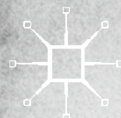
Investigating Italy's Past Through Historical Crime Fiction, Films, and TV Series

Murder in the Age of Chaos

Barbara Pezzotti

Italian and Italian American Studies



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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This book is an investigation into the Italian past and present through crime fiction.[1] It is not a history volume, but a study of how the experiences of war, dictatorship, political violence, and terrorism have been refracted and constructed through the prism of crime literature and cinema. By taking as its point of departure the privileged relationship between the crime genre and history, the book intends to examine the ways in which historical *giallo* novels, television series, and films have become a means to comment on and intervene in the social and political changes of the country.[2]

Literature is a powerful instrument to investigate the past. History volumes are necessarily influenced by the contemporary socio-political and cultural framework of a historian and are subordinate to an epoch-specific topical paradigm of scientific reflection.[3] By contrast being free from the constraints of historiography, fiction writers are able to penetrate "the interstices of history"[4] and interpret obscure events, "recreating the missing pieces."[5] Indeed, historical fiction recovers "memory from silence" often uncovering "the lies of official history" by filling the gaps historiography cannot fill.[6] Ultimately in Lukács's words, historical fiction "offers a truer, more complete, more vivid, and more dynamic reflection of reality than the receptant otherwise possesses."[7]

On its part, cinema is a powerful mediator among history, memory, and politics. Rosenstone has celebrated the ability of cinema to enact a connection between past and present through its narrative and visual

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prerogatives.[8] As O'Leary points out, cinema provides "effective frames for understanding historical events" and a film is "symptomatic both of its time and of the code of representation of the medium itself—in terms of its elisions, omissions and evasions as well as of its emphasis."[9] A film as a commercial product to be marketed and consumed can also provide a further insight into acceptable and inacceptable aspects of a given past.[10] Finally, it carries a political function as it is "subtextually linked to contemporary national issues."[11] In other words, historical cinema challenges the perception that memory is primarily about the remembrance of the past and demonstrates that they also pertain to the present.

For Halbwachs, memory and recollection are intrinsically social phenomena.[12] A society can have a "collective memory," and this memory is dependent upon the framework within which a group is situated in a society. Thus, there is not only an individual memory but also a group memory that exists outside of and lives beyond the individual. Consequently, an individual's understanding of the past is strongly linked to this group consciousness. As Straub explains, collective recollections as communicative constructions of a shared past may serve two different purposes. First, they can be regenerative inasmuch as they serve the purpose of stabilizing the already existing traditional cultural-specific components of the social or individual life, such as norms, values, and rules. Second, they can be innovative. In this case, they create a break with the continuities of an established socio-cultural life. Therefore, they can generate a new understanding of the historical process and its disruption, a new version of the past, a new outlook on the present, and a new group-shared expectations for the future.[13] According to Ricoeur, continental memories of wars are reconstructed through both remembrance and amnesia.[14] This is particularly true for Italy. As Rusconi points out, for a long time national history has not been a principal moment of the democratic public discourse, and the incapacity to narrate the collective past in a convincing manner remains the main destabilizing factor in contemporary culture.[15] Indeed, in Italy, diametrically opposed memories of the past intended as recollection of basic historical facts (and not only of their significance) still coexist. As Foot shows, the Italian anomaly rests not as much as in the plurality of its narrative but, rather, in their pursuit of institutional legitimacy.[16] This attempt at manipulating history for propaganda purposes is evidence of the politicized nature of memory in Italy.[17]

Writer Vincenzo Consolo stated that "the writing of historical fiction as a genre has nothing to do with escapism or nostalgia, nor does it defer to

utopia."[18] According to Della Colletta, following Alessandro Manzoni's example, contemporary Italian writers, such as Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Elsa Morante, and Umberto Eco, wrote historical novels that "imply a revisionist attitude with respect to the historical records. Invention, therefore, becomes a way to fill in the gaps in the archives and tell the stories of those who did not have a voice in the historical world."[19] Analyzing literary novels set in ancient Rome, in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the eighteenth century, Rebane argues that the new wave of historical fiction of the 1980s and 1990s in Italy "is characterised by the innovative ways of depicting, exploring and questioning the collective past."[20] According to Rebane, the historical novel in particular unfolds its "powerful potential for a critical diagnosis of contemporary society" by representing "a search for new collective identities endangered by major socio-political transformations within and without Italy"[21] such as the increasing economic and political power of the European Union. Equally interestingly, Ganeri associates the recent revival of historical narratives with the fear produced by the information-technology revolution and by the impact of multimedia languages on the selection processes of historical memory.[22] In other words, working on the past would represent a natural form of resistance, because of its capacity to exalt that which the techno-communicative transitions tend to undermine from within: the value of the present and its root with the past.

What about crime fiction, specifically? Hampered by prejudices, this genre has been ignored by scholars for a long time, and only in the last few decades has become object of a lively scholarship.[23] The crime genre has engaged extensively with history, in Italy and abroad. Historical crime fiction has in fact developed into the fastest growing type of crime fiction.[24] Browne explains this impressive growth with the fact that "the reader gets the same kind of thrill at a safe distance that he or she gets from more contemporary and directly threatening true crime literature" and in the context of a new and revitalized general interest in history worldwide.[25] This may be true for crime narrative set in the distant past, but it may be argued that the success of crime narrative set in the near past speaks rather of the interest in making sense of the present by returning to its roots. In some cases, as Said acutely puts it, "[w]hat animates such appeals [to the past] is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past is really past, over and done with, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms."[26]

Spurred by the international success of Umberto Eco's *Il nome della rosa*,[27] several Italian writers of the 1990s and 2000s employed the form of the historical novel, mostly concentrating on more recent—and particularly troubled—periods of Italian history, such as the Risorgimento (1815–1870) and Fascism (1922–1943). The focus of crime narrative is especially on justice and the law and relates to the hot topic of personal and collective responsibilities in the past and in the present. This is not surprising as the crime genre lends itself to exposing, denouncing, and addressing social and political injustice, often as a response to specific political and social climates experienced by the authors.

In spite of recurring prejudices, today there is a growing recognition in the social sciences of "popular" criminological texts, such as film, television drama, crime fiction, and true crime, as valid social documents, which shape both public and academic understanding of crime, justice, and victimization and offer alternative means of engaging with criminal events and "knowing" about crime.[28] This volume builds on recent scholarship on international historical crime fiction that highlights the importance of the genre for dealing with the past and the present. For its special relationship with topics such as legality, culpability, and responsibility, a crime novel is also a mostly suitable medium for recounting history.[29] The formula of the investigation allows tackling history from a hypocaliptic prospective: that is, a micro-story—the investigation itself—that illustrates a macro-story or history, functioning as a wider investigation into a society and its times.[30] More importantly, in historical crime novel, the detective's enquiry into the past often allows crime writers to draw a parallel between the past of the investigation and the present of the reader and to comment upon contemporaneous events.[31] Finally, by discussing some recent Italian novels, mainly historical crime stories, as New Italian Epic—that is an "hypothesis of convergence currently existing in Italian literature"[32]—the collective scholar Wu Ming (2003) identifies their acting at the level of social imagination, in the spheres of symbols and in the dimension of myth as a way to represent history in a problematic way, and a practice of resistance and willing to change the present.

From the above account, it follows that the relationship between history and crime fiction and film is particularly interesting and worthy of an investigation. Yet, apart from a collection of essays and some articles on individual authors, the historical *giallo* has never been studied systematically from this point of view.[33] While it is widely recognized that Italy's popular culture is in the front line in tackling everyday problems

and conflicts,[34] historical crime fiction and films have seldom been studied through their political and social aspects. My book is the first monograph in English that investigates Italian historical crime fiction and films. It does not provide a complete survey of the Italian output. Rather, its aim is to highlight the fruitful relationship between history and crime narrative. It places historical crime fiction and films in the larger cultural, social, and political context of contemporary Italy, exploring the ways in which fictional representation of past crimes mirror contemporaneous political and social anxieties in Italian society and often investigate an unsolved past. Above all, by analyzing historical crime fiction, television series, and films set during three troubled periods of Italy's recent history—namely, the Risorgimento, Fascism and the Second World War (WWII), and 1968 and the Years of Lead—this volume investigates if and how the sub-genre has been able to intervene in topical debates in Italian politics and society.

Taking into account the vast production of crime narrative in Italy, I have focused on the crime fiction, films, and television series of the 1990s and 2000s when several Italian authors emerged and became nationally and internationally famous, generating a renaissance in Italian crime fiction, and historical crime narrative in particular.[35] However, previous relevant books such as Leonardo Sciascia's *L'affaire Moro* and *Porte aperte*[36] and films such as Pietro Germi's *Un maledetto imbroglio*,[37] Damiano Damiani's *Girolimoni*,[38] and Elio Petri's *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*[39] are equally analyzed. This book concentrates on famous writers, such as Leonardo Sciascia, Andrea Camilleri, Carlo Lucarelli, Marcello Fois, Giancarlo De Cataldo, and Maurizio De Giovanni; film directors, such as Elio Petri, Pietro Germi, Damiano Damiani, and Marco Tullio Giordana; and television series such as the *Commissario* [Inspector] De Luca series; the *Commissario* Nardone series; and *Romanzo criminale. La serie* [Crime Story. The series]. It also analyzes lesser known authors, providing the most wide-ranging examination of the development of this sub-genre in Italy.

In order to investigate the relationship between fictional works and history more effectively, I give an account of the main historical and social events and the political debates that may have inspired the novels. Apart from Introduction and Conclusion, my book is divided into three chapters: the first dedicated to historical crime novels set during the Risorgimento, the second analyzes *gialli* set during Fascism and WWII, and the third tackles the so-called Years of Lead characterized by terrorism from the left and the right. The aim of this volume is to find out if the writers use the historical setting simply as a backdrop for their stories or, rather, if

they weave it into the very fabric of their novels turning the storytelling into a more general investigation into history. Other questions this book addresses are does the alleged fixed and repetitive structure of the crime genre allow a meaningful investigation into the past? Has historical *giallo*, in both book and filmic versions, been able to intervene in topical debates in Italian politics and society? Using Straub's terminology, does the new wave of historical crime fiction and film contribute to a "regenerative" or, rather, "innovative" recollection of the past? Do the analyzed novels, television series, and films reflect, as well as reflect upon, the social and political changes that have occurred in contemporary Italy? Do they address the topic of personal and collective responsibilities? Does historical crime fiction tell us something about Italian national and regional identities? Finally, do the novels show a relationship between the historical setting and the sub-genre used (such as whodunit, hard-boiled, or noir) for the crime story?[40]

This book is a "time machine" traveling into crucial periods of Italy's recent history through historical crime fiction. In investigating some of the most important Italian crime writers, it also explores the transformations that have occurred in Italy's social and political fabric in the last 40 years. It is the first study to examine comprehensively the many fascinating ways in which the *giallo* confronts history and its open wounds. It disputes the idea that crime fiction is a mechanical and repetitive exercise and makes a case for the genre as a privileged space for social and political critique. In so doing, the *giallo* more often than not becomes a thorn in the flesh for whoever wants to accommodate history for political purposes or forget the past and its victims.

Notes

1. This book uses "crime fiction" as the label for the genre as a whole. See Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981) and Martin Priestman, *Crime Fiction from Poe to Present* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998). Detective fiction is considered as a sub-genre of crime fiction, where the focus of the story is "on the detective and the process he or she uses to solve the crime" (Wayne Wiegand, ed., *Genreflecting. A Guide to Popular Reading Interests* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2006, 148). As for the variants in detective fiction, the private eye novel refers to a story whose main protagonist is a private detective, while in a police procedural the police detective "must function within the rules of the police department; he or she

lacks the freedom of the private detective. Although the pattern may vary because of the personality of the detective, most police detectives work as part of a team (as opposed to the private detective, who is often a loner)" (Wiegand, *Genreflecting*, 150).

2. *Giallo* (pl. *gialli*) is the term commonly used to define crime fiction in Italy. It means "yellow" from the color assigned to the covers of one of the first Italian series of crime fiction launched 1929 by the publisher Mondadori. In my book, I use the term *giallo* in its widest meaning—that is to say, a story where there is a crime and an investigation takes place—as commonly accepted by authoritative scholars, such as Giuseppe Petronio, *Sulle tracce del giallo* (Rome: Gamberetti, 2000).
3. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
4. Antonio La Placa, "Il giallo di ambientazione storica," *Delitti di carta* 8 (2001): 95–100 (99).
5. Claudia Canu, "Mille e una maniera di indagare la Storia: il caso di Giorgio Todde," *Il romanzo poliziesco, la storia, la memoria. Italia*, ed. Claudio Milanesi (Bologna: Astraea, 2009), 499.
6. Maria Pia De Paulis-Dalembert ed., *L'Italie entre le XXe et le XXIe siècle: la transition infinite* (Paris: Presse Sourbonne, 2006), 161.
7. Georg Lukács, "Art and Objective Truth," in *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, ed. Arthur D. Kahn (London: Merlin, 1970), 25–60 (36).
8. Robert Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: the Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 5.
9. Alan O'Leary, *Tragedia all'italiana. Italian Cinema and Italian Terrorism*, 1970–2010 (Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), viii–ix.
10. Giacomo Lichtner, *Fascism in Italian Cinema since 1945. The Politics and Aesthetics of Memory* (London and New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2014), 18.
11. Andrew Higson, "Re-presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film," in ed. Lester Friedman, *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism* (University of Minnesota Press and UCL Press, 1993), 109–129 (117).
12. Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952). Translated as *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1992).
13. Jürgen Straub, "Collective Memory and Collective Past as Constituents of Culture: An Action-Theoretical and Culture-Psychological Perspective," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift fiir Psychologie* 52 (1993): 114–121 (120).
14. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).
15. Gian Enrico Rusconi, *Possiamo fare a meno di una religione civile?* (Bari and Rome: Laterza, 1999), 14.

16. John Foot, *Italy's Divided Memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2010), 27.
17. Richard J. B. Bosworth and Patrizia Dogliani eds, *Italian Fascism: History, Memory and Representation* (Basingstoke and London: Palgrave McMillan, 1999).
18. In Sharon Wood, *Italian Women's Writing. 1860–1994* (London: The Athlone Press, 1995), 127.
19. Cristina Della Colletta, *Plotting the Past: Metamorphoses of Historical Narrative in Modern Italian Fiction* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1966), 18.
20. Gala Rebane, *Re-making the Italians: Collective Identities in the Contemporary Italian Novel* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), 13.
21. Ibid., 15–16.
22. Margherita Ganeri, *Il romanzo storico in Italia: il dibattito critico dalle origini al postmoderno* (Lecce: Piero Manni, 1999), 11.
23. For Todorov "detective fiction has its norms; to 'develop' them is also to disappoint them; to 'improve upon' detective fiction is to write 'literature', not detective fiction" (Tzvetan Todorov, "The Typology of Detective Fiction," in *The Poetics of Prose* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1977], 42–52, 43). According to Eco, a lack of social innovation in crime fiction translated itself into a repetition of formulae, schemes, and conventional expressions (Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979], 114–72). This misconception is still widespread even though the history of crime fiction demonstrates that this genre has always been incredibly resilient to any rules imposed upon it. See Heta Pyrhönen, *Murder from an Academic Angle. An Introduction to the Study of the Detective Narrative* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1994), 20 and Jean Anderson, Carolina Miranda and Barbara Pezzotti eds., *Serial Crime Fiction: Dying for More* (London and New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2015).
24. Ray B. Browne, "Historical Crime and Detection," in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, eds. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 223.
25. Ibid.
26. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 1.
27. Umberto Eco, *Il nome della rosa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1980) translated by William Weaver as *The Name of the rosa* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).
28. Nicole Hahn Rafter, "Somatotyping, Antimodernism, and the Production of Criminological Knowledge," *Criminology* 45, no.4 (2007): 805–834.
29. Ray B. Browne, Lawrence A. Kreiser, and Robin W. Winks, *The Detective as Historian: History and Art in Historical Crime Fiction* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 2000), xiv.

