotici in 1973, entitled *Tales of Canterbury*, but it was with his first Emanuelle film, *Emanuelle and Françoise*, a mix of softcore eroticism and rape-revenge horror, that he began to find his unique voice as a creator of hybrid body genre cinema. I will return to *Emanuelle and Françoise*, because it occupies a very important place in his oeuvre in the 1970s.

While softcore films fell out of favour in the

mid-1970s with the advent of hardcore, D'Amato continued to make films for the softcore market well into the 1980s, making the popular *Eleven Days, Eleven Nights* (1987), a successful softcore film (shot in New York City) at a time when the subgenre was perceived as a degeneration of hardcore. D'Amato crossed over more forcefully to the hard market in the 1990s, making hardcore versions based on such subjects as diverse as Mozart, Carmen, Robin Hood, Rocky, Hercules, Othello, Nero, and Rudolph Valentino (Zimmer 2012: 464). According to the dictionary of porn cinema, *Le Cinéma X*, even with the technological changes occurring in the porn industry in the 1990s, D'Amato refused 'the video format and shot almost exclusively in 35 mm' (Zimmer 2012: 464). In the 1990s he made a series of films with Italy's iconic hardcore porn star Rocco Siffredi, most notably *The Marquis de Sade* (1994), a homage to D'Amato's patron saint. Mendik claims that D'Amato was a "Sadean" filmmaker', not only because he made films that 'circulated within the domain of the "pornographic"', but because 'his narratives were marked by a type of cross-generic overload' that appealed to different grindhouse audiences (2012: 95).

A good example of D'Amato's hybrid style is his atmospheric *Erotic Nights of the Living Dead* (1980), which is a film that riffs on the title of George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) while attempting to cash in on the trend-setting success of Romero's second iconic zombie film *Dawn of the Dead* (1978). The film tells the story of a powerful land developer (Mark Shannon), who arrives at a Caribbean island to build a luxury hotel, only to be eaten by zombies. Intercutting hardcore sex scenes with zombie attacks, the film's top billing went to the Indonesian-born star Laura Gemser, who provided grindhouse crowds with iconic status because of her presence in many of D'Amato's softcore films from the 1970s, most notably his series of Emanuelle films, which cashed in on the success of the hugely successful French softcore film, *Emmanuelle* (Dir. Just Jaeckin, 1974), starring Sylvia Krystal.

Emanuelle as Rape-Revenge

D'Amato's first Emanuelle film, *Emanuelle and Françoise* has absolutely nothing to do with the

thematic thrust of the French *Emmanuelle*. However, it has everything to do with the world of the Marquis de Sade. The film was released in 1975, the same year that Pier Paolo Pasolini's body was discovered in Ostia, outside of Roma. Pasolini was brutally murdered by a 17-year-old hustler named Giuseppe Pelosi, whom the filmmaker/poet/theorist had picked up at Rome's Stazione Termini central railway station. The murder occurred just before the Italian release of his controversial film, *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), a film that is intimately linked to D'Amato's first *Emanuelle*, especially as it stages bodily excess through spectacularised torture. D'Amato's *Emanuelle and Françoise* recounts the story of Françoise (Patrizia Gori), a young woman who commits suicide because a manipulative womaniser named Carlo, played by D'Amato regular George Eastman. The narrative is presented through several disorientating flashbacks that recount how Carlo forced the virginal Françoise into a series of humiliations such as sexual encounters with business associates and appearing in pornographic films. Françoise penned a suicide note before her death, which was found by her sister, the more sexually powerful *Emanuelle* (Rosemarie Lindt), who discovers the reasons behind her sister's suicide. She then decides to enact vengeance by seducing and capturing Carlo. *Emanuelle* proceeds to lock Carlo up in a cell in her apartment that has a two-way mirror, where she forces to him watch her have sex with several people including his most recent girlfriend Mira (Karole Annie Edel). *Emanuelle* starves, tortures, threatens to kill, and castrates him, as well as using drugs to terrorize him. In one scene, under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs, Carlo believes he is watching a cannibalistic feast where the dinner party members assembled in the apartment are eating raw human organs and engage in an orgy.

Unlike the sexually liberated Black *Emanuelle* films, which I discuss below, *Emanuelle and Françoise* does not begin with the active photographic gaze in the hands of a powerful female protagonist. On the contrary, the film's credit sequence positions Françoise in the role of the woman on display as she is seen in a photo shoot, posing in sexually-suggestive costumes in front of a male photographer. The

post-title-sequence scene revolves around Françoise's first humiliation (for the audience), or final humiliation in the film's narrative. She leaves the studio, buys Carlo cigarettes and flowers, and arrives home on her moped only to find him in bed with Mira. In the style of the classic embodied gaze of softcore cinema, she gazes at the couple in bed together through the open door. Angered by her intrusion, Carlo packs her bags and throws her out of the house. This act will set off her suicidal act, which will entail jumping in front of a moving train. Enter *Emanuelle*, the other Sadean female.