30. See Carlo Ginzburg, "Spie. Radici di un paradigma indiziario," in *Crisi della ragione*, ed. Aldo Gargani (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), 57–106; and Andrea Cortellessa, "Ipocalittici o integrati. Romanzo a chiave di un falsario collettivo con ambizioni di conflitto sociale," *Indice dei libri* XVI, nos. 7/8 (1999) in http://www.wumingfoundation.com/italiano/rassegna/140799.html (Consulted on 5 September 2014).
31. Claudio Milanesi, "Le roman criminal et l'histoire. Introduction," *Cahiers d'études romanes*, 15, no.1 (2006): 9–19 (13).
32. Marco Amici, "Urgencies and Visions of the New Italian Epic," *Journal of Romance Studies* 10, no.1 (2010): 7–18 (8).
33. See Anna Bertini, "Il giallo storico di Corrado Augias," *Studi novecenteschi* XXXVII, no. 79 (2010): 173–202; Elgin Kirsten Eckert, "Youth Raped, and Denied: The *Ventennio* in Andrea Camilleri's Narrative," *NeMLA Italian Studies*, Special Issue "Italy in WWII and the Transition to Democracy. Memory, Fiction, Histories," vol. XXXVI (2014): 195–212; Claudio Milanesi ed., *Il romanzo poliziesco. La storia, la memoria* (Bologna: Astraea, 2009); Barbara Pezzotti, "Colonialism in One Country: The Italian Risorgimento in Marcello Fois's Historical Crime Fiction," *AULLA Conference Proceedings* (2011), 35–45; Barbara Pezzotti, *Politics and Society in Italian Crime Fiction: An Historical Overview* (Jefferson, IN: McFarland, 2014), 213–235; Barbara Pezzotti, "The Detective as an Historian: The Legacy of the Resistance in Macchiavelli and Guccini's Crime Series," in *NeMLA Italian Studies*, Special Issue "Italy in WWII and the Transition to Democracy. Memory, Fiction, Histories" XXXVI (2014): 213–235; Antonella Santoro, "I romanzi storici di Andrea Camilleri," *Quaderni d'Italianistica* XXII, no. 2 (2001): 159–182; Luca Somigli, "Fighting Crimes in Times of War: Detective Fiction's Visions and Revision of Fascism. A New Social Novel?," in *Uncertain Justice: Crimes and Retribution in Contemporary Italian Crime Fiction*, ed. Nicoletta di Ciolla (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010, 15–35); and Mark Chu and Marco Amici, "Unearthing Collusions: The Socio-Political Dimension of Crime in the Conspiracy Novel," in *Uncertain Justice*, 35–70.
34. Massimo A. Bonfantini, "Il nero senza paura," in *Quattro lezioni dal giallo al noir*, ed. Massimo A. Bonfantini and Carlo Oliva (Bormio: Comunità montana Alta Valtellina, 2005), 61–77 (63); Carlo Oliva, *Storia sociale del giallo* (Lugano: Todaro Editore, 2003); and Barbara Pezzotti, *Politics and Society in Italian Crime Fiction. An Historical Overview* (Jefferson, IN: McFarland, 2014).
35. According to Istat, the print run of "romanzi gialli e di avventura" [crime and adventure novels] increased from 15.6 million in 1996 to 21.8 million in 2001. In the meantime, "romanzi e racconti" [novels and short stories], a category that excludes crime fiction, decreased from 62.4 million to 38.4 million in 2001. See http://www.istat.it. Moreover, according to La

Porta, from 1994 to 2003 the sales of crime fiction grew by 450 %, while Italian crime fiction increased from 7 to 24 % of the total (Filippo La Porta, "Contro il Nuovo Giallo Italiano (e se avessimo trovato il genere a noi congeniale?)," in *Sul banco dei cattivi. A proposito di Baricco e di altri scrittori alla moda* [Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2006], 58–59).

36. Leonardo Sciascia, *L'affaire Moro* (1978) in *Opere 1971–1983*, ed. Claude Ambroise (Milan: Bompiani 2001), 467–599; translated by Sacha Rabinovitch as *The Moro's Affair* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987); and *Porte aperte* (Milan: Adelphi, 1987) translated by Joseph Farrell as *Open Doors* (London: Vintage, 1993).
37. Pietro Germi, *Un maledetto imbroglio*, 1959; *The Fact of Murder*, 1959.
38. Damiano Damiani, *Girolimoni*, 1972; *The Assassin of Rome*, 1972.
39. Elio Petri, *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*, 1970; *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*, 1970.
40. According to Horsley, both detective fiction and the hard-boiled formula are "loose groupings of texts" (Lee Horsley, *Twentieth Century Crime Fiction* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 1]. Classic detective fiction, also called whodunit or golden age-style detective fiction, usually indicates a pattern of death–detection–explanation in which "the reader's attention is focused on the process by which a brilliant or at least uncommonly perceptive detective solves a case so intricate and puzzling that ordinary minds are baffled" (Horsley, *Twentieth Century*, 12). The hard-boiled formula is what Raymond Chandler defined as an American variety of detective fiction whose writers "wrote or aimed to write realistic mystery fiction" (Raymond Chandler, *The Simple Art of Murder* [New York: Vintage, 1988], 13). Several scholars have tried to give an account of the fluidity of the genre, identifying more specific terms for the great variety of novels present within these two groupings. Noir fiction (or roman noir) is a literary genre closely related to hard-boiled genre with a distinction that the protagonist is not a detective but instead a victim, a suspect, or a perpetrator. Other common characteristics include the self-destructive qualities of the protagonist. A typical protagonist of the noir fiction is dealing with the legal, political, or other system that is no less corrupt than the perpetrator by whom the protagonist either is victimized and/or has to victimize others. See William Marling, *The American Roman Noir*: *Hammett*, *Cain and Chandler* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996). For the Italian noir, see Massimo Carlotto and Marco Amici, *The Black Album. Il noir tra cronaca e romanzo* (Rome: Carocci Editore, 2012). The terminological debate about crime fiction sub-genres is a fascinating topic, but it is not a focus of this book.

CHAPTER 2

The Foundation of the State: *Giallo* and the Risorgimento

The wars of the Risorgimento (1815–1870) united the Italian peninsula after centuries of political fragmentation. The Savoy family was able to create a new nation, the Kingdom of Italy, but in doing so often disregarded regional, cultural, and economic differences, and its governments imposed—rather than negotiated—new laws. This generated deep resentment, especially in the south of Italy and on the Italian islands. Many patriots who had fought for a unified Italy felt their ideals of freedom and social justice had been betrayed. These issues were long neglected or obscured in the official history of the country, with its rhetoric of patriotism and nationalism and its focus on the glorious birth of a nation.[1] Writers—such as Giosuè Carducci (1835–1907), Giovanni Pascoli (1855–1912), Edmondo De Amicis (1846–1908), and Carlo Collodi (1826–1890)—joined the nation-building effort of biographers and painters by disseminating in their works "paternalist messages to bridge class, religious, and territorial fractures."[2] In contrast, some post-unification Italian literature appropriated the topic of the Risorgimento from an alternative point of view, expressing the voice of the oppressed and delivering a counter-history of this crucial period.[3] Post-WWII literary writers have used a Risorgimento setting to investigate some evils of Italy's contemporary history, such as social injustice, discrimination, and women's status in Italian society.[4]

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In more recent times, crime fiction in particular has built on this literary tradition as a response to political events in the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, the aftermath of the *Tangentopoli* [Bribesville] scandal (1992) led to the demise of most of the traditional parties that had ruled Italy in the previous 50 years.[5] The subsequent void of power allowed the birth and rise of new political formations. Among these the Lega Nord [Northern League] reignited among Northerners an anti-south sentiment, reutilizing old stereotypes commonly applied to Southerners as being lazy, corrupt, and backward, and advocated the separation of the north and the south of Italy.[6] The electoral success of the Northern League, which has gone as far as calling for the creation of an independent state called "Padania," "reveals the emergence of new political subcultures and indicates a further weakening of the concept of a unified state created by the Risorgimento."[7] Among others, crime writers, such as Andrea Camilleri (b. 1925), Piero Soria (b. 1944), Marcello Fois (b. 1960), Giorgio Todde (b. 1951), Giancarlo De Cataldo (b. 1956), and Matteo Collura (b. 1945), have reacted to this new political climate by setting their stories in the period of the Risorgimento. This new wave is characterized by a particular emphasis on the topic of identity.

Crime fiction is an urban literary form *par excellence*. In Italian crime fiction traditional settings have been northern cities, such as Milan or Bologna, where several crime writers have formed groups to support the culture of the *giallo*.[8] By contrast, starting from the 1990s some crime novels, and especially historical crime novels, have been set in towns and villages in the south of Italy and more precisely on two Italian islands, Sicily and Sardinia, which suffered most from the colonialist attitude of the Kingdom of Italy. As Canu puts it, "if the urban dimension had been the ideal setting for denouncing the dynamics of a corrupt society, it is now the human beings, with their ties to the land, to the traditional values of ancient customs and a variety of spoken languages who allow the novelist investigate and make the past relevant."[9] Indeed, in the genre the investigation into a crime often grows into an inquiry into society itself and specifically into personal and collective identities. The confined space of the island (which constitutes an amplified version of the device of the locked room of classic detective fiction) seems to magnify the issue of a still elusive common identity, which is particularly relevant in the novels of Camilleri, Todde, and Fois. Alternatively, the genre has tackled the topic of the Risorgimento in the form of a spy novel, characterized by a vertiginous change of setting, from Italy to Austria, France, and the

UK, and a mix of real historical figures, such as Victor Emmanuel II, Garibaldi, and Mazzini, and invented characters with a particular focus on the adventurous aspect of the story. De Cataldo's *I traditori* [Traitors][10] gives an interesting account of the unification period from 1844, the date of the Bandiera brothers' expedition to Calabria, to 1871, the year after Rome was integrated into the new Kingdom of Italy.[11] It follows the story of Lorenzo di Villelaura, a Venetian aristocrat who becomes a spy for the Austrians first (and then for the Piedmontese) after being arrested and tortured following the failure of the Bandiera brothers' expedition. His story intertwines with the adventures of other fictional characters as well as real ones, such as Mazzini for whom Lorenzo officially works. In this novel, De Cataldo avoids writing a hagiography of the Risorgimento and depicts the main historical figures, such as Mazzini and Garibaldi, objectively exposing their flaws and contradictions, but also acknowledging their passion for a united and fairer Italy. Historically accurate, the novel paints a fascinating fresco of this crucial period of Italian history. It fits in with the consolidated literary tradition of depicting the ideals of justice and equality being crushed by the cynicism and opportunism of governments and of individuals who exploited the situation for their own good. More interesting for our purposes is Soria's *La primula di Cavour*, set between 1856 and 1858.[12] Unlike the other crime novels set in the Risorgimento, it gives a "northern" perspective to this troubled period of Italian history. The novel relates the adventures of Aimone, Barone del Lupo, a spy for the Kingdom of Piedmont in charge of convincing a reluctant Napoleon III to support the Savoy family in their war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The story is a hymn to the Savoy family, its grandeur and liberality, and Camillo Benso Count of Cavour, the "architect" of the Italian unification. It is also a celebration of the astuteness and moral superiority of Piedmont in Italy and in Europe.

Finally the true crime novel, such as Collura's *Qualcuno ha ucciso il generale* [Someone Has Murdered the General] (2006),[13] aims at "recovering memory from silence" filling "history's gaps and the lies of official history."[14] *Qualcuno ha ucciso il generale* relates the story of Giovanni Corrao (1822–1863), an officer who fought with Garibaldi and who was murdered in an ambush some days before the first anniversary of the Battle of Aspromonte.[15] The book, a work of literary journalism, mixes fiction and biography to shed light on a forgotten episode of the Risorgimento. Of humble origins, Corrao spent his life fighting against the Bourbon rule of Sicily; he participated in the Sicilian Revolution of 1848 and joined

Garibaldi's Expedition of the Thousand. Appointed General by Garibaldi himself, he was accepted in the Savoy army, but resigned in order to follow Garibaldi in his quest from Rome in 1862. He was murdered in Sicily the following year. The investigation into his death was never concluded, but in his file the word mafia appears for the first time in the history of unified Italy. The investigators suggested Corrao was killed by the Sicilian criminal organization with which he was plotting a revolt against the Savoy rule. However, according to various witnesses, two policemen disguised as hunters had been seen wandering around the countryside near Corrao's farm. This line of investigation was never taken into consideration. As Collura remembers "[n]on si trovò chi l'aveva ucciso, e una decina di anni dopo il rapporto dei carabinieri e tutte le carte relative a quel delitto erano misteriosamente scomparsi" [The culprit was not found and ten years later his police file and all the documents about his murder had mysteriously disappeared].[16] Corrao's death could therefore constitute—and this is Collura's conspiracy theory—one of the first *delitti di stato* [State crimes] of unified Italy. In spite of being praised by Garibaldi ("Giovanni Corrao. È tal nome che onora la Sicilia e l'Italia. Egli fu onesto e valoroso" ["Giovanni Corrao. Such a name honors Sicily and Italy. He was honest and brave"],[17] Corrao was soon forgotten. His existence came to light only in 1960 when his embalmed body was found in the *Cappella dei Cappuccini* in Palermo.

The book alternates reconstructions of the general's life, and chapters that relate the writer's search for truth. In a fictionalized episode, the book describes Corrao's disappointment when he realizes that Victor Emmanuel II, King of Italy had chosen "il principe di Sant'Elia, noto reazionario filo-borbonico" [Sant'Elia prince, a notorious pro-Bourbon conservative][18] to represent him during a religious celebration in Sicily. This choice is symbolic of the compromise the Savoy family made in order to reign over Sicily, betraying the expectations of many patriots, such as Corrao. The narrator also denounces the Savoy family's opportunism: as he remembers, after persecuting Mazzini and Garibaldi, they exploited them for their own purposes: "sarebbe cresciuto, in quei giorni, il numero dei 'cospiratori', degli 'assassini' e dei 'delinquenti' che in Sicilia, come in Lombardia, in Liguria come in Emilia, in Veneto come in Toscana, impugnavano le armi per un ideale rivoluzionario che avrebbe donato ai Savoia il Regno d'Italia" [in those days, the number of "conspirators," "assassins" and "bandits" would grow. In Sicily and Lombardy, in Liguria and in Emilia, in the Veneto and in Tuscany they took to arms for a

revolutionary ideal that would deliver the Kingdom of Italy to the Savoy family].[19] Some of these conspirators would then become national heroes. However, this was not the case with Corrao whose intransigence, loyalty to Garibaldi, and inability to compromise in post-unification Italy made him an awkward character that needed to be eliminated. As Collura puts it: "[s]arebbe stato certamente ricordato nei libri e nei monumenti se, in vita come in morte, dopo le calunnie, non fosse calato su di lui un ben orchestrato silenzio" [he would have been remembered with monuments and in books if, in life as in death, after the lies, an orchestrated silence had not obscured his memory].[20] In depicting Corrao's desire for justice and freedom, frustrated by the arrogance and cynicism that had corroded the new Kingdom of Italy since its origins, "Collura talks about us, about Italy today."[21]

As the narrator says, in order to explain what really happened to Corrao and other revolutionaries "bisogna inoltrarsi come in una caverna buia, cercando a tentoni i segni lasciati dalla Storia e che gli storici non sono riusciti a individuare nelle loro incursioni spesso ostacolate, se non addirittura rese inutili, dagli ingannevoli sedimenti delle dicerie" [you need to penetrate a dark cave, groping for signs left by history. Historians could not identify them in their forays, which were often hampered, if not negated, by the misleading sediments of gossip].[22] In other words, Collura claims the role of the writer goes beyond the limits of historiography by giving an interpretation of historical events. Through the search into a macro-story or history, *Qualcuno ha ucciso il generale* is a powerful example of the historical narrative that recovers memory from silence.

After this brief excursus on true crime, the following pages give an account of the works of Camilleri, Todde, and Fois, and their meditation on a still-elusive Italian identity. This chapter concludes with the analysis of a spy novel set in pre-unification Piedmont, the abovementioned *La primula di Cavour*.

Andrea Camilleri's *Il birraio di Preston*

Andrea Camilleri (b. 1925) is the most popular contemporary Italian writer in the world, with an estimated 65 million books sold worldwide and translations—in addition to the most commonly spoken languages—in Greek, Norwegian, Turkish, Lithuanian, Japanese, Estonian, Hungarian, and even Gaelic.[23] Best known for his contemporary crime fiction series featuring Inspector Montalbano, Camilleri is also the author

of several historical novels, all set, like the Montalbano series, in the fictional Sicilian village of Vigàta. Among them, *Il birraio di Preston*[24] is particularly relevant as it presents a crime story in post-unification Italy that centers on the difficult relationship between Government authorities and the local population and on the pervasive corruption that characterized the new Italian state from the very start. The dichotomy between center and periphery is at the core of most literary fiction set during the Risorgimento. However, what distinguishes Camilleri from his predecessors is his focus—supported by the use of the crime fiction tropes—on criminality and corruption. While Sicilian authors such as Verga, Capuana, De Roberto, and Pirandello ignored or played down the role of the mafia in Sicily in order to concentrate on the clash between Sicilian and northern Italian culture and the Italian state and its institutions,[25] Camilleri gives a non-apologetic account of the mafia and its interweaving with the new Italian state in *Il birraio di Preston*. In so doing, Camilleri discredits the alleged moral superiority of the north versus the south of Italy, without concealing Sicily's responsibilities.

Like many other Camilleri books, *Il birraio di Preston* is inspired by real historical events that occurred in Sicily. However, as with his other historical works, Camilleri concentrates on a less-known event or "microstory" buried in official documents. In this novel, history is only in the background, but through dealing with apparently unimportant historical events, Camilleri is able to tackle relevant issues in post-unification Italy. In so doing, not only does Camilleri follow Ginzburg's theory of the micro-story, but he is also inspired by his master Leonardo Sciascia who once stated: "I want to show something by representing an imaginary or invented story; when I say invented I mean found: found in history or chronicles."[26]

Il birraio di Preston revolves around the decision of Caltanissetta prefect (Fortuzzi from Tuscany who becomes Eugenio Bortuzzi in the novel) to inaugurate the new Caltanissetta theater with an obscure opera, Luigi Ricci's *Il birraio di Preston* in 1874. At the time, the local population saw this decision as an imposition and protested against it. In the novel, the setting is moved to Vigàta and the prefect uses Emanuele Ferraguto aka Don Memè, a local Mafioso, to get rid of whoever opposes the performance: a school principal mysteriously disappears and a carpenter is arrested under false pretenses. A group of followers of Giuseppe Mazzini decides to take advantage of the situation and set fire to the theater. Deputy Puglisi is the only one who understands the real reason for the fire—officially dismissed

as an accident—but is killed before he can identify the instigators. The novel ends with the murder of Don Memè ordered by the prefect in collusion with a Sicilian Member of Parliament. This tragic ending highlights the corruption of the state, which exploits local criminal organizations to pursue its interests, and the equally corruptive power of Sicilian criminality that nestles in the very heart of the Italian state. As Kolski argues, Camilleri represents "post-unification society as built on corruption, underpinned by the mafia 'presence.'"[27]

Camilleri explains in a foreword to his novel that the episode was included in the parliamentary inquiry entitled "Inchiesta sulle condizioni della Sicilia 1875–76" [Inquiry into conditions in Sicily 1875–76] and published in 1969. In a parliamentary audience reported in the inquiry, Sicilian journalist Giovanni Mulè Bertolo commented that Fortuzzi "voleva studiare la Sicilia attraverso le figurine incise nei libri. Se un libro non aveva figure non aveva importanza…Stava sempre chiuso tra quattro mura, avvicinato soltanto da tre o quattro individui a cui s'ispirava"; "Fortuzzi wanted to study Sicily through the engravings in books. If a book had no plates, that didn't matter…He was always shut up within four walls, with only three or four individuals around him, on whom he depended for advice."[28] This inspired Camilleri to write a novel about the difficult relations between Sicilians and the new Italian state as represented by northern officials. The story gives ample space to the confrontation between Bortuzzi, who, like the new Italian state, wants to control every single aspect of his subjects (as represented by the imposition of the opera *Il birraio di Preston*)—and the Sicilian population which stubbornly and somewhat irrationally reacts to what is perceived as an abuse of power ("'E noi invece ci dobbiamo agliuttìri, volenti o nolenti, una musica che manco sappiamo cos'è solo perché così vuole l'autorità! Cose da pazzi!'"; "'And yet we get the music if Luigi Ricci, whom we know nothing about, shoved down our throats willy-nilly. Simply because the authorities says so! It's sheer madness!'"[29] Interestingly, in *Il birraio* Bortuzzi confesses that he does not like books without illustrations as they are boring: "'Sapete Ferraguto, vi rivelo una hosa. A me m'annoiano i libri fitti di scrittura, mi honfondono. 'apisco meglio dalle figure. E per fortuna i libri del Serradifalco ne sono pieni di figure'"; "'You know, Ferraguto, I'm going to tell you something. Books with dense writing bore me. I understand images much better. And fortunately Serradifalco's books are full of images.'"[30]

The story assumes the tone of a farce, especially in the chapters dedicated to the performance of the opera, when actors and audience exchange their respective roles. The actors participate in the audience's reaction to the play as they openly and loudly comment upon what is happening on stage:

> [Singing] Facciamo un liquore
> che arreca piacere.
> "A tìa piace!" esclamò ad alta voce uno che stava assittato nei posti proprio sotto al soffitto. "A mia la birra pare pisciazza, a mìa mi piace il vino!"
> […] "Ma perché questi sei strunzi ripetono sempre le stesse cose? Che credono, che siamo zulù? Noi quello che c'è da capire lo capiamo a prima botta, senza bisogno di ripetizione!"
>
> "*We make a drink*
> *That brings good cheer.*"
> "Yeah, cheer for you!" a voice yelled from the seats just under the ceiling. "To me it tastes like piss! I'll take wine anyday!"
> […] "Why are these six assholes always repeating the last lines? What do they think, that we're we are a bunch of savages? We can understand whatever there is to understand at the first go, without any repetition!"[31]

In these pages, Camilleri displays all his talent by emphasizing the inherent theatricality of writing and providing the reader with comic relief in an intense narration.[32] However, the novel ends tragically with the destruction of the theater and the death of several people, including detective Puglisi.

Il birraio di Preston is also notable for its structure. It does not follow a chronological order: the 23 chapters are not consecutively placed and are often autonomous or interchangeable. Each begins with an incipit derived from a heterogeneous selection of works from Marx and Engles's *The Manifesto* (1848) to Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), Dostoyevsky's *Demons* (1872), and Calvino's *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (1979, translated as *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, 1981).[33] Each chapter contains intertextual in-jokes through which Camilleri pays homage to Sicilian writers from Giovanni Verga to Gesualdo Bufalino. In inserting these references into the narrative, Camilleri de facto advocates for a place in the Sicilian literary tradition that criticizes the way Italian unification was carried out.[34] Only at the end of the book, does the reader realize that the concluding chapter, designated "capitolo primo" [first chapter] is in fact

the first chapter, which acts as a prologue. Interestingly, this section, which presents an internal intradiegetic narrator, gives the official version of the story/history 40 years after the event. This character-turned-narrator is the now 50-year-old Gerd Hoffer, the son of a German engineer living in Vigàta who appears in the novel's opening Chap. 2. In retelling the story, he declares:

> E quindi il mio intendimento, a quarant'anni e passa dall'avvenimento, è quello di mantenermi nei limiti d'una onesta testimonianza e di ordinare questa storia entro i confini di una ricostruzione saldamente ancorata alla verità dei fatti, quale essa emerge da atti istruttorii, documenti, lettere, testimonianze.
>
> It is therefore my intention, some forty and more years after the event, to keep within the bounds of a straightforward testimony, and to organize the story in accordance with a reconstruction based solidly on the facts as they emerge from the documents of the investigation, letters, and testimonies.[35]

Interestingly, this official version exonerated the guilty of all responsibility, while accusing detective Puglisi of foul play. The reader, on reading Gerd's account, will have already become familiar with elements of the story—told in the previous chapters—which contradict "documenti, lettere, testimonianze." Indeed, Gerd's version of the events is unreliable precisely because it is based on official documents that offer a convenient (for the authorities) interpretation of facts. This is an effective *escamotage* with which Camilleri highlights the discrepancy between the official version of events and real facts. It also emphasizes the need to read through and beyond the lines of official documents—and official history with it—in order to understand the complexity of the unification process.

The crime story within *Il birraio di Preston* helps the reader to make sense of the chronology of the novel. However, *Il birraio* is not a classic detective story. In spite of the presence of a detective, Puglisi, the novel does not have a classic investigation or a solution. In a postscript to the novel, Camilleri invites readers to take an active role by establishing their own sequence of and "solving" the crime. The task of making sense of the story is challenging because each chapter follows different characters whose vicissitudes eventually comprise the entire story.

This complexity is not only functional to the crime story but also serves the purpose of describing a community. The novel is, in fact, a choral story of a Sicilian village facing the challenges of history. The many characters are

often not individually shaped but are symbolic of a wide range of social and cultural classes: from the authorities of an authoritarian state, to Mafiosi, to people marginalized by unification. Everybody speaks their own language in a sort of Bakhtinian heteroglossia; written communication may take the form of letters, reports, poetry, and graffiti, and people also communicate by gestures. Besides the hybrid language of the extradiegetic narrator, standard Italian interlaces with Sicilian dialect, the prefect speaks Florentine, a general and a colonel have strong Piedmontese accents, a *questore* [police commissioner] speaks Milanese when he does not want his secretary to understand him, and Roman is spoken by a *mazziniano* [Mazzini follower] from the capital city. Camilleri engages the reader directly by reproducing graphically the phonetic peculiarities of Florentine, Piedmontese, Milanese, and Roman speech. The register of these types of communication may vary from literary and formal to vulgar, often juxtaposed at times for comic effect. However, the most effective display of this variety in speech is represented by the frequent dialogues in the story, which also give the flavor of a provincial environment according to the Verghian model.

This multiplicity of languages is symbolic of the lack of communication between the authority of the new Italian state and the local people. As Concolino-Abram explains, the figure of the foreigner has belonged to the comic tradition of Italian literature since the sixteenth century.[36] With their incomprehensible language, foreigners bring misunderstanding and a hilarious chaos to the story. Their way of communicating makes them ridiculous or negative characters. In *Il birraio di Preston* there is a foreign character, engineer Fridolin Hoffer, Gerd's father. However, he is not the real outsider in Camilleri's novel. He is described as completely integrated into Vigàta social fabric—in spite of his comic pronunciation of Italian language—thanks to his activity as a volunteer firefighter. The real foreigner is in fact prefect Bortuzzi, whose Italian *toscanizzato* [from Tuscany] and his methods are incomprehensible to the average Sicilian. His indispensable go-between becomes Mafioso Don Memè who explains Sicilian culture and habits to Bortuzzi:

> "Vostra Eccellenza mi permette di parlare latino?"
> Il prefetto si sentì bagnare la schiena da un rivolo di sudore. Fin dal momento che si era imbattuto in rosa-rosae aveva capito che quella era la sua vestia nera.
> "Ferraguto in honfidenza, a scuola non ero mi'a bravo."
> Don Memè allargò il sorriso leggendario.

> "Ma che ha capito, Eccellenza? Da noi, in Sicilia, parlare latino significa parlare chiaro."
> "E quando volete parlare oscuro?"
> "Parliamo siciliano, Eccellenza."
>
> "Would Your Excellency mind if I spoke Latin?"
> The prefect felt a bead of sweat trickle down his back. From the very first time he had come up against *rosa-rosae* he had realized that Latin was his bête noire.
> "Just between me and you, Ferraguto, I wasn't exactly the head of the class at school."
> Don Memè beamed his legendary smile.
> "What did you think I meant, Your Excellency? Here in Sicily, 'to speak Latin' means to speak clearly."
> "And when you want to speak unclearly?"
> "We speak Sicilian, Your Excellency."[37]

In this passage Bortuzzi's ignorance is symbolic of the ignorance of the new Italian state, which tried to impose rules and laws without understanding local customs and culture. The novel also gives numerous example of these local habits, showing how when islanders speak "Sicilian," they communicate through parable and innuendos. This is the case with a conversation between Don Memè and Sicilian businessman Lillo Lumìa from whom Don Memè wants a favor.