In its second edition, Sade's first novel was entitled *Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu* (1791). The first-person narration recounts the misfortunes that occur to the virtuous Justine, who is separated from her older sister, the libertine Juliette, after they are forced to leave a convent and live in the world. Just like Françoise, Justine is virginal, trusting, innocent and blond, while her older sister has dark hair and is a powerful libertine. Sade's avant la lettre interest in the subjectivity of women is also present in D'Amato's film. In the novel, the reader hears the whole tale from Justine's perspective, which is very important as it problematizes simplistic perspectives that construct Sade as misogynist. This form of address found in Sade's *Justine* will become a staple of the Anglo-Saxon Gothic with its many buried narratives by women, uncovered by women who read them and become aware of their positionality under patriarchal structures. Jane Austen's parody of the Gothic novel *Northanger Abbey* (1817) is the quintessential example of this shifting space for female subjectivity. Similarly, in *Emanuelle and Françoise*, the story is also indirectly told through Françoise's suicide letter, but as it is read by her older sister. In the novel Justine suffers every imaginable cruelty along her journey, yet she is a smart resilient young woman who suffers not because she is naïve, but because of the inner depravity of humanity. Following the workings of Nature, Sade believed that human beings were alone (without a God) to face a world where the strong survive and the weak suffer. And the sisters, in both the novel and the film, represent two different regimes of sexual power: Françoise's virginal passivity and *Emanuelle*'s sexual aggression, which is unleashed on Carlo.

Mendik argues that what makes D'Amato a Sadean filmmaker is not only his thematic interests, but also structural ones. Mendik argues that D'Amato's films are marked by 'repetitious, meandering and often illogical structure that frequently outraged many of the director's detractors. However, these strategies also recall the contradictory nature of narrative excess and deviation found in Sade's work' (2012: 96). Hence, what is found in both D'Amato and Sade's works is the highlighting of narrative excess as a strategy to spectacularise the human body. As John Phillips argues in his assessment of Sade's uncompleted *120 Days of Sodom*, which he began to write in his prison cell in 1785, '[t]he story-tellers effectively dramatize the very process of narration, illustrating the power of language to excite and taking the physicality of theatre to its logical extreme in transforming the body itself into a principal actor' (2005: 67). Sade posits theatricality as a main feature of his infamous novel, as it takes place in a castle setting and inside a semi-circular amphitheatre where each libertine story-teller sits on a centrally-positioned throne in order to narrate the contents of the sexual proceedings. In *Emanuelle and Françoise*, it is the older libertine sister who narrates the story as written by the younger Françoise, thus challenging the agency/passivity dichotomy embodied in the sisters. The words of the narrative constitute a paradoxical mix of absence and presence insofar as Françoise's story of humiliation becomes spectacularised by Emanuelle's theatre of bodily excess as she inflicts torture on the imprisoned Carlo.

D'Amato's rape-revenge film positions itself less as the critique of authority found in such contemporaneous US horror films as Wes Craven's *Last House of the Left* (1972) and more in the arena of Sadean body politics where regimes of sexual power are played out on the stage of synesthetic titillation and trauma. *Emanuelle and Françoise* may be one of the most unique and interesting genre films of the 1970s, as it is constituted by elements that bring together horror and pornography in ways that only the Marquis de Sade could envisage. The dark Sadean torture chamber of *Emanuelle and Françoise*, however, will open up onto the 'exotic' travels of Black Emanuelle, a figure that embodies the more liberation-

themed aspects of the women-centred softcore features that will characterise D'Amato's work into the 1980s.

Sexual Liberation in Softcore

In the tradition of the French Emmanuelle's personal journey to the 'exotic' orient in search of sexual liberation, D'Amato's Emanuelle travels extensively as well, but she is already sexually liberated and seeks to find happiness through her sexual power and agency. The Emanuelle films often seemingly advocate a feminist stance (feminism is even mentioned by name in a few films in the series), while simultaneously shooting Gemser's body in the classic (non-explicit) manner of voyeuristic sexual spectacle for heterosexual male audiences. While the feminist messages about agency, choice, self-respect are limited in these films, these themes have led to the paradoxical feminization of the genre. In her important study of erotic thrillers, Linda Ruth Williams writes that with much softcore, the price of 'an erection', as she puts it, is often 'at the expense of having to listen to a diatribe against the average guy's sexual neglect of woman' (2005: 352). Like the Gothic tradition, the romance novel, the soap opera, this feminisation in softcore porn embodies a scornful unease about the feminine. Yet, unlike these genres, softcore is made primarily for heterosexual male arousal (and heterosexual couples). A fiercely sexist sexual division operates at the core of the division between softcore and hardcore; insofar as softcore tends to be identified with a 'lack', here the lack of an erect penis (or hardcore footage as it was often trimmed out in softcore versions), it is often looked down upon and associated with the feminine.