> "Non vorrei portare offesa per nisciuna ragione al mondo, don Memè. Ma c'è quarchi cosa che io modestamente posso fare per voi o per quarchi amico vostro?"
> "Vogliamo babbiare, don Lillo? Nienti ho di bisogno. Onoratemi sempre della vostra amicizia e sarò più che pagato."
> Aveva usato il verbo pagare e questo stava a significare che don Lillo doveva insistere.
>
> "I would never want to offend you, Don Memè, not for any reason in the world, but is there anything that I, in all modesty, could do for you or for any friend of yours?"
> "Are we joking, Don Lillo? I need nothing. Honor me always with your friendship; that will be payment enough."
> He had used the word *payment*, which meant that Don Lillo was supposed to insist.[38]

This theatrical conversation also shows how criminal organizations operated in Sicily by establishing a network of people who would give and/or accept support. This tie would eventually become lethal for some people, who would end up being forced to work for the criminal organization in order to return the favor. In *Il birraio di Preston* the mafia is in collusion with local politicians to ensure it wins a contract to build the new opera house. Fiannaca, a shady Sicilian politician, controls all the business in Vigàta behind the smokescreen of an alleged "Società di Mutuo soccorso Onore e Famiglia" [Honor and Family Mutual Aid Society]. A middle-caliber Mafioso, Don Memè moves at ease in both the bureaucratic world of the new Italian state and in the Sicilian (legal and illegal) environment. However, in some cases, he does not understand prefect Bortuzzi:

> "Siamo alle porte hoi sassi, 'arissimo."
> "Non capisco, Eccellenza."
> "È un modo di dire delle mie parti. Vuol sigifi'are che oramai c'è pochissimo tempo."
>
> "We're at the gates with stones in our hands, my friend."
> "I don't understand, Your Excellency."
> "It's a saying from my parts. It means there's not much time left."[39]

The dialogues between Don Memè and Bortuzzi are illustrative of the linguistic and cultural misunderstandings between a Northerner and a Sicilian and symbolic of the difficulties in communicating among fellow Italians. In the novel not only are Sicilians and Northerners unable to communicate, but mistrust is also present in the relationship between the different representatives of the new Italian state. When Bortuzzi visits Vigàta commanding officer Colonel Aymone Vidusso, the latter refuses to support Bortuzzi in his plans to impose the opera on the Vigàta population. In order to win over Vidusso's doubts, Bortuzzi appeals to the officer's sense of duty:

> "E diho, ragionando, che quando c'è periholo di sommovimento hontro l'autorità, lo stato, tutte le forze, diho tutte, senza distinzione di horpo e arma, devono, madonna bambinaia, essere hompatte a reprimere senza stare a spaccare il culo ai passeri. Questi siciliani la son gente che puzza, lo sa o no?"
>
> "And I say, huite [sic] reasonably, that when there is a danger of unrest against the instituted authority, the state, all the armed forces—all of them, I say, regardless of branch or services—must, by God, be united in the will to put down the uprising, without splitting hairs. These Sicilians smell bad, do you know that or don't you?"[40]

This passage exemplifies the widespread attitude of carrying out one's personal business under the cover of doing it for the common good. It also shows how in *Il birraio di Preston* the Italian state is far from unified in its goals. In this case, Vidusso behaves honorably by refusing to endorse Bortuzzi's plans in order to guarantee peace, but in other cases, other representatives of the Italian state, such as Commissioner Everardo Colombo, put a spoke in Bortuzzi's wheel to advance their careers. This extract also introduces the important topic of an "internal" Orientalism that has characterized relations between north and south since the very beginning of unification. As Russo has written, Southern Italy "for a long time it has been considered a source of archaic customs and habits, obscure and inaccessible languages, the continent of the primitive and the exotic at the same time."[41] Indeed, many studies of the period show that the Italian intellectual élite from the north considered the south and the islands as "Africa," that is, as exotic others to conquer and exploit rather than understand and respect.[42] These studies, which expressed colonial and denigrating points of view, produced stereotypes that have continued to influence contemporary Italian society. Consequently, as Bagnoli puts it, the birth of the Kingdom of Italy did not bring with it an Italian identity of shared values and mentality, but only shaped a "mellifluous identity,"[43] subsequently made apparent by the success of the Northern League in the 1990s.

If there is a common identity in *Il birraio di Preston*, it is in the form of distrust for the police and the justice system. When Police Commissioner Colombo investigates a murder during a card game, he is told that not a single player saw anything. He comments mockingly:

> "Tutti siciliani, eh, i giocatori?"
>
> [Il segretario Francesco Meli]: "Non si, cavaliere. Quello della scarpa slacciata si chiama Vendramin Giulio, è veneziano, fa il commesso viaggiatore."
>
> "All Sicilians, these cardplayers?"
>
> [His secretary Francesco Meli]: "No, Cavaliere. The man tying his shoe was Giulio Vendramin, a Venetian. He's travelling salesman."[44]

Here Camilleri deconstructs a stereotype about Sicilians—the so-called *omertà* [code of silence] that makes all Sicilians complicit with the mafia—by showing how Northerners too may be "forgetful" when their lives are at stake. Again, an alleged Sicilian trait is attributed to the entire Italian

population in this novel. This is also the case, for example, when Don Memè is exonerated from the accusation of murder, thanks to a false alibi: "Tra i fornitori dell'alibi c'erano il ricevitore postale Bordin Ugo, Veneto, il dottor Pautasso Carlo Alberto, astigiano, direttore dell'ufficio imposte, e il ragionier Giannanneschi Ilio, pratese, addetto al catasto"; "Among those furnishing the alibi were the postmaster Ugo Bordin, from the Veneto; the *dottor* Carlo Alberto Pautasso, Esq., of Asti, director of the tax office; and *ragioniere* Ilio Giannanneschi, of Prato, an employee at the land registry."[45] As Camilleri dutifully mentions, among the people who provide help to Don Memè are Northerners who work within the state. When the prison doors open to release him, Don Memè ironically exclaims: "Ma quanto è bella l'unità d'Italia!"; "Ah, how splendid our unified Italy is!"[46] As we can see from this extract, humor is effectively used as "a critical weapon directed at the hegemonic élite who view unification as a moral right."[47] Prunster also argues that in *Il birraio di Preston* "national unity exists only as a theoretical concept."[48] It can also be argued that it is achieved in the form of a general and pervasive corruption.

The disappointment is therefore huge for those who fought for unification hoping for a new era of justice and prosperity. In *Il birraio di Preston* Pippino Mazzaglia, former *garibaldino*, gives voice to this dissatisfaction:

> "Io ho visto l'esercito italiano, in più occasioni, e sempre più frequentemente, sparare su gente che protestava perché stava a murìri di fame. Hanno sparato magari su fimmine e picciliddri. E io ne ho provato raggia e virgogna. Raggia perché non si può starsene freschi e tranquilli a vedere ammazzare persone 'nnucenti. Virgogna perché io stesso, con le mie parole, i miei atti, con gli anni di galera, con l'esilio ho dato una mano a fare quest'Italia che è addiventata così com'è, una parte che soffoca l'altra e se si ribella, la spara."
>
> "Several times, and with increasing frequency, I've seen the Italian army fire at people who were protesting because they were starving to death. They even shot at women and children. And I felt rage and shame. Rage because one can't just sit there, cool and calm, watching innocent people get killed. And shame because I myself, through my words, my actions, my years in prison, my exile, had a hand in creating the Italy that has turned out this way, with one part suffocating the other and shooting if it rebels."[49]

In the tradition of Sicilian fiction on the Risorgimento, Camilleri also points at the flaws of a less than perfect unification of Italy that sacrificed the aspirations of many fighters in order to protect the status quo. In other

parts of the novel Camilleri highlights the paradox of preserving law and order in the new Italian state:

> "Quando il boia dei Borboni, Maniscalco, col quale io e il mio caro amico Pippino Mazzaglia abbiamo avuto a che fare, se ne andò a crepare a Marsiglia, quattro anni dopo la sua vedova ebbe la faccia tosta di domandare una pensione al governo italiano. [...] La pensione della vedova andava data, scrisse [il questore Albanese], perché, e non sto cangiando una virgola, Maniscalco, a parte gli eccessi giustificati dalla situazione, e le colpe di cui si era cummigliato, era stato comunque un fedele servitore dello stato, di quale stato si trattasse poco importava."

> "Four years after the Bourbons' hangman Maniscalco—with whom my dear friend Pippino Mazzaglia and I had various dealings—went off to Marseille to croak, his wife had the gall to ask the Italian Government for a pension. [...] 'The widow should get her pension' [the police commissioner Albanese] wrote because—and I'm not changing so much as a comma—'because Maniscalco, aside from his excesses, which were justified by circumstance, and aside from the misdeeds he committed by the bushel, had nevertheless been a loyal servant of the state' and it didn't matter which state."[50]

Both under the Bourbons and the Savoy family the state ends up incarnating an entity that does not hesitate to crush individuals for its own survival. Power finds a raison d'être in itself, ignoring fairness and justice. This is, according to Camilleri, the failure of the Risorgimento, which replaced one tyrannical power with another, equally tyrannical. The hope for a new and more equal society was also crushed by the deadly embrace between the new Italian state and local criminal organizations, a true a partnership in crime vividly represented through the tropes of crime fiction.

Giorgio Todde's Efisio Marini Series

Giorgio Todde was born in 1951 in Cagliari (Sardinia) where he still lives and works as an eye specialist. He started his career as a writer with the publication of *Lo stato delle anime* [The State of Souls] (2001), followed by *Paura e carne* [Fear and Flesh] (2003), *L'occhiata letale* [The Lethal Glance] (2004), *E quale amore non cambia* [What Kind of Love Does not Change] (2005), and *L'estremo delle cose* [The Far End of Things] (2007).[51] As mentioned, the protagonist of this series, Efisio Marini is an historical figure. He was a naturalist doctor born in Sardinia who became

famous all over Europe for his innovative technique of embalming corpses. The series moves from Cagliari (where Marini was born) to Naples, where the Sardinian doctor relocated in 1865 and then died in 1900, to Paris (where real-life Marini went in 1867 to participate in the Paris Universal Exposition). The novel, which does not follow a chronological order, gives an account of Marini's personal story and career intertwined with some invented investigation he performs mainly because of his ability to "read" corpses. The crimes investigated do not necessarily unveil inequality or the difficult relationship between central and local government as occurs in Camilleri's *Il birraio di Preston*, but this series is relevant to our discourse because it tackles the dichotomy between national and regional identity and reflects on the representation of Sardinians in the context of unified Italy. It spans Marini's life from when he was only 18 to the year of his death and it intertwines with Sardinian history.

An easy target because of its central position in the Mediterranean, Sardinia suffered several invasions before being incorporated in the Savoy Kingdom in 1847. This fusion, driven by the Sardinian urban *élite*s—and the subsequent mechanism of centralized administration imposed by the government in Turin—drew on the social and political system of the island, highlighting problems such as Sardinian economic backwardness; the growing gap between cities and the countryside; and the phenomenon of brigandage. The *questione sarda*, [the Sardinian issue] widely debated by historians and intellectuals, dates from this time.[52] The era when Marini lived was also the period when "Sardinia opened to the world and the world discovered Sardinia."[53] This opening generated two kinds of narrative about the island: on the one hand, diaries and travel literature from European tourists who described the island in exotic terms as a land of magic and wonder; on the other, essays from sociologists and politicians who labeled Sardinia as a barbaric place. The Savoy family was responsible for the dissemination of these prejudices and French culture through which the knowledge of Sardinia was spread throughout Europe, contributed to this image. Both perspectives, which in some cases intertwined, are scrutinized in Todde's series.

L'occhiata letale is particularly relevant because it recounts the six-week visit of French photographer Edouard Delessert (1828–1898) to Sardinia in 1854. Delessert's attitude in the novel embodies the fascination and repulsion that Sardinia had for foreign visitors, and prejudices also shared by northern Italians and even the Sardinian élite.[54] Photography[55] came into official existence in 1839, little more than two decades before Italy

came into being as a state, and from the very beginning it documented both the difficult creation of the nation and resistance to it. The new medium captured experiences and communities that did not fit the national mold, creating visual counter-histories of unification and its aftermath. At the same time, it was used as a vehicle of official cultural information to promulgate images of "Italianness" that reinforced myths of nationhood. It was also a means of recording and celebrating the triumph of a northern, bourgeois concept of Italian national identity. In other words, nineteenth-century Italian photography was part of an intricate system in which the production and distribution of images was closely linked to social, economic, and political codes and interests. As Sekula has pointed out, photography served both an honorific and a repressive function.[56] On the one hand, it democratized the ceremonial bourgeois portrait, offering an art available to the masses. On the other, it was also the primary medium for documenting and defining taxonomies of humanity, creating a social archive of "superior" and "inferior" types. This was also especially true for Sardinians who became unwitting models for an inferior civilization, as we will see in Fois's *Sempre caro.*

In *L'occhiata letale* the historical figure of Delessert unites the themes of photography and the foreign gaze on Sardinia. When visiting Sardinia in 1854, real-life Delessert did not take any portraits of Sardinians, limiting his activity to landscaping. However, his images of rugged and wild areas supported the already widespread idea of Sardinia as a backward land. In the novel, none of Delessert's pictures are described in detail, but the fictional Delessert is seen working on the top of Bonaria hill, in the outskirts of Cagliari trying to include an exotic prickly pear plant in one of his photographs, in a clear attempt to portray Sardinia as a mysterious land. He then presents one of his pictures to Efisio's father, and this image provides an important clue in the investigation into the murder of Tatàno, a Cagliari beggar who had found a jewel in the bowels of a fish a few days before (and whose death provokes a frantic treasure hunt and more murders). In the novel, according to a supposed objectivity of the image, the abovementioned photograph is revealed to have a decisive evidential value for the investigation, by unveiling the murderer. In *L'occhiata letale* the task of creating powerful emotional and subjective effects—which is another function of photography—is performed by the French photographer himself not through his images but through his gaze: "'La prima attività degli abitanti di quest'isola: far passare il tempo, a loro basta che passi il tempo…e che passi bene o male per loro è lo

stesso'" ["The primary activity of the inhabitants of this island is letting time pass by. They're happy with this. It's the same for them if they pass time in a pleasant way or not"] (351).[57] Delessert's patronizing point of view echoes the prejudices attached to the southern population as weak and lazy. For the French photographer Sardinian climate extinguishes any vital spark: "'Qui persino gli innamorati sono senza vigore…si parlano per anni dai balconi…Cantano, cantano queste cantilene innervosenti e poi si sposano senza conoscere amore e passione che nel frattempo si sono inceneriti'" ["Here even lovers are deprived of vigour…They talk to each other from their respective balconies for years…They sing, they sing these unnerving monotonous songs and then they get married without experiencing love and passion that in the meantime have burnt away"].[58] Here we are in Edward Said's territory—that is, the typical representation of weak Eastern populations as opposed vital Westerners—in this case moved into a north–south dichotomy. At the beginning of the novel, Delessert is so convinced of Sardinian inferiority that he believes the encounter with a superior civilization marks the beginning of a proper existence for Sardinians:

> "Sono certo, caro Pillet, che queste saranno le prime fotografie nella storia della città e anche dell'isola e faranno seguito a quelle—mica più esotiche di queste—che ho fatto in Oriente. […] Le mie foto sono l'inizio di questa gente che per la storia, fino a oggi, non era neppure al mondo."
>
> ["I'm sure, dear Pillet, that mine will be the first photographs in the history of the city and the entire island. They will follow the pictures—no more exotic than these ones—I took in the East. […] My pictures are the beginning for these people who, for history, weren't born until now."][59]

In this passage, Delessert thinks that an allegedly inferior civilization starts to exist only when it is acknowledged by a "superior" culture. This acknowledgment is symbolized by the act of taking a picture. The camera, which represents science and progress, captures the image of a backward land or a person, not only giving it visibility, but even infusing life. A superior gaze animates an inferior object whose existence finally finds its place in the outer world. Great therefore is Delessert's surprise when he attends a show at Cagliari Opera house:

> "Non mi sarei mai, mai aspettato, dopo costumi pittoreschi, cavalieri e cavalli coraggiosi, donne berbere e altopiani selvaggi, di trovare un pezzo

> d'Europa nella parte dell'isola più vicina all'Africa. Dame e uomini eleganti… un'orchestra e opera italiana! Un teatro che cinquant'anni fa ha ospitato anche Lord Byron e da dove, proprio come quelli greci, si vede il mare!"[60]
>
> ["After picturesque costumes, brave horses and horsemen, Berber women and wild planes, I would have never expected to find a piece of Europe in the part of this island closest to Africa. Elegant man and ladies…an orchestra and Italian opera! A theatre that fifty years ago hosted Lord Byron and from where you can see the sea just like in a Greek theatre!"]

Here the French photographer contrasts exotic images of the Sardinian countryside with the "civilized" image of a night at the opera. In spite of Cagliari's physical proximity to Africa, the Sardinian city sports elegant ladies and Western music. Delessert's surprise of attending an "opera italiana" in Cagliari illustrates how Sardinia was not considered part of Italian culture by the majority of Europeans, in spite of being part of the Kingdom of Piedmont. By contrast, the reference to a Greek theater ties Sardinia to an ancient culture from which western civilization took its origins.

Delessert's involvement in the investigation and in the treasure hunt gradually changes his attitude. However, he moves from seeing Sardinians as an inferior species to marveling at a mythicized land: "si è persuaso che in questa comunità, sottomessa dal caldo e dal vento, gli uomini, divisi in fazioni, quella del Bene e quella del Male, si combattono come gli dei e i giganti" [he convinced himself that in this community, subject to heat and wind, human beings, divided into factions, into Good and Evil, fight like Gods and giants] (484). In Delessert's mind, the weak and inactive Sardinians have become inhabitants of a mythological land. Giants or pygmies, Sardinians retain a distinctive trait: "La carrozza riparte verso il Nord dell'isola, solleva una polvere bianca che ricopre tutti e Delessert questa gente se la ricorderà così, come statue di marmo che non cambiano mai" [The coach leaves for the north of the island. It stirs up a white dust that covers everybody. Delessert will always remember these people like this, like marble statues that never change] (485). Physical immobility and political immobilism are the ultimate trait the French photographer assigns to Sardinians before leaving the island forever.

In the novel, this attitude is shared by other "foreigners"; as in Camilleri's novels, in Todde's continental Italians are internal "others." This is the case with Giovanni Pescetto, a Genoese officer working in Cagliari:

> "Sono stanco, dottore…è da sette anni che ho lasciato Genova per vivere tra questi Venerdì, scusatemi, ma voi sapete in che senso lo dico. Io non li odio, però non li capisco…Ma dite Dehonis, quante generazioni serviranno a cambiare questa gente?"[61]
>
> ["I'm tired, doctor…I left Genoa seven years ago to live with, excuse my expression, these "Fridays." I beg your pardon, but you know what I mean. I don't hate them, but I don't understand them…Please, tell me Dehonis, how many generations are needed to change these people?"]

In this passage, Pescetto expresses frustration at the inferiority of Sardinians, who he compares with savages (using Man Friday of *Robinson Crusoe* as an example), and at their inability to evolve. However—and this is an interesting trait that differentiates Todde's novels from Camilleri's—this perception is shared by Sardinians themselves. In a meeting of the Freemasonry in Cagliari, members of the secret society debate the nature of Sardinians:

> [Avvocato Pruneddu] "Da quello che ho detto discende che anche l'isolano intelligente è meno intelligente del continentale, professor Nonnis. Il tonto è più tonto mentre l'uomo d'intelligenza, da queste parti, tende alla sonnolenza e al torpore, insomma è meno intelligente."[62]
>
> [Lawyer Pruneddu] "From what I said it is obvious that the intelligent islander is less clever than the continental type, professor Nonnis. Here the idiot is more stupid and a clever man tends to be sleepy and lethargic. In other words, he is less intelligent."]

This attitude is not confined to negative characters, such as the lawyer, Pruneddu, but to the entire Sardinian élite. For example, Girolamo, Efisio's father, wants his son to leave in order to have a meaningful life:

> Il padre lo manda a Pisa a studiare medicina. Dice che Cagliari è un castello secco e povero, sospeso sulle paludi, dove comandano i topi e le zanzare e che da qui bisogna andarsene e che siamo nel 1854 però qua non è lo stesso anno di altri posti perché da queste parti, dice, è sempre lo stesso anno di molto tempo fa.[63]
>
> [His father sends him to Pisa to study medicine. He says that Cagliari is a dry and poor castle surrounded by swamp, where mice and flies rule. He says that you need to leave. It's 1854 but here it's not the same year as in other places. Here it's the same year of many, many years ago.]

If Girolamo cannot see any future in Sardinia, Efisio suffers from the paralysis of his hometown. Fictional Efisio's attitude is consistent with Efisio's biography: disappointed because his talent was not recognized in Cagliari, the doctor-embalmer moved to Naples where he found a more welcoming environment for his experiments.

In the series the topic of Sardinian conservatism is almost obsessively repeated by foreigners, Northerners, and Sardinians. This view echoes the famous *costante resistenziale sarda* [Sardinian steadfast resistance] formulated by Sardinian Giovanni Lilliu according to which islanders kept their culture unchanged through time in spite of the numerous invasions from foreign countries.[64] According to this theory, Sardinians traditionally see the sea as a source of danger. A culture of fear, summarized by the proverb "furat chie venit dae su mare" [he who comes from the sea steals] would permeate local psyche after the experience of several violent invasions. According to Lilliu the sea is "the sea, lost with the colonial defeat many centuries ago and never reconquered because of an unrelenting slavery during a history of uninterrupted sequences of paleo and neocolonialism."[65] From here, came the paralyzing feeling that would prevent Sardinians from evolving. This attitude toward the sea is acknowledged by Todde who in *Lo stato delle anime* refers to:

> invasione del moro Mugahit, principe di Denia, […] segna la nascita di tutti quei paesi della diocesi nascosti per il terrore tra le montagne e lì rimasti ancora dopo otto secoli, come se nessuno li avesse avvertiti che i mori non sono più padroni del mare.[66]
>
> [the invasion of the Moorish Mugahit, prince of Denia, […] marks the birth of all those villages of the diocese hidden in the mountains out of terror. They're still there after eight centuries as if nobody told them that the Moors aren't the lords of the sea any longer.]

The mountain villages of the above passage are symbolic of Sardinians' paralyzing fear of the unknown that would keep them isolated from the rest of the world. However, while acknowledging this psychological trait, Todde also challenges the concept. As Pias argues, Todde builds up on the images of conservatism and fear to create a new representation of Sardinians that at least partially disavows it.[67] In particular, by choosing Efisio Marini as the detective, Todde contrasts the stereotypical representation of the islander that has dominated the last two centuries. Efisio Marini is far from being a frightful and powerless character: he crosses the

sea several times. First he moves to Pisa to study and Naples to pursue his career then he comes back to Sardinia in *Lo stato delle anime*, *E qual amor non cambia*, and again in *L'estremo delle cose*. When he is on the sea "[N]on soffre nessun tipo di onda" [he isn't seasick].[68] When he is in Sardinia he constantly moves from one place to another ("'io ci vado subito: un'ora di saltafossi e sono a Nunei'" ["I'm going immediately: one hour by coach and I'll be in Nunei"].[69] Efisio's profession and natural curiosity makes him a character in perennial movement from both physical and intellectual points of view. In a period when Sardinia is considered backward, he invents an innovative technique for embalming that is praised internationally. His constant struggle to rescue corpses from putrefaction, his ability to stiffen bodies and to turn them back to their original consistency is symbolic of transformation and change: "'Cambia! Cambia! L'acqua non è più torbida…La carne cambia"' ["It's changing! It's changing! The water isn't cloudy anymore… the flesh is changing"].[70] His "vita d'azione" [action life] is devoted to "contrastare le conseguenze della morte" [fight the consequences of death],[71] death being a powerful symbol of immobilism. He feels a "nostalgia geologica," "metereologica," and "olfattiva" [geological, metereological, and olfactory nostalgia][72] for his hometown. When he is back in *E quale amore non cambia* "[s]ente il sale delle lacrime che arrivano" [he feels the salt of the tears that well up].[73] He may criticize Sardinian society, but his visceral attachment for his land is the only "love that does not change." His eccentric personality and his use of science to solve his investigations echo the figure of Sherlock Holmes and make him an unconventional character. He never stops: "Non mi fermo di fronte alle cose dei vivi e sono certo che riuscirò a capirle, a capirle fino in fondo" ["I'm not deterred from studying living beings and I'm sure I will be able to understand them right to the core"].[74] Even his physique challenges stereotypical views of islanders: he is tall and "sottile e nervoso […] dritto ed elegante" [thin and nervous […] upright and elegant].[75] Even more importantly, he, a Sardinian, is the one who solves crimes. Contrary to a tradition in crime fiction where the outsider detective completes his investigation in an inhospitable land, Efisio, like Puglisi in *Il birraio di Preston*, surpasses local policemen in acumen and passes judgment on all who come from the north of Italy. Moreover, he fights pseudo-scientific prejudices against Sardinians:

> [Efisio] "Se Niceforo sosterrà ancora una volta in pubblico quelle teorie che non esito a definire idiote sulla microcefalia degli abitanti dell'isola, gli farò

> vedere questa statua e dovrà tacere uan volta per tutte, scienziatino dei miei stivali."[76]
>
> [Efisio: "If Niceforo recounts those theories again in public—which I don't hesitate to define as idiotic—about the alleged microcephaly of Sardinians, I'll show him this statue and he will have to shut up once and for all, third-rate little scientist!"]

In this extract, Marini explicitly refers to Alfredo Niceforo (1876–1960), an Italian sociologist, criminologist, and statistician who, under the influence of criminologist Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909), argued that Sardinians were criminals by nature. While embalming the corpse of Graziana Bidotti, a young, beautiful, and clever inhabitant of a secluded mountain village, the embalmer cannot hide his admiration for this exceptional woman whose life had been abruptly ended. He will not stop until the murderer has been brought to justice. Indeed, as a dynamic detective, Marini always solves his crimes, which are often committed by characters who, interestingly, embody conservatism. In *Lo stato delle anime*, don Càvili, a priest in the mountainous village of Abinei, kills in order to keep the number of his villagers unchanged from 164 people:

> "Io mantengo l'ordine ad Abinei, qui io sono l'alfa e l'omega, una porta che io chiudo qui nessuno la apre e nessuno chiude una porta che io apro. Questo è più importante di ogni vita. [...] Anche io morirò e un'altra anima mi sostituirà nel paese...la proporzione regnerà perfetta [...], dal caos originerà l'ordine e l'ordine è nei numeri."[77]
>
> ["I keep order in Abinei. I'm the alpha and the omega. If I close a door nobody opens it and nobody closes a door I have opened. This is more important than any single life. [...] When I die another soul will replace me in the village...the ratio will rule undefeated [...]. Order will come out of chaos and order is in numbers."]

The villain sees himself as the custodian of the status quo. An obsession with numbers and the scare of unbalancing a long-standing equilibrium leads to violence and murder in Abinei. In *Paura e carne*, murderer Michela Làconi makes sure she eats the same amount of food she ejects in the hope of living an eternal life:

> Per lei alimentarsi è un processo alchemico d'equilibrio tra l'acqua che beve a gocce come un cardellino e quella che elimina; e così fa anche col cibo, ogni giorno lo stesso, nella stessa quantità. In questo modo è certa di

> battere—nascosta in casa—l'eternità, senza doversi umiliare con preghiere che secondo lei nessuno sente.[78]
>
> [Eating for her is an alchemic process that balances the little water she drinks—drop by drop like a goldfinch—and the water she eliminates; she does the same with food. It's the same every day, the same quantity. This way, she is sure to defeat—hidden as she is in her home—eternity, without humiliating herself with prayers that, she reckons, nobody listens to.]

In *Quale amore non cambia*, in Naples Antonino del Restivo murders his Sardinian servant when he finds out she is pregnant with his baby. The idea of mixing his aristocratic blood with the blood of a commoner upsets him. The scare of social change leads him to murder. In *L'estremo delle cose*, the villain, Paul Bec is "un matto che vuole chiudere un suo cerchio che solo lui vede" ["a madman who wants to close a circle that only he can see"].[79] His murders have the aim of returning to the point of origin, as in a circle.

If villains symbolize lack of change and are guardians of the status quo, some characters (mainly Sardinians) who help Marini in his investigations are emblematic of progress and change. This is the case with Antonia Ozana, the village midwife in *Lo stato delle anime*:

> "È una donna intelligente, diversa dalle altre di qui, don Càvili. Sa leggere e legge, si veste alla cittadina, parla italiano, è informata sul mondo. […] Si occupa delle mie pazienti […] e le ha anche convinte a partorire a letto come si fa negli ospedali e non su stuoie luride, come le gatte."[80]
>
> ["She's a clever woman, different from the other women in the village, Don Càvili. She can read and she reads. She dresses like a city person, she speaks Italian, she's informed about what's happening in the world. (…) She takes care of my patients (…) She even convinced them to deliver in bed the way they do in hospitals and not on dirty mats like cats."]

Antonia Ozana is an educated and emancipated woman who devotes her life to improving the living conditions of Abinei female villagers. She introduces new techniques of delivery in a poor and backward area of the island. For this reason, she is praised by medical doctor Pierluigi Dehonis, a friend of Efisio, who appears both in *Lo stato delle anime* and in *L'estremo delle cose*, the first and the last novels of the series. Like Antonia, Dehonis lives and works in Abinei and asks Marini to come to the village to solve the mysterious murder of the elderly Milena Arras (which is then followed by the murder of the suspect, the young and beautiful Graziana).

Unlike Marini who has left the island disappointed by the Sardinian academic and medical environment, Dehonis has decided to stay and help poor villagers tormented by hunger and disease. The novel follows him in his relentless work in poor dwellings and dilapidated farms. In *L'estremo delle cose*, Dehonis resumes Marini's investigation, interrupted because of the embalmer's death. He solves the case and confronts the villain. While the villain mocks him for being a Sardinian, the doctor answers: "'Be', qualcosa succederà anche da noi. In ritardo, di rimbalzo, ma succederà"' ["Well, something is going to happen in Sardinia, too. Later, indirectly, but it is going to happen"].[81] Undoubtedly, Dehonis is a positive and dynamic character that Todde contrasts with the stereotypical representation of Sardinians as dumb and inept.

Equally interestingly, many victims are bearers of social and personal change and for this reason are eliminated. In *Quale amore non cambia*, Restitùta Serràle, is a Sardinian servant killed by her aristocratic lover: "'ogni sera scriveva un pensiero sul quale aveva riflettuto tutto il giorno e che durante la fatica le si era prima ramificato e poi, piano piano, semplificato nella testa'" ["every night she used to write down a thought she had reflected on the whole day. During her chores, this thought had first been very complicated and then, little by little, it had become simple in her head"].[82] Reading her diary, Efisio realizes that she is a poet. The young woman has the courage to leave an abusive relationship to start afresh on the mainland. In *Lo stato delle anime*, Graziana, also writes poetry. These two women defy their social status and through writing change who they are. Their example is dangerous in the eyes of anyone who wants to keep things unchanged. Their challenge to the world makes them victims, but their true self is rescued by Efisio Marini who defeats conservatism and resistance to change and delivers their tormentors to justice thanks to his dynamic investigations.