While some of D'Amato's softcore films had hardcore scenes in them (often trimmed for export), Laura Gemser never participated in hardcore scenes except as a voyeur. Like a lot of softcore (and horror) cinema more generally, voyeurism is front and centre in D'Amato's films, yet interestingly, it is often women who are the voyeurs. In *Emanuelle in Bangkok*, D'Amato's first Emanuelle film with Gemser, but the second for Gemser,² the lead actress plays a very forceful photojournalist, pursuing stories in a way that is usually attributed to male protagonists. This

emphasises a typical aspect of 1970s softcore: while the female body, and most specifically female breasts, are positioned as the spectacle of male pleasure, scopical control and power, or the gaze, in the narrative are often in the hands of the female protagonist. Typical of D'Amato's style, *Emanuelle in Bangkok* begins without the use of establishing shots, but with disorienting shots of Emanuelle setting up her photographic darkroom in red light. She is interrupted by a man who attempts to interfere with her work printing photographs in order to have sex. Reversing the trope of the busy male professional being disturbed by the bored girlfriend/wife, the film suggests in its opening minutes that this woman has unambiguously chosen her career over her man, even if she makes time for pleasurable sexual encounters. The darkroom setting makes it clear that in this softcore film, the voyeuristic gaze is actively in the hands of the female protagonist. At a time when the gaze was considered the template for exploring female agency because of Laura Mulvey's influential article 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975), the theme of Emanuelle's photojournalism is striking in a genre usually associated with women being on display for the male gaze.

A good example of classic softcore gazing in *Emanuelle in Bangkok* is a short scene later in the film where Emanuelle begins to undress in her room, only to hear her friend Robert (Gabriele Tinti) having sex in the bedroom. With her blouse off, Emanuelle moves toward the room and secretly observes the couple through a slightly open door. This scene of unabashed voyeurism is preceded by Emanuelle snapping pictures of a very violent and deadly battle in an aquarium between a ferocious mongoose and an equally powerful cobra snake. The spectacle is inserted to shock the audience, which (as I will discuss below) shows D'Amato's indebtedness to Mondo documentary cinema and the neorealist ferret/rabbit shock attractions in Rossellini's *Stromboli*. In that scene, Karen (Ingrid Bergman) smiles and asks Antonio why he has brought the creature home. Antonio responds that the ferret is used for hunting. Then, to Karen's utter horror and disgust, he removes the ferret from the cage to demonstrate to her what a ferret can do to a rabbit by placing them together in

a cockfight-style face off. This kind of sensorial shock will be repeated in many Italian cannibal films, such as the pulpy *The Mountain of the Cannibal God* (Dir. Sergio Martino, 1978). On a thematic level, the mongoose scene highlights Emanuelle as being in possession of an unflinching active gaze, which has traditionally been associated with men in classic Hollywood cinema. The gaze of this photographer is also the gaze of a woman who is often aroused in her position as a Peeping Tom, or in this case a Peeping Jane. However, on a more corporeal level this erotic gazing is unsettled by the shocking spectacle of the mongoose and cobra. The affective resonance of that scene spills over into the next scene where Emanuelle gazes erotically, its trauma and viscerality shocking the gazing from what is often understood as a simple visual act (idealist) to an embodied one (materialist).

The rhizomatic approach, however, encourages more embodied, haptic looking, as Laura Marks suggests, where the gaze becomes a graze (2000: 162). This grazing takes the viewer to the surfaces of the aquarium that Emanuelle is shooting with the camera, reinforcing the circus-like attractions staging of both the battle between the animals and the bout of sex. This attractions-based staging can be found in another film by Rossellini that pre-figures the attraction-based Mondo documentary in important ways: *India: Matri Bhumi*. The film uses voice-over commentary to lend a sense of factuality (a gesture to so-called objective truths) to its insertion of fictional stories (a gesture to so-called subjective experience) within the documentary landscape. This technique, according to Peter Brunette 'stands opposed to the prevailing film fashion of the time, cinema vérité' (1987: 200). For example, there is a scene in Rossellini's documentary where a circus performing monkey stands over the body of his (supposedly) dead owner/trainer in the middle of the desert to protect it from praying vultures circling above. The scene utilizes the editing technique that will be used in many Mondo films, and so important to D'Amato, to create sensorial shock. Positioning himself in opposition to cinema vérité, Rossellini stated in a 1963 interview that he was not interested in audiences learning the truth of India, only communicating emotions

(Brunette 1987: 200). Brunette astutely writes that India's 'thoroughly un-Rossellinian style of editing assails the viewer... the cutting even faster... than it was in the early *La nave bianca*, so indebted to Eisenstein' (1987: 198-99). I will return to Rossellini's Eisensteinian indebtedness below when I look at the very pre-Mondo tuna fishing scene in *Stromboli*.

D'Amato's films were made years before what David Andrews calls the golden age of softcore in the USA. As Andrews notes, softcore was in the eighties 'all but absent as an American film genre' (2006: 4). The passing of the old exploitation circuit (grindhouses and porn houses), as well as palpable pressures on the porn industry more broadly under the Reagan administration, meant that softcore was not to reappear again until the 1990s in the USA. The nineties was the era of late-night cable programming, which showcased very influential softcore shows such as the trend-setting and upscale *Red Shoe Diaries* (Showtime, 1992-1999). Andrews writes that 'the new willingness of HBO and Showtime to finance upscale softcore—along with a moderation in the culture's antiporn attitudes [in the Reagan period of the 1980s] led to softcore's renewal [in the 1990s]' (2006: 4). But unlike the gloss of upscale, or corporate softcore, D'Amato made films in the seventies and eighties that had more in common with the documentary, or more precisely the Mondo film in its mingling with neorealism.