Rather than representing Sardinia as unchanging, through his representation of key roles in crime fiction, such as the detective, the villain, and the victim, Todde endorses an image of the island where conservatism is constantly challenged by evolution. The figure of the detective symbolizes movement and progression while the culprit more often than not retains a cosmic, material, social, and personal status quo. Halfway through the series, the detective leaves Sardinia and he may be considered an outsider, but movement and progression also originate from other Sardinian characters, especially women. With his powerful representation of the dynamic between immobilism and change, Todde seems in tune with Braudel who

in his 1949 essay on the Mediterranean civilizations argued that "Sardinia also had windows open towards the outside."[83] He is also closer to Carta's point of view, when he argues that the coexistence of old and new, of tradition and the opening toward the outside world, was the fertile ground where the idea of Sardinia was born.[84] Ultimately, Todde enters into the debate about regional identity in a political climate that challenged the idea of a unified nation and divided Italians into questionable categories of moral and cultural superiority and inferiority.

Marcello Fois's Sebastiano Satta Series

Among the authors of crime fiction dealing with the Risorgimento, Marcello Fois is particularly interesting because he not only stresses the distortion of a less than perfect unification of Italy, but also presents a complex discourse on Italian identity.[85] In his novels set in nineteenth-century Sardinia, *Sempre caro*, *Sangue dal cielo*, and *L'altro mondo*,[86] Fois analyzes Sardinian identity through the medium of detective fiction. Fois's novels are characterized by a poetic and evocative style and the use of local dialect, and the novels are also recounted from multiple points of view, adding complexity to the narrative. The historical series examines the colonial nature of relations between Sardinia and the mainland, while in the contemporary series he gives an account of new forms of dependency caused by active participation in a corrupt political and economic system. This chapter concentrates on Fois's historical crime stories. It starts with the analysis of his 1998 novel, *Sempre caro*, which returns to the immediate post-unification period of Italian history to trace the roots of the ongoing debates around what it means to be Sardinian and Italian. It will conclude with an investigation into *L'altro mondo*, the most political novel of the trilogy.

In his historical series, which was published in a period when the rise of the Northern League had made the issue of secession a hot political topic, Fois deals with the ongoing weakness of the concept of national statehood as it was created through the unification of Italy. It unfolds against the backdrop of the area known as Barbagia at the end of the nineteenth century, in which, as Fois has said "the annexation to a modern nation, the new-born Italy, was often perceived, and not always without reason, as an abuse of power."[87] The detective, lawyer and poet Bustianu, who is based on the real Sebastiano Satta, investigates cases of innocent people wrongly accused of crimes by a repressive and authoritarian state.[88]

By tackling Sardinia's troubled relationship with the mainland in all its political, social, economic, and cultural aspects, Fois emphasizes the importance of attempting to understand the historical roots of Italy's heterogeneous national identity and links the work of the detective to that of the historian. Fois's crime series not only delivers a counter-history of the Italian Risorgimento and meditates upon a still-fragile concept of national unity, but also advocates for an identity in flux that is respectful of cultural differences.

In *Sempre caro*, a prosperous farmer is shot dead in his olive grove, and the man's hired hand, a young man called Zenobi, is found guilty in absentia. Zenobi had gone to ground earlier after being wrongly accused of stealing from his master's flock, and the young man is now a bandit with a price on his head. Zenobi's mother is convinced of her son's innocence, but nobody is willing to help her, except for the lawyer Satta, known as Bustianu, who begins investigating the case.

This story is classic detective fiction with a crime and investigation, clues scattered throughout the story and a final, positive resolution of the case thanks to the acumen and perseverance of the detective. The action takes place in a real Sardinian town, Nuoro, which Fois describes extensively and realistically throughout the book. Several characters are historical figures, first and foremost the detective protagonist, who was in fact a lawyer, as well as a poet and journalist. Most importantly, the novel reflects real issues of the time, especially the troubled relations between the central government and local culture and people, characterized by hostility and prejudice. In the novel, this cultural and political clash is mainly represented through the relationship of three key characters to each other, who also represent three key roles in a crime story: the (supposed) villain—in this case Zenobi; the policeman, Sergeant Poli; and the lawyer-detective, Bustianu.

Zenobi is poor, uneducated, and incapable of defending himself. Most people know he is innocent, but nobody does anything for fear of retaliation. The old Sardinian social and economic system that sees a few powerful landowners control the lives and destinies of the poor population fails Zenobi, but the new Italian state also fails him, as its masters accept the *status quo* and are not interested in delivering justice. Zenobi ends up with no option but to become a bandit. This event mirrors the destiny of numerous young Sardinians forced by poverty to become outlaws. The failure of the new Italian government to address effectively the issue of the unequal distribution of wealth and social injustice only worsened the phenomenon of banditry already present on the island. As a response to

brigandage, Rome promulgated new and repressive laws, allowing for the extreme use of force and arbitrary arrests, causing widespread discontent among the population.[89] The so-called special laws are cited in *Sempre caro* and are at the core of the subsequent *L'altro mondo*. As a bandit, Zenobi also symbolizes the prejudices the rest of Italy held against Sardinians, synthesized in so-called scientific papers of the time that claimed the existence of a hereditary genetic disease that inevitably turned all Sardinians into criminals.

The cultural misunderstandings between representatives of the central government and local Sardinians and the expectation that a sense of national identity might be imposed from above are shown to have tragic and lasting consequences in the novel. Sergeant Poli genuinely believes that Sardinians should embrace the new status quo: "'Qui la gente deve capire che se si mette in mano a questi delinquenti, si mette dalla parte sbagliata. Devono capire che fanno parte di una nazione adesso, che non esistono solo loro, insomma!'"; "'People here have to understand that if they go along with these scoundrels they have put themselves on the wrong side of the law. They must understand that they are now part of a nation, they are Italians, in short that they are not the only pebbles on the beach.'"[90] Fois shows the futility of Poli's attempt to impose a sense of national identity and solidarity that he himself does not feel, through having him refer to "them" and not "us." In contrast, Bustianu believes that this attitude of imposing instead of negotiating is the consequence of prejudices against Sardinia, which is seen as different from the rest of Italy. As he says to Poli:

> "A prendere la gente per fame e per sfiducia, non si possono pretendere risultati duraturi. Questa non è una terra come un'altra. Nessuna terra è come un'altra. Anche lei brigadiere quando ha aperto una lettera con l'ordine che l'assegnava a questa plaga sperduta in mezzo al mare ha pensato: che ho fatto? Perché mi puniscono? Perché mi mandano tra i selvaggi—Vede quanta strada abbiamo da fare noi? Non siamo cittadini qualunque, non italiani come gli altri. Noi siamo carne da lavoro e cani da guerra."
>
> "Exploiting hunger and insecurity to sway the people cannot lead to any lasting results. None of them are. Take your own case, Sergeant. When you opened the letter posting you to this place stuck out in the middle of the sea didn't you think: 'What have I done? Why are they punishing me? Why are they packing me off to live among savages? You see what a long way we have to go? We are not just any old citizens, we are not Italians like the rest of you. We are beasts of burden and dogs of war."[91]

In this passage, Sardinians are described as "dogs of war." As the writer remembers in an interview, Sardinians have paid a huge tribute to the unification of Italy, being employed as soldiers in all three wars of independence.[92] Bustianu points out that it is unreasonable and unrealistic to expect Sardinians to understand the changes being introduced when nothing is ever explained to them and they are treated as second-class citizens. In this story, lawyer-investigator Bustianu stands in the middle between the young bandit Zenobi and the man of law and order Poli. He is well educated and has spent many years on the mainland before coming back home. The people in his town consider him an eccentric for his habit of taking long walks in the summer heat and his inclination to defend poor people without asking for money. Like the typical detective in crime fiction, Bustianu is able to mix with different social classes and environments.[93] Like Todde's Efisio Marini, he is now a "continentale"; "a mainlander,"[94] as he defines himself. He is also able to analyze the historical juncture at which the new Italian state stands. He can detect the ultraconservatism of the Sardinian landowners, who opposed any change; but, and above all, he can detect the "colonial" attitude that characterizes the annexation of Sardinia and the south of Italy. More militant than his fictional colleague from Cagliari, he sympathizes with poor people crushed in the merciless mechanisms of official justice and actively fights against the impositions of the new Italian state.

By highlighting both the colonial attitude of the Savoy rule and the responsibilities of the Sardinian landowners, Fois suggests a profitable dialogue between different cultures symbolized by an Italian identity in flux, respectful of diversity. This concept appears for the first time in *Sempre caro* in the words of Bustianu: "'Forse la sorprenderà di sapere che ritengo un'aberrazione il concetto di identità immobile quale lei sembra attribuirmi. Io sono per un'identità transitoria, in movimento, che trova in se stessa i meccanismi per non lasciarsi annullare…'"; "'It may surprise you to know that a fixed identity, an idea you seem to attribute to me, is in my view an aberration. I believe in a provisional identity, one in a state of flux, that finds in itself the mechanisms to prevent its being erased altogether.'"[95] Bustianu decides to save Zenobi (and symbolically with him Sardinia) from the oppression of his past and the colonialism and prejudice of his present because the young man embodies this identity in flux. With it, he also embodies the future of Sardinia, a future that Bustianu hopes will see a new Italian identity emerging from mutual understanding that still preserves regional identity and culture.

Bustianu realizes Zenobi is a promise of an inclusive Italianness when he stares at a picture of him. Bustianu is given the photograph by Sisinnia, the girl Zenobi loves and for whom he sacrifices himself. It is a photograph Zenobi had taken specifically to give to Sisinnia, a token of his love and a deliberate self-presentation. Gazing at this photograph of Zenobi, Bustianu becomes convinced of his innocence. In spite of not constituting an objective clue in the investigation (as instead happens in Todde's *L'occhiata letale* with Delessert's picture of Cagliari) the photograph plays a crucial role in forging his commitment to exonerating the young man.

Looking at Zenobi's portrait photograph, Bustianu observes that Zenobi is not wearing full Sardinian costume, but rather a mixture of Sardinian and "continental" dress. His upper body is clothed in the traditional local shirt, but "dalla vita in giù è un borghese qualunque, un gentiluomo campagnolo. Indossa un paio di calzoni alla continentale che gli fasciano le gambe nervose. Ha i polpacci inguantati nei gambali allacciati con le corregge"; "he [Zenobi] is not wearing full local costume. From the waist down he is dressed like a middle-class country gentleman, his muscular legs clad in a pair of continental-style trousers, his calves enclosed in leggings fastened with straps."[96] Bustianu is struck by this unusual combination, which for him defines Zenobi as "un uomo diviso, un po' dentro un po' fuori, un po' sardo un po' continentale. Sì, diviso tra la tradizione e il futuro"; "it marks him out as a man divided, half in half out, half Sardinian and half mainlander. That's it—split between tradition and the future."[97] In contrast, Bustianu wonders whether the young man has picked up on something that he himself has missed: "Un messaggio che le generazioni più giovani riescono a percepire nonostante tutto. Nonostante il silenzio imposto da un passato enfatizzato. Mito di se stesso. Nonostante le catene, nonostante l'isolamento"; "A message that gets across to the younger generations in spite of all. Despite the silence imposed by an overwhelming past, the very myth of its own self. Despite the shackles, despite the isolation of being…an islander."[98] Pondering this dual quality of the new generation, Bustianu feels conscious of a sense of fear, inadequacy, and guilt. In his inability to live a similarly dual existence, he feels old and trapped in the past, despite his mere 30 years.

Fois's choice of photography as the means by which Bustianu becomes aware of Zenobi's innocence points to important uses of the medium in nineteenth-century visual culture, and to its links to questions of personal and political identity. By the 1880s in Sardinia, as in the rest of Italy, photography had made portraiture available to the masses. These images

continued to follow the conventions established first of all in painted portraits of the nobility, copied in turn by a bourgeoisie anxious to emulate models of power and success, and finally filtered down to working people. But despite their iconographic standardization and their function as markers of social aspiration, these portraits inevitably recorded and preserved the individual's physical traits as well as unintentional reminders of their economic and cultural origins. Fois makes use of these competing elements of nineteenth-century photography to highlight the dual identity of his Sardinian "bandit," symbol of a new possibility for Italian identity more generally.

As Tagg has shown, photography's supposed evidential force connects it at its birth to the network of other forms of observation, surveillance, and documentation that developed along with disciplinary institutions such as mental asylums, prisons, and hospitals from the eighteenth century onward and enforced identities and relations of power.[99] Photography was a crucial tool in that process of measurement and was used in criminal investigations from the early 1840s onward, creating a vast archive of criminal types that included the "bandit." After unification, as Di Fiore writes, this was another way in which the Northerners' war on the bandits was waged, as these images that showed "the ugliness of dirty rebels"[100] and with it their barbarian wickedness as opposed to the civilization represented by the new Italian state. These photographs were an important part of both the propaganda against and the mythology of the bandit. Given Zenobi's outlaw status, this repressive function of photography haunts his portrait. Nevertheless, it is the medium's honorific function that is primarily at work. As mentioned, the photograph seems to represent Bustianu's (and perhaps Fois's) ideal modern Italian. Even the description of the photographic subject's relationship to the camera emphasizes his ease with the technology. While the Northern authorities describe Sardinians as backward and superstitious, Fois has Bustianu note that in Zenobi's photographic portrait, he shows no sign of unease: "niente storie di macchine che si involano l'immagine e l'anima. Nemmeno la paura che l'obbiettivo non sia altro che la canna di un fucile pronto a sparare"; "no nonsense about cameras catching your likeness and stealing your soul along with it. Not even the fear that the lens masks the barrel of a gun aimed straight at you."[101] Bustianu's reading of Zenobi's open gaze into and beyond the camera lens reveals how his own identity is in flux and reiterates his conviction of the young man's innocence. In Fois's "ekphrastic" description of the photograph, which conforms very strictly to the conventions of nineteenth- and

early twentieth-century portrait photography, Zenobi fulfills what Bustianu cannot accomplish, what sergeant Poli cannot understand, and what the Sardinian landowners oppose: he embodies the potential for a new Sardinia and a new Italy that will embrace different cultures and cross social classes. This identity in flux is Fois's proposition for an inclusive national identity and an antidote against the political agenda of the Northern League at a crucial juncture of contemporary Italian history.