The Mondo Film

The first Mondo film was *Mondo Cane*, a Tuscan expression meaning 'a dog's life'. The term 'Mondo' refers to a series of films made after the success of *Mondo Cane* that applied the tactics of exploitation filmmaking to the documentary. By this, I mean the use of cinematic devices that transgress the cardinal rules being enforced in the streams of direct cinema and cinema vérité in the 1950s and 1960s. In other words, Mondo documentaries often prioritized the voyeuristic camera, shock editing, voice-of-god narration, and the depiction of the lifestyles of 'primitive others' around the globe. The Mondo lens tends to present a colonial perspective of non-Western cultures, yet it is also accompanied by—at least in *Mondo Cane*—a thoroughgoing critique of the West.

Important Mondo effects that produce more embodied sensory responses used by D'Amato in many of his *Emanuelle* films include the fast zoom-in, the freeze-frame, shock editing, and, most importantly for his cinema, the peeping camera.

While the colonial representations abound in some Mondo films, these films also operate (as with pornography) productively, on other levels that explore territories of the affective and sensual as places to evoke new meanings. Following Susanna Paasonen, the effect of these films is more at the level of the visceral, the embodied, and the affective (2011: 12); hence, one is not only making sense (representation and meaning), but also sensing (sensory and fleshly). Hence, D'Amato's Mondo style is a way into the kind of sensuous cinema he made his own. While cinema vérité strived for 'authenticity' within an observational framework, Mondo films highlighted the peep show staging mode and the cinema of attractions, and because of this have often been disdained as pseudo-documentaries (Goodall 2010: 247). The strategy of the Mondo film is one of distancing from, rather than proximity with, the subjects of the documentary, almost giving the viewer the impression that they are watching a series of travelogues. However, because of their embeddedness in what Tom Gunning calls the cinema of attractions (1989), which emphasises spectacle over narrative, the films operate on a different level from classical cinema. Vivian Sobchack argues that cinema has the capacity to 'physically arouse us to meaning' (2004: 57). And in the excess of Mondo-style or exploitation cinema, or in body genres like horror and pornography, the fusing of arousal and meaning includes all the senses: sight, sound, taste, smell, and especially touch, or what some scholars have called 'haptic visuality' (Marks 2000: 162-63).

D'Amato takes his cue from Mondo cinema in the way he shoots and structures his films. Danny Shipka mentions that D'Amato incorporated what he calls 'Mondo filmmaking techniques' into his filmmaking, but does not attempt to flesh out the implications of this observation for genre studies and film theory (2011: 157). I am arguing that D'Amato's Mondo aesthetic is important precisely because it challenges strict divisions between low and high

art forms, as well as exploitation and realism. As in Mondo films, D'Amato's characters appear often in airports, on trains, subways, lifts, boats, cars, jeeps, (often with iconic architecture in the background). *Confessions of Emanuelle* begins with a close-up of feet, only to reveal lovers in sexual intercourse, which quickly thrusts the audience into the immediacy and intimacy of the sensory world. Hands move over shadowy bodies. No establishing shot is given, and the location is indistinct. Only tactile textures are felt, the soft textures of human flesh. As D'Amato's camera caresses the two bodies, it's as if he were filming a long shot of the mountainous terrain that Emanuelle has travelled through, but it is instead the sensuous terrain of the human body. The people in the act of coitus are unknown, though aficionados will recognize Gemser as it is her third of five Emanuelle films directed by D'Amato. Finally, Emanuelle and a truck driver (played by 'porn chic' era hardcore star Paul Thomas) are shown exiting the trailer of a van and getting into the front cab. Their conversation reveals very quickly that Emanuelle is beginning a new journey with only a toothbrush as her baggage and sex as her currency. This is the 1970s, a time of sexual exploration, and in this film, exploration through embodied forms of Tantric sex. Emanuelle will take the audience to multiple sensorial places, not to mention disproving the theories of the famous Indian Guru Shanti (George Eastman) who claims to have achieved the ultimate orgasm.

In the same opening sequence of *Confessions*, D'Amato cuts from a conversation between Emanuelle and the truck driver to a POV shot from the van on the Golden Gate Bridge, almost 'shocking' his audience from an intimate sensual space to larger than life bird's-eye-view, and with that the sensation of freedom and movement. And as he cuts to an extremely long zoom-in of the van driving over the bridge, the credit sequence begins. When they move off the bridge and drive toward the Sheraton Hotel in San Francisco, Emanuelle tells the driver that she is on a quest for happiness, and for her that means being on the road. This film will take her to India, Hong Kong, Macau, Iran, and back to the USA. The film ends with a sequence featuring Emanuelle on a boat sailing through New York harbour, with the Twin

Towers and the Statue of Liberty in the distance. Like the Mondo film, one is taken on a journey to distant places, but instead of the voice-of-god narrator, the photojournalist Emanuelle is our guide, making us voyeurs of her, and along with her.

In *Emanuelle and the White Slave Trade*, D'Amato plunges the viewer into the heart of Kenya, with the famous protagonist, played by Gemser, uncovering a global sex trade. The film, like so many of D'Amato's films from the 1970s, moves effortlessly from place to place, often using shock edits to disorient viewers, and move the narrative forward. In this film, Emanuelle moves between Nairobi, New York City, and San Diego. As (middle-class) freedom is the main theme of the Black Emanuelle films, the film begins with a shot of a flock of birds alighting on the sea. D'Amato cuts to a green van moving through what looks like African plains: images of rhinoceroses, giraffes, and elephants are inserted, along with hand-held shots of Kenyan tribes-people. Emanuelle is photographing the landscape and her feminist sidekick, the blond Susan Towers (Ely Galleani), is in the driver's seat. Another disorienting cut shocks the audience into experiencing change and movement, as the film cuts to the inside of a van traveling through the modern city of Nairobi. In this sequence, shock editing and embodied POV shots—two tactics of Mondo cinema aesthetics—are the tools that D'Amato uses to make his viewers experience his films synaesthetically preparing them for the further sensorial spectacle of softcore eroticism later in the narrative.

Mondo Realism and Disgust in America

Emanuelle in America, D'Amato's second Emanuelle film with Gemser, begins with a low angle shot of a gondola with what looks like a bridge in the background. Typical of D'Amato's style, the shot is disorienting because the viewer expects to see a ski resort or a high mountain, but instead it pans down to reveal city traffic over the Queensboro Bridge. The second shot is a pan over a city skyscape from the gondola onto the person of Emanuelle standing inside it as Gemser's name flashes on the screen and tall buildings move by in the background. In a few seconds, D'Amato has already taken the audience

on the Roosevelt Island Tramway, an aerial tramway crossing New York City. Very quickly he cuts to a zoom out of a motorcycle revealing Emanuelle working her trade as photographer on an erotic shoot. Then a blur cut of a moving yellow cab reveals a telephoto shot of Emanuelle walking in front of a very distinctly demarcated sign behind her that says, 'Peep Show'. Not a minute has elapsed in this film, and D'Amato's Mondo aesthetic is fully affective.

While the popular (and scholarly) association of neorealism is with the art-house film (and certainly not the voyeuristic Mondo film), Simona Monticelli reminds us that neorealism was never 'a unitary phenomenon, but successfully crossed boundaries between highbrow and lowbrow' (1998: 460). By this, she means that the neorealist tradition cannot be pinned down into easy dichotomies that distinguish the 'authentic realism' of the art-house film from the 'spectacular realism' of the exploitation film, because Neorealism presented the everyday in often very spectacular ways. A good example of this is the way in which Rossellini presents the iconic tuna fishing scene in *Stromboli*. Brunette argues that the English voice-over on the American cut of the film puts the scene in an 'overtly documentary mode' (1987: 122). But Rossellini's own cut may show him to be more indebted to Sergei Eisenstein, the first person to theorize attractions in the terms of sensation, than is often claimed. Brunette insightfully states that in Rossellini's cut the 'entire sequence is a brilliant textbook illustration, reminiscent of the Po episode in *Paisan*, of how to build emotion through rhythm, expectation, and suspended fulfillment' (1987: 122). The tuna sequence is not only one of the most spectacular scenes in the film, but it hinges on the spectacle of realism, built around editing, sound design, and the immersive camera in ways that calls to mind the recent visceral experimental documentary on industrial fishing, *Leviathan* (2012), by Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Verena Paravel of the Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab. *Leviathan*'s immersive experience is predicated on the proximity of its many go-pro cameras within the industrial fishing environment, dislodging the notion of a unified gaze. Despite localizing its fishing scene through Karen's gaze and her reactions to the effect of being splashed by salty

water, *Stromboli* features perspective-splitting sensorial effects similar to *Leviathan*. Her reactions move from child-like curiosity to outright disgust as the tuna are speared by the fisherman. Using many cuts, Rossellini moves between the explosions of water, Karen's reactions, and the hauling of the majestic fish into the boat by spears. Rossellini lingers on the corporeality of the squirming of the sizeable, powerful fish in the bottom of the boat. The scene is not one of simple gazing on Karen's part, but actual tactile and corporeal reaction to the water exploding in front of her. The explosions of water generate shock for Karen that extends to the laps of the audience. Realism has rarely been more spectacular than in this attraction-based sequence. Rossellini presents *Stromboli*'s dangerous volcano as actively roiling and bubbling under the surface of the sea. And it is around these grazing surfaces that Rossellini creates sensorial affective shock and intensity.