The portrait of Zenobi convinces Bustianu that he is not the murderer, but it provides no evidence that would stand up in a court of law. Indeed, pondering the difficulty of the case, Bustianu comments: "L'unica immagine che avevo [di Zenobi] era una fotografia che non lo scagionava da niente, che anzi, al contrario, lo legava a doppio filo al fotografo Leccis, ucciso"; "the only picture I had of him was a photograph which did not exonerate him from anything. Indeed, on the contrary, it forged the strongest possible link between him and the murdered photographer Leccis."[102] Bustianu responds to the photograph as a poet rather than as a positivist. He arrives at the truth by means of a sense of where things fit and he compares this to the construction of a poem:

> In fondo è come scrivere una poesia, le parole giuste si trovano senza sapere come. I versi si dispongono naturalmente, contro ogni logica, contro ogni previsione [...] Si trattava di sentire le cose e disporle nell'unico posto a loro riservato. Come scrivere versi, appunto.
>
> When you come to think of it, it's like writing a poem: the right words come to you without you knowing how. The lines arrange themselves, against all logic, despite all the odds. [...] It was a question of feeling things and assigning them to the only possible place allotted to them. As I said, just like writing a poem.[103]

Indeed, it is precisely through a fictional construction of Bustianu's that the truth (and the murderer) is revealed, and both literal and poetic justice are served.

Ultimately, in *Sempre caro*, like the photographer, who not only records but also constructs reality, and like the historian, who registers and interprets the past, Fois investigates and asserts a still-fragile Italian identity. The photograph of Zenobi tells a micro-story within the narrative economy of *Sempre caro*, while the novel itself takes its place in the macro-story of Italian unification and its long aftermath. Just as the photographic portrait of Zenobi expressed a fluid, dual identity, Fois's snapshot of post-Risorgimento Sardinian society is an interpretation of Sardinia's divided

past and a celebration of its potential for a contemporary identity that is both Italian and Sardinian.

Fois's discourse on Italian unification continues in *Sangue dal cielo*. In this novel, Bustianu is given the task of representing a young man, Filippo Tanchis, who has been accused of murdering a usurer and police informant, Bobore Solinas. While in jail, Tanchis allegedly commits suicide. Bustianu's investigation unveils a tragic story of sexual abuse perpetrated by a military doctor, Riccardo Fantini, against Tanchis. Tanchis, whose ambition is to join the Italian army, is manipulated by Fantini who promises to help him. The story of the abuse is symbolic of the unbalanced relationship between the mainland and the island. This novel also sees Bustianu working with Sergeant Poli, who, in the meantime, has become his friend. This collaboration, however, is far from being unproblematic and is still characterized by misunderstandings.

The topic of a new, inclusive identity is resumed in *L'altro mondo* and sees an evolution in the relationship between Bustianu, Sergeant Poli, and Zenobi that hints at an ideal collaboration in the name of an inclusive Italianness. In this story Bustianu investigates the murder of a woman that has been hastily attributed to a bandit, Dionigi Mariani. During his investigation, which sees the Sardinian lawyer collaborate with his friend Zenobi and Sergeant Poli, Bustianu unveils a secret government program of chemical warfare on the island. Set in the historical context of the special laws for public order in Sardinia which were established in 1897, Fois inserts the fictional twist of the secret program as a metaphor for the exploitation of Sardinia by the central government.[104] In various parts of the novel Bustianu attacks the new laws:

> "Ora lo Stato, con le leggi speciali, ci dice che è suo dovere, in nome della giustizia, essere sullo stesso piano, ma io dico peggiore, di colui che l'offende. Una bestia sanguinaria commette razzie, sequestri, omicidi e noi che facciamo? Gli arrestiamo le madri, i figli piccoli per costringerlo a venire allo scoperto. Diventiamo suoi compagni, membri della sua banda, parliamo lo stesso linguaggio: a sequestro rispondiamo con sequestro, perché sequestrati sono le madri, le sorelle, i figli, che vediamo dentro alla gabbia degli imputati."[105]

> ["Now with its special laws, the Government is telling us that its duty, in the name of justice, is to be at the same level—but I say at a lower level—of whoever offends. A bloody beast makes raids, kidnaps and murders and what do we do? We arrest their mothers, their little children to make him come out into the open. This way we become their partners, members of

their gang, we speak their language: we respond with kidnapping to their kidnapping, because their mothers, sisters, children—whom we see in the dock—have been kidnapped."][106]

In this passage, Bustianu condemns a central government that ruthlessly applies laws in order to fight criminality, positioning itself at the same level as delinquency. At the same time, however, the lawyer associates brigands with "merciless beasts." This way Fois avoids any softened or romanticized representation of brigandage. In other words, Bustianu is aware of the fact that social and economic problems were present in the island before the arrival of the Piedmontese. He also thinks that these problems need to be addressed by the new state. What he cannot accept are the "colonial" methods used:

"La mia idea è che si stia tentando di risolvere la questione sarda senza risolverla. Se si finge di sanare il problema del banditismo si aprono nuove aree di sfruttamento senza l'obbligo di dare una soluzione ai problemi profondi."
"E allora?"
"Allora finché siamo il canile di Roma qui le cose vanno sempre peggio."
"Il canile," ripete Pais Serra, sorridendo appena. "Dice bene, ma ignora, o vuole ignorare, che i guardiani di questo canile sono tutti sardi. Non stia a cercare troppo distante, avvocato."[107]

["I think that they are trying to solve Sardinian problems without solving them. They pretend to solve the issue of brigandage by opening new areas of exploitation without the obligation of providing a solution to serious problems."
"So what?"
"Then until we are Rome's doghouse things will always get worse."
'The doghouse' Pais Serra repeated, slightly smiling. "You are right, but you ignore, or, rather, you want to ignore, that the custodians of this doghouse are all Sardinians. Don't look too far."]

During a conversation with Francesco Pais Serra, a historical figure and the Sardinian congressman responsible for the new special laws, Bustianu reaffirms his judgment on the new state's methods. In this passage, however, an important theme also found in Camilleri's *Il birraio di Preston* is introduced: the increasing Sardinian participation in a corrupt political and economic system ("the custodians of this doghouse are all Sardinians"). While reinforcing his criticism of the "colonization" of Sardinia and introducing the theme of active participation in an unjust system, Fois also

presents an important evolution in the character of Poli. As we have seen in the previous two books of the series, Poli is an honest policeman, but shares prejudices against Sardinians, whom he considers "others." His attitude is very different in *L'altro mondo*:

> "Volevo dire, con licenza, signor maresciallo, che lí era tutto un fronte."
> "Lo posso capire, Mari, non intendevo…Se ti ho dato quest'impressione…"
> "Come qui, signor maresciallo."
> "Certo, certo." Poli ha assunto il tono di chi dice una cosa e ne pensa un'altra.
> […] "Ah sí," fa Poli. "L'elenco dei colleghi in servizio attivo che hanno fatto la campagna d'Africa, appunto. Per un motivo che ignoro, l'avvocato…"
> "…Non dovrebbe permetterlo!" la voce di Mari ora ha virato al nero.
> Poli spera di non aver capito, per un attimo desidera di non aver percepito quel tono. "Ma, ma…"
> "…Non si deve dare spago a questa gente, maresciallo. Sono bestie, io li conosco, ne ho visti tanti come loro in Africa: mangiano e poi sputano sul piatto, fanno gli amici, ma il loro unico desiderio è di vederci morti."
> "Io le impedisco!" esclama Poli, ma non fa in tempo a finire la frase.[108]
>
> ["I meant, if you allow me, Staff Sergeant, the front was everywhere there."
> "I understand, Mari, I didn't mean…If I gave you this impression…"
> "Like here, sir."
> "Sure, sure." Poli has assumed a tone of a person who says something but is thinking about something else.
> […] "Ah, yes" says Poli. "The list of the colleagues who have fought in the African campaign, precisely. For some reason that I don't know, Satta."
> "You shouldn't allow that!" Mari's voice has turned dark now.
> Poli hopes he didn't understand, for a moment he wishes he hadn't heard that tone. "But, but…"
> "You shouldn't let the people talk, sir. They're beasts. I know them. I saw many like them in Africa: they eat and then they bite the hand that feeds them. They pretend to be friendly, but their only desire is to see us dead."
> "I forbid you!" Poli cries out, but he can't manage to finish his sentence.]

In this passage, Poli is talking to his subordinate, Mari, who—the reader will soon discover—is implicated in the secret program. While in the previous books of the trilogy, Bustianu was outraged by Poli's prejudices, this time it is Poli who reacts to Mari's bias ("I forbid you!"). Mari describes Sardinia as a war front and compares Sardinians to Africans, highlighting once more the colonial mentality of the average mainlander toward Sardinia which was one of the topics at the center of Todde's series. By

contrast, Poli is surprised and outraged and only accepts Mari's apology because he believes that his subordinate is going through a period of stress. Nevertheless, he is left "inquieto" [worried].[109] The final pages of the novel see Poli kidnapped by Mari who tries to kill him. Poli is eventually saved by Bustianu and Zenobi. The three characters managed to survive their ordeal, but return home knowing that in spite of being able to stop the secret program called symbolically "L'altro mondo" [The Other World], the exploitation of the island will probably continue in new forms: "Se ne tornano verso casa come pellegrini, laceri e tristi. Cosa è successo veramente lo sanno, ma non sanno raccontarlo" [They come back home like sad and ragged pilgrims. They know what happened, but they aren't able to tell] (210).[110] For the first time in the trilogy, Bustianu, Zenobi, and Poli share the same emotions. There is no "other" in this trio that at the beginning of the trilogy was divided by mistrust and prejudice and is now united by feelings of sadness and despair for Sardinia's destiny.

By highlighting a troubled relationship with the mainland, political, social, and economic problems, and cultural misunderstanding through the relations between three key roles in crime fiction—the culprit/victim, the policeman, and the private detective—Fois goes back to the causes of enduring weaknesses in contemporary Italy: the north–south divide, social inequalities, and political corruption. While highlighting the negative aspects of Italy's unification, the author does not yearn for an idealized past or hope for a politically independent Sardinia.[111] On the contrary, he indicates a new way of uniting the island and the mainland through a mutual understanding that preserves regional identities and cultures. In doing so, Fois indicates a way of creating a new Italian identity that respects diversity, using the tropes of crime fiction to contribute to the politically hot issue of contemporary Italy.

Piero Soria's *La primula di Cavour*

Piero Soria was born in Turin in 1944. A journalist for the daily *La Stampa* as well as a screenwriter and scriptwriter for the national radio station Radio 2, he has written several books, mostly set in Turin or in the Piedmont countryside. He is famous above all for his contemporary crime series featuring Inspector Lupo, but he has also written a spy novel set in pre-unification Italy, entitled *La primula di Cavour* [Cavour's Primrose] (2002).[112] As in Fois's work, there is a common thread between Soria's

contemporary series and his historical crime novel. In this case, they both celebrate an alleged superiority of Piedmont and Turin. In the contemporary series, descriptions of Turin are functional to the representation of Savoy grandeur and liberality and of Piedmont's cleverness and moral predominance in contrast to the rest of Italy:

> Quello che accadeva all'interno delle sue mura erano storie singole, intime, a loro modo universali. Ma, in sottofondo, appariva sempre quella sorta di carattere impresso dal suo respiro.
> I falsi cortesi dello stereotipo, i provinciali, *i bogia nen*, i riservati, i mentalmente e orgogliosamente sudditi di un istinto che fa amare il principe a tal punto da sostituire una monarchia con una stirpe.
> I Savoia con gli Agnelli.
> E da considerarla l'illuminata superiorità da esibire senza clamore, ma in modo profondo, divaricante, nei confronti di quell'Italia degli altri stereotipi: vociante, disordinata, lagnosa, sbruffona, furbastra, menefreghista.
> Quell'altra Italia così troppo italiana.[113]
>
> [What happened inside its walls were intimate and private stories that were universal at the same time. However, in the background there was always a distinct personality generating from Turin's very breath. Turinese were stereotypically described as hypocritical, provincial, *bogia nen*, and reserved. They were seen as, mentally and proudly, subjects of an instinct that made them love a king to such an extent they had replaced a monarchy with a family: the Agnelli after the Savoy.
> They knew they possessed an enlightened superiority displayed without fanfare, but in a deep way that contrasted with the other Italy of other stereotypes: noisy, untidy, moaning, boasting, crafty and couldn't-care-less Italy.
> The other—too Italian—Italy.]

This passage illustrates a recurring topic in Soria's novels: intertwined with the pride for a royal city there is a feeling of being outside the rest of Italy, manifested in a constant dialectic between "the Turinese" who possess an "enlightened superiority" and "the other Italy" which is "noisy, untidy and boasting," according to recurrent stereotypes. The pride of being from Turin comes from a particular perception of Italian history: the difference between the fierce Piedmontese, whose kings were responsible for the unification of Italy, and the rest of the country, the so-called too Italian Italy. This is also expressed in *La donna cattiva* when the narrator even contrasts nineteenth-century Turinese with fellow Northerners, the "pavidi" [cowardly] Milanese, long subservient to the Austrian Empire.[114]

One year after the publication of *La donna cattiva*, Soria resumes these themes in his historical spy novel set in the Risorgimento.

La primula di Cavour is a fast-paced narrative that takes place in Turin, Paris, and London between 14 June 1856 and 21 July 1858. It relates the adventures of Aimone, baron of Lupo, an illegitimate son of Charles Albert I of Savoy and therefore brother of Victor Emmanuel II, the king responsible for Italian unification. Trained as a spy by Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, he has traveled extensively abroad to work on dangerous missions that have taken him as far as China. On the eve of the Second War of Independence, he manipulates anarchist Felice Orsini, helping him to organize a terrorist attack against French Emperor Napoleon III.[115] The plan is that Aimone will save the Emperor at the very last moment, hoping that he will then agree to help the Savoy family in their quest to rule Northern Italy. The Savoy spy embarks on this mission with Chiara, a childhood friend who has become his love interest and is helped by Hungarian Lajos Hòrmani, chief of the Piedmont secret service. The novel also follows Cavour's attempt to obtain political support and funding for the impending Second War of Independence; and Felice Orsini in his organization of the Paris attack. The story is not devoid of stereotypes relating to different nationalities: for being Eastern European, Lajos apparently likes torturing his prisoners: "Lui era per sistemi più ricercati. Magari feroci, com'era nella natura del suo popolo" [He preferred more refined techniques. Maybe cruel ones, as in the nature of his people].[116] Eugenia, Napoleon III's wife, is capricious. The narrator comments that "era pur sempre una spagnola" [at the end of the day she was Spanish] and that her melodramatic changes of mood "facevano parte dell'innata tragicità della sua natura" [were part of an inborn tragic nature].[117] Fictional Daniel Use, the English spy is cold-hearted and "[p]oco incline, come tutti i suoi conterranei, a mostrarsi anche vagamente espansivo" [not inclined, like all his fellow islanders, to show even the slightest affection].[118] Stereotypes also apply to single historical figures. The subtitle of this novel, *Pettegolezzo risorgimentale di amore e morte* [Risorgimento gossip of love and death] is appropriate as the narration is often interrupted by official documents and fictional confidential files. The latter often contain rumors regarding characters such as Orsini, Garibaldi, and the Countess of Castiglione, Napoleon III's mistress. Throughout the book many historical characters are also described in a pejorative way: for example, Karl Marx is "tronfio e indispettito" [pompous and vexed]; Lord Palmerston is "un uomo

affascinato dal vizio" [a man fascinated by vice] who loves "intimorire gli altri" [intimidating other people] (318) with his unconventional and often disgusting behavior; Queen Victoria sports a "sorriso vagamente equino" [vaguely equine smile] and is "ombrosa e assetata di potere" [touchy, she thirsts for power].[119]

By contrast, many pages of the novel are used to highlight the uniqueness of the Savoy Kingdom:

> Il piccolo villaggio sabaudo appariva di giorno in giorno più vivace e aggressivo. Moderno. Una gran fabbrica di idee. Di progetti. Di opere. Come la ferrovia da Torino alle Alpi e il gigantesco traforo del Fréjus. Era quello un clima che eccitava e affascinava gli investitori stranieri. Costretti quotidianamente a fare i conti con i fumosi gigantismi delle burocrazie reali europee.[120]
>
> [The little Savoy village looked increasingly lively and aggressive. It looked modern. It was a factory of ideas, projects, and public works such as the railway from Turin to the Alps or the gigantic Frejus tunnel. There was an atmosphere that excited and fascinated foreign investors who were forced almost daily to deal with obscure royal bureaucracies all over Europe.]