My rhizomatic exploration of D'Amato's films through the concept of Mondo Realism, namely an assemblage of traditions that are all too often constructed as opposed, is an attempt to champion heterogeneous positions and creative contradictions, which is often lacking in mainstream film scholarship. As Mark Goodall states, the Mondo film continues to be understood as 'repellent' and 'lurid' in mainstream film studies (2010: 248), and thus at a disjuncture with the neorealist tradition. But as Joan Hawkins (2000) and Jeffrey Sconce (2008) have argued in their studies of so-called lowbrow film culture, or what Sconce calls the paracinematic, it is not unusual to find textual analyses that intertextually blur the divisions of art and exploitation. How does one position Pasolini's *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom*, which uses techniques associated with exploitation cinema, especially an excessive voyeuristic camera, to frame its theatrics of the body? Some may argue that *Salò*'s anti-Fascist stance elevates the film into the domain of art cinema, but there is too much bodily excess in Pasolini's film to thus limit it to a narrow representational/ideological reading.

Scholars who study lowbrow art, or exploitation cinema, have argued quite convincingly that exploitation films can be as subversive as art-house films. I am not attempting to posit an essentialist

reading of exploitation as inherently subversive, nor for that matter, the art house film. What I am doing is attempting to dislodge what cultural theorist Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick has called 'strong theory' in the appreciation of exploitation cinema (2003: 133-36). For Sedgwick, 'strong theory' presupposes a kind of circular reasoning, whereby the premises that a researcher starts with become lead to unambiguous and totalizing results. In other words, strong theory cannot, Sedgwick concludes, but be tautological 'in that it can't help or can't stop or can't do anything other than prove the very same assumptions with which it began' (2003: 135). If, for example, a researcher begins with the premise that Mondo films are 'lurid' and 'repellent' because they use techniques such as shock editing and the voyeuristic camera, then the research undertaken can end up re-inscribing these same premises. Sedgwick calls for a 'reparative reading', which is open, partial, hopeful, and lacking in totalizing outcomes (2003: 145-6). Sedgwick reminds us that 'to a reparatively positioned reader, it can seem realistic and necessary to experience surprise' (2003: 146). Hence, let us establish what rhizomatic possibilities this assemblage of D'Amato's work through Mondo cinema and neorealism brings forth.

One needs to think about the tragic death of Pina (Anna Magnani) in *Rome, Open City* (Dir. Roberto Rossellini, 1945), or the comic antics Aldo Fabrizi as the priest Don Pietro in the same film, to understand that neorealism is not devoid of spectacle. The neorealist approach to realist filmmaking is very important to the development of the French and other national New Waves in the 60s, and exploitation cinema in the 1970s, because it championed the idea of taking a camera to the streets and shooting films in a guerrilla-style manner with very small crews. In the traditions of Italian filmmaking, D'Amato's films in the seventies have a distinctly Mondo Realist feel which challenges false art-house/highbrow vs. exploitation/lowbrow frameworks that continue to position the art film as worthier of study. Louis Bayman argues against the classical division between realism and melodrama in neorealism, proposing that they must be conceptualised in the same breath (2009). Realism is not simply that which is 'realistic',

but a claim that suggests a specific relationship between text, reality, and the audience (2009: 47). Realism is not, in Bayman's estimation, a fixed essence; however, it has traditionally been conceived in opposition to melodrama. Bayman seeks to re-think aesthetic theory, which defines realism and melodrama against each other (2009: 47); especially in the theory of influential French theorist André Bazin, who championed Italian neorealism and melodrama as antithetical. Bayman argues that neorealism charts the emphasis on the larger themes of society in realism through a focus of the individual victim of melodrama. This approach forcefully challenges a perspective that genders realism as masculine (rational) against the feminised (emotional) melodrama.

The plight of the working-classes is the theme of several neorealist films, given the context of war-torn Italy. The Emanuelle films, on the other hand, are focused on a different reality, that of the professional woman. Here, with the impact of second-wave feminism, D'Amato's films promote an issue that is consistently important in the Italy of the 1970s: gender issues. But what is particularly interesting about D'Amato's Emanuelle films with Gemser is the colour of her skin. Born in Indonesia, Gemser is not only a transgressive presence because of her representation as a black woman in a milieu that is very white, but because she embodies in her skin the colonial fears projected onto the other in Italy, which was usually the south of Italy in Neorealism. It is important to remember that in Italy, a racist slur for Italians of southern descent, is the term 'africano', because of the south's proximity to the African continent. In this way, Gemser is born from the Mondo, as it circulates in 'exotic' other places in the global south, which for Neorealism, was the peasant south. If Karen, in *Stromboli*, is a lily-white guide, played by the Swedish Bergman, because she takes audiences to the poor dark and overwhelming peasant south of Italy, Emanuelle is the guide in the globalising world of the Mondo. The issues of race and gender are not only issues of representation, but of affective embodiment as I trace them through the Neorealist focus on the marginalized classes. Karen and Emanuelle are not just representations, but embodiments of the voyage to the so-called primitive spaces, where

gender, race, and class are imprinted on the surface of their skin.

D'Amato privileges mobility and movement in all his Emanuelle films. In many of these films, the viewer is often thrust into situations without much consideration for narrative development or detail. Often, Emanuelle is on a plane, or in a taxi, moving from place to place without any indication about where (and sometimes why) she is going. Emanuelle is free. She just moves. And as I suggested earlier, D'Amato uses both flashbacks and shock editing to disorient his viewers. In *Emanuelle in America*, the eponymous photographer is negotiating her career again with her boyfriend Bill (Riccardo Salvino), who the audience is told, she never gets to see very much because of their demanding careers. Joe exclaims to Emanuelle, 'I might have to marry you', to which she responds, 'that would be a crime against freedom'. Their lovemaking cuts to a scene with Joe (Efrem Appel), a boxing instructor in Manhattan, who gives Emanuelle information about an aristocrat named Eric van Darren (Lars Bloch), who runs a 'harem' that she wants to uncover. Suddenly, the narratives move to a new place; Emanuelle is getting out of cab, but the audience does not know where it is. Is it upstate New York? She later escapes 'the harem' by hiding in a car owned by the Italian named Alfredo Elvize, Duke of Mount Elba (Gabriele Tinti). The Duke tells Emanuelle that he is from Venice. Cut to a shot of Emanuelle's lover Bill, who tells his newspaper editor on the phone that he can't wait to have her in his arms again. The editor tells him that he will have to wait a while. Bill says: 'Why, where is she now?' In a Mondo-style shock edit typical of D'Amato, he cuts to a tilt down onto Emanuelle, who is now on a gondola in Venice being driven through the famous canals to the Duke's home where she will experience a ménage-à-trois with her host and his wife. The élan of the editing within this spatially labyrinthine narrative embodies the themes of freedom that Emanuelle herself defends in discussions with her lover Bill. The sense of affective propulsion is very palpable, almost intoxicating. The freedom that Emanuelle espouses is decidedly class-based. Her notion of freedom is based on notions of the bourgeois individual who seeks autonomy. And while bourgeois notions of freedom are presented in the film, it is also

experienced through the multiple sensory experiences that Emanuelle undertakes; not only sexual, but here also the realist spectacle of a LSD trip as she attempts to uncover a snuff film in South America.

I want to return to the harem sequence because it contains a moment that seems to want to surpass in infamy the opening scene of Walerian Borowczyk's cult film *La Bête* (1975), where a black stallion is filmed in coitus with a mare in a courtyard. The scene begins with Eric van Darren going to a small stable where all his 'harem women', a group that Emanuelle has infiltrated with a forged passport, have gathered to watch an act of sexual transgression: a woman undresses next to a horse and begins to stroke the erect penis of the steed. The woman speaks to the horse in the hushed tones of a lover. Everyone stops by the windows to watch the spectacle as if to maintain a safe distance. Only the sound of the horses' low whinnying and braying can be heard on the soundtrack. The sound of braying intensifies as she pets the steed and moves her hands toward his groin area. D'Amato cuts between close-ups of eyes and faces watching as the horse's penis grows larger and larger in size. The gazing of the spectators is intercut with shots of the woman inside, petting the steed's hide and hair and later, stroking the horse's penis until it is erect. D'Amato, however, uses only two actual point-of-view shots of the spectators as they are tinted by the window through which the spectators are gazing: the opening shot of the woman removing her top, and again near the end of the scene. In this second point-of-view shot, D'Amato is utilizing a moving handheld camera that grazes the surface of the window, obscuring sight because of the window dividers. Hence, this is less a scene about gazing, even if there are multiple shots of people watching the spectacle. The emphasis on textures and skin, on touching and stroking, however, links to what Marks asserts about haptic visuality, the idea that the visual can produce a tactile response from viewers, it is 'more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze' (2000: 162). The g(r)azing of the onlookers, who move on from the spectacle rather quickly as the scene runs for approximately two minutes, undermines the primacy of the gaze as a marker of power in the porn genre. The gazing in this scene is not positioned so much in

relation to the representation of an obscene object, the steed's erect phallus, but as a kind of grazing over the taboo and the obscene. The scene does not only depict *gazing* at an obscene representation of a naked woman stroking an erect horse; it is *grazing* over the surface causing shocking affect as it hybridises with the horror genre.

Mondo viscerality of monstrous proportions takes the viewer to a different sensual experience: disgust. This is cinema of attractions at its most excessive; it is Mondo cinema within the horror and porn genres. In the spirit of Linda Williams' distinction between ob/scene, with literally means 'off-stage', out of public view, I want to reclaim the on/scene nature of this sequence. Williams writes that '[o]n/scenity marks both the controversy and scandal of the increasingly public representation of diverse forms of sexuality and the fact that they have become increasingly available to the public at large' (2004b: 3). The harem sequence begs for analysis because it is so unabashedly transgressive, and synaesthetically complex as a corporeal experience. The scene was also censored out of the film in many countries. *Emanuelle in America* positions itself, like the later *Confessions of Emanuelle*, in between softcore and hardcore, because the film contains moments of hardcore sex (an orgy in Venice) where Emanuelle participates as a voyeur. But more importantly, the complex embodied reception of the harem sequence takes the viewer into the experience of the horror genre, with its emphasis on disgust and the visceral. As Paasonen has suggested, disgust is very frequently an experience found in the reception of porn film (2011: 55). But for D'Amato, the harem sequence moves toward the film's most shocking moment: the last section of the film where Emanuelle attempts to uncover snuff footage in South America. This scene is one of the most shocking and disturbing scenes in the history of world cinema. A full exploration of Emanuelle's embodied presence in the film does call for a quick peek into the world of snuff footage, as it resonates affectively within D'Amato's Mondo realism.

The scene in question begins as Emanuelle gets a tip that an unnamed Senator (Roger Browne) has the snuff footage in his possession. She quickly accosts him about it, and is invited to his place.

Emanuelle asks the Senator to show her something intense (intensities are, after all, Emanuelle's business!), but she finds the Senator's initial selection—a reel of BDSM porn projected in Super 8—to be 'phoney'. She demands that he present her with something more transgressive, more, in her words, 'sensational'. The Senator complies, pulling out a new reel of film. The snuff footage contained therein depicts deeply disturbing scenes of torture, including slicing off nipples, the forcible drinking of boiling oil, and rape. The scenes of torture in Pasolini's *Salò*, made only two years before, are unmistakably present in this scene. The intense body trauma effects in this snuff sequence were designed by make-up artist Giannetto De Rossi, who was responsible for some of the goriest Italian horror films of the late-70s and 80s. D'Amato shot the snuff footage in 35mm and hand-scratched the negative to give it a vivid, hyper-realist feel that explodes with tactile intensity in direct accompaniment to the explosive sensory shock of the imagery. Now Emanuelle fakes excitement while watching the sensational spectacle of the snuff footage. As the reel ends, Emanuelle remarks: 'And those pictures! So real! As if it was really happening! Oh, it was so awful!! But what a turn on!' In this scene, spectacular Mondo realism is the 'real' stuff of sensation. As the scene continues to unfold it is uncertain that the Senator will take Emanuelle on a 'trip' to the jungles of South America blurring the lines of the dream, hallucination, and reality. Emanuelle continues: 'Sometimes I dream of actually living something as cruel as that!'

Emanuelle gets her wish as the boundary between 'dream' and 'actually living' becomes very blurry as the Senator seems to take her to South America to the actual place of torture. But this is ambiguous as the Senator slips drugs into her drink. What kind of trip is this? Hallucinatory? Real? D'Amato zooms in on her intoxicated face, focusing on her eye. Cut to a small plane taking off. We see Emanuelle and the Senator in the plane. Throughout the sequence, D'Amato continues to cut back between Emanuelle's eyes and the flying plane. After the plane has landed, D'Amato cuts to a shot of a jeep in the jungle. This is followed by a shot of Emanuelle being escorted by men in military fatigue into a room has a view of the torture chamber, through small

door-shaped windows. As I have shown already, the similar use of the zoom, shock edits, and new locations throughout the film are all part of D'Amato's Mondo-realist aesthetic. Now here, we are in an unnamed South American country, linking the torturing of prisoners by the military to the Senator, and thus underscoring the support of dictatorships by the U.S. government. This further elucidates Paasonen's notion that meaning here is not forged only out of the regimes of signification, but together through somatic spectacles of sensing (2014: 140). Emmanuelle will think the experience was all a hallucination until actual photographs of the torture chamber are found in her camera in New York City. In this sense, the torture chamber is inscribed on her body, for her camera is not only an eye onto the world but a tool for provoking and documenting her embodied memory. The tortured bodies she has seen are not remembered as such by Emmanuelle, but become inscribed onto the flesh of film, onto its materiality, onto its tactile body. Emmanuelle does not remember a thing of what she experienced, and she is angered that her publisher does not have the courage to publish the photos. Her indignation is so profound that she protests by quitting her position as a photojournalist, and even threatens to blow up the building.

D'Amato's Mondo-realist-porn-horror film, *Emanuelle in America*, challenges narrow notions that bifurcate realism from cinema of attractions, making this 1977 film one of the most noteworthy films made with Laura Gemser. With his series of Emmanuelle films, which he made between 1975-1978, D'Amato sensual body-centred approach weaves together heterogeneous elements into an assemblage that cannot be contained by narrow genre distinctions. Joe D'Amato's films bear the stamp of a creative vision hybridising genres in Italian cinema, and his unique oeuvre deserves much more critical attention.

Notes

¹ The spelling of 'Emmanuelle' here is not a mistake. To avoid lawsuits, Italian filmmakers removed an 'm' from the spelling of Emmanuelle, which was the eponymous title of the French film with Sylvia Kristel from 1974.

² The first one was called *Black Emmanuelle* (1975) and was directed by Bitto Albertini. Laura Gemser had

her debut in the Emmanuelle cycle, because of her short appearance in the 'official' Emmanuelle sequel *Emmanuelle 2* (Dir. Francis Giacobetti, 1975) as the masseuse.

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