In this passage the Savoy kingdom's dynamism is clearly contrasted with the conservatism of the other European nations. Foreign investors are described as irresistibly attracted to Piedmont's inventiveness. The novel cites an impressive list of bankers of the time such as Lafitte, Hambro, and the Péreire brothers, owners of Crédit Mobilier. Even the Rothschild family participates in the race to finance this small, but promising kingdom. In a meeting with Cavour, an initially suspicious Baron of Rothschild surrenders to Piedmontese superiority:

> Quello era davvero lo Stato più ruspante d'Europa.
> Lì succedevano cose incredibili.
> Lì non c'erano limiti alla fantasia.
> Lì si incontravano tutti i più pazzi esemplari del genere umano. Ciascuno con la sua stravagante dose di estro e genialità.
> Quale altro nano avrebbe infatti potuto pensare di abbattere un gigante (perché, al di là di ogni farsa, solo di questo si trattava: ottenere i soldi per far guerra all'Austria) usando i francesi come fionda?
> Soltanto un lucido visionario come il Conte.[121]
>
> [It was the most robust country in Europe.
> Incredible things were happening there.
> There was no limit to imagination.

> The craziest specimens of the human race met there, each with an extravagant dose of creativity and genius.
> What other dwarf would have ever thought of knocking down a giant (because, apart from any farce, this was what it was all about: obtaining money to make war on Austria) by using the French as a slingshot?
> Only a lucid visionary like the Count could think of doing it.]

Inventiveness, genius, creative craziness make the Savoy Kingdom a unique country in Europe. The Kingdom is also in the frontline for its liberal policies:

> Un crogiolo di lingue e di razze. Di idee, costumi, religioni.
> Già il regno di Sardegna aveva attirato col suo liberalismo ogni sorta di reduci e di sconfitti da qualsiasi campo di battaglia. A cui si era aggiunto di tutto: dal più corretto e competente *brasseur d'affaires* al mago più truffaldino e scalcinato.[122]
>
> [It was a melting pot of languages and races, of ideas, customs and religions. The Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia had already attracted many different kinds of veterans and defeated soldiers from various battlefields. Others had joined in: from the most honest and competent *brasseur d'affaires* to the most fraudulent and seedy magician.]

Indeed in Soria's novel, the kingdom of Piedmont is a modern and dynamic country ruled by an enlightened king and run by clever politicians. There is no room for poverty, social unease, and political criticism in this ideal world.[123] With a mix of realistic description and a great dose of literary rhetoric, Soria's ambition is to transform Turin and Piedmont into a myth. This view fits a function in literature identified by Reiner and Hindery as "an image for the articulation of an encompassing ideal."[124] Von der Thüsen's definition of a "symbolic city," applied this time to an entire region, is also useful in the context of Soria's novel. If "the city reveals through its form a more general truth,"[125] Piedmont as represented in *La primula di Cavour* is symbolic of an alleged pre-eminence of Piedmontese, which in Soria's contemporary novels is contrasted with the moral inferiority of the rest of Italy. In *La primula di Cavour* there is little room for the rest of Italy. Other regions or kingdoms in Italy are seldom cited. However, a reference to Sardinia is interesting. At the end of the novel, Aimone needs to leave a mountain village in a hurry. He

asks a railroader to add a wagon to the train for Turin. When he hesitates, Aimone threatens him: "'Non vorrete mica essere trasferito in Sardegna a dirigere un'oscura stazioncina di diligenze, vero?'" ["You wouldn't like to be transferred to Sardinia to work in a remote coach station, would you?"].[126] This reference to Sardinia reiterates the image of the island as a remote and barbaric land at the fringe of the kingdom, as challenged in Todde's and Fois's crime fiction.

In order to support the idea of a moral superiority, Soria also makes use of symbolic characters. Born and raised in Piedmont or "adopted" by the kingdom, several fictional and historical characters display exceptional characteristics. For instance, Aimone and Lajos are "[i] due che avevano creato l'intelligence più moderna d'Europa. Nello Stato più piccolo d'Europa" [two people who had created the most modern intelligence service in the smallest country in Europe].[127] Born in Florence and a spy for the Piedmontese, Nicchia, aka the Countess of Castiglione is "l'astuta, sfrontata, affascinante Nicchia, col suo straordinario intuito e con la sua enciclopedica conoscenza dell'universo maschile" [the cunning, impudent, fascinating Nicchia, with her extraordinary instinct and her encyclopaedic knowledge of the male universe].[128] Pietro Paleocapa from Bergamo is a grumpy old man, but also celebrated as the genius who planned the Frejus tunnel for the Savoy family.[129] Victor Emmanuel II is familiarly depicted as a loving partner of his mistress *la Bela Rosìn* [the beautiful Rose]: "'Dài Rosa: *fà nen parèj*. Lo sai che ti voglio bene come un matto. Vorrei poterti sposare anche domani'" ["Come on, Rosa: drop it. You know that I'm crazy about you. I wish I could marry you tomorrow"].[130] Provided with a big rough voice, he is also a champion of secularism: "Che grande giorno era stato quello in cui, di fatto, era stata ribadita la laicità del regno. Togliendo a quei parassiti tutti i privilegi con cui si erano per secoli gonfiati il ventre e prosopopea" [What a day it was when the secularity of the state was established. This removed all privileges from those scroungers who been fattening their stomachs and arrogance for centuries].[131]

A variety of less well-known historical figures or unnamed characters are also cited in order to show Piedmontese inventiveness:

> "A Torino vennero per imparare a imitarli numerosi artigiani svizzeri. Tra di essi, il celebre François Louis Callier. Che, dopo ragionevole apprendistato, se ne tornò in patria nel 1818 e fondò a Vevey la prima fabbrica di cioccolato della Confederazione Elvetica."[132]

> ["Many Swiss artisans came to Turin to learn from them. Among them, the famous François Louis Callier who, after a reasonable internship, returned home in 1818 and founded the first Swiss chocolate factory in Vevey."]

Through the *escamotage* of a fictional dialogue between Rothschild and Cavour's mistress, readers are reminded that the Turinese taught the Swiss how to make chocolate. An electoral campaign visit from Cavour is also used to point out that the Piedmontese invented safety and wax matches.

> [La Premiata Fabbrica di Fiammiferi Fosforici di Borgo Dora]: "uno degli opifici più grandi del regno. Che aveva fatto propri i principi della rivoluzione industriale inglese. Moderno. All'avanguardia. Persino un piccolo nido autogestito dalle giovani madri del reparto inscatolamento e confezioni. Esportazioni nell'Italia intera, compreso l'estero al di là delle Alpi. [Anche il cerino] era un'invenzione piemontese. Di tal Sansone Valobra di Fossano."[133]

> [(The Safety Match Factory of Borgo Dora): it was one of the largest factories in the kingdom. It had endorsed the principle of the English industrial revolution. It was modern and at the forefront. They even had a small kindergarten self-managed by the young mothers of the boxing and packaging shop. They exported everywhere in Italy, including foreign countries beyond the Alps. (Wax matches) were also a Piedmontese invention by a Sansone Valobra from Fossano.]

Kings, spies, engineers, and inventors contribute to create a mythical Piedmont where anything can happen. However the symbol par excellence of Piedmontese superiority is Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour (1810–1861). As prime minister, Cavour successfully negotiated Piedmont's way through the Crimean War, the Second Italian War of Independence, and Garibaldi's expeditions, managing to maneuver Piedmont diplomatically to become a great new power in Europe, controlling a nearly united Italy that was five times as large as Piedmont had been before he came to power. After the declaration of a united Kingdom of Italy, Cavour took office as the first Prime Minister of Italy, but died after only three months in office. Undoubtedly, a leading figure in the movement toward Italian unification, throughout the novel Cavour is celebrated as virtually the sole person responsible for Italian unification. In the novel, praise comes from kings and emperors, such as Napoleon III ("Lui è un genio" [he is a genius]) and humble people ("la gente semplice del borgo si era affannata fin dall'alba

per un saluto" [the simple people of the village went out of their way to greet him at dawn]).[134] An astute politician, he is also described as a good-hearted man, especially when he participates at the wedding between Aimone and a dying Chiara: "cercò di mascherare il tremito che gli attanagliava la voce" [he tried to cover the trembling that choked his voice].[135] Fondly called "Millo" by his mistress, he also surpasses Garibaldi in virility. The novel relates a secret meeting between Cavour and Garibaldi. Candida, Cavour's mistress, anxiously waits for the encounter to end. Initially fascinated by the imposing presence of Garibaldi, Candida wonders: "Chi avrebbe ceduto? Il guerriero o il tessitore? L'uomo d'azione bello e sprezzante che odiava gli ordini e faceva solo e sempre quello che voleva? O l'occhialuto burattinaio con le mani piene di fili che cercava di far ballare mille marionette insieme?" [Who would give up? Would it be the warrior or the weaver? The handsome and ruthless man of action who hated taking orders and only did what he wanted? Or the bespectacled puppeteer with his hands full of threads who was trying to make a thousand puppets dance at the same time?].[136] In other words, Candida wonders who is the real "maschio alfa, il lupo dominante. L'indiscusso capo branco" [the alpha male, the dominant wolf. The undisputed head of the pack][137] between the two strong personalities. Interestingly, Garibaldi leaves Cavour's office saying: "'Obbedisco, amico mio'" [I obey, dear friend].[138] Candida feels admiration for alpha male-Cavour who has been able to tame Garibaldi. The General ceases to attract her and she gladly makes love to Cavour in his office "[a]mmaliata dal pericolo che da un momento all'altro qualcuno fosse potuto entrare. Perché quel suo anziano ronzino grigio era molto più scalpitante di quell'ossequiante cavallo bianco" [bewitched by the possibility that someone could enter any time as her old grey horse was much more eager than the other submissive white horse].[139] In this problematic passage where a woman cannot avoid being irresistibly attracted to an alpha male, Garibaldi, who famously rode a white horse, is described as a disempowered figure ("ossequiante") who becomes one of the many puppets the Cavour-puppeteer maneuvers for his own goals. This biased interpretation does not end here. In order to celebrate Cavour's role in the unification, Soria does not hesitate to tear to shreds the reputation of another father of Italian unification, Mazzini. Real-life Cavour did not like either Garibaldi or Mazzini, ironically both subjects of the Kingdom of Savoy. Therefore, instead of using them as good examples of an alleged Piedmontese superiority, the narrator decides to portray them as adverse figures. Mazzini is

described as a "fottuto massone repubblicano" [fucking republican Freemason] who is kept "al guinzaglio" [on a leash] by Lord Palmerston who allegedly uses him for his intrigues.[140] Daniel, a spy for Lord Palmerston, and Aimone's friend, sharply defines Mazzini: "'La sua specialità non è sempre stata quella di lanciare i suoi fanatici, a cui aveva sapientemente praticato il lavaggio del cervello, in attacchi terroristici suicidi mentre lui inevitabilmente si salvava rifugiandosi a Londra?'" ["Wasn't it his specialty to make his fanatical followers—who he had cunningly brainwashed—perform suicide terrorist attacks while he invariably saved himself by taking refuge in London?"].[141] Through the reference of "attacchi terroristici suicidi" this passage clearly and problematically equates Mazzini with Osama bin Laden and his movement to an *ante-litteram* al-Qaeda. In contrast, Cavour's political maneuvering is seen as the behavior of a superior and lucid mind. As for Garibaldi, Soria's jab is aimed at destroying the general's reputation completely. Not only does the narrator reiterate Garibaldi's disempowerment in various parts of the story, but the novel also implies that Garibaldi was a coward and a rapist. Initially the narrator insinuates that Garibaldi's legend was built by his followers, who were "artisti della menzogna capaci di trasformare un atto di coraggio la più bieca delle viltà" [artists of lies capable of turning wicked cowardice into acts of bravery].[142] Then a fictional file on Garibaldi reports an alleged interview with Ruby, a former comrade, who accuses the General of raping Ruby's wife. According to Porter, "[c]rime fiction texts constantly assure the reader of their mimetic function through continued reference to actual places, dates, people, and organizations. Part of the pleasure of reading depends on his authenticity, allowing the reader to experience normally inaccessible forbidden activities."[143] In Soria's case, the use of fictional files that mix real events and completely invented ones, such as the rape of Ruby's wife by Garibaldi, has the scope of supporting the narrator's point of view. The title of the chapter exemplifies the tone of the narration: "Là dove un gran violentatore di donne fa indossare la camicia rossa ai suoi tagliagole e diventa Eroe dei due Mondi" [Where a great rapist of women makes his cutthroats wear a red shirt and becomes the Hero of Two Worlds]. In Ruby's words: "'A lui bastava menar le mani. Essere in mezzo a una battaglia. Respirare l'odore della polvere da sparo. O quello di una bella berbera, possibilmente da prendere con la forza. Lo stupro lo eccitava...'" ["He was happy when he could fight. He wanted to be in the middle of the battle. He wanted to smell the smell of gunpowder; or the smell of a beautiful Berber woman, possibly to possess with violence. Raping excited him"].[144] Here the

destruction of Garibaldi's reputation is complete. While the redshirts were sometimes accused of brutality against the civilian population, this is a direct attack on the motives that drove Garibaldi into action.[145] Interestingly, Soria is not trying to criticize the process of unification through this operation of demystification. Rather, he wants to glorify who he thinks are the only ones legitimately responsible for achieving unification and these are Cavour and Victor Emmanuel II. In the novel, in order not to overshadow Cavour as the father of the unification, Garibaldi is labeled a bloodthirsty thug. Between the crazy cowardly Mazzini and the violent rapist Garibaldi, Cavour shines as a champion of rationality and law. The use of such allegedly questionable characters on Cavour's part is never put under scrutiny in the narrative. The politicized nature of the narrative around the Risorgimento is very obvious here. Even more interestingly, this is an extreme example of Foot's divided memory. In this case, the Italian tendency toward different and often opposite interpretations of historical events does not apply to the traditional fronts of pro-unification versus anti-unification, but remains within the pro-unification side. In other words, Soria does not describe Italian unification as a flawed process that created widespread resentments in the south of Italy, like many southern writers did. He does not dispute the value of a united Italy, either, as the Northern League has done. He simply "sells" the unification as one of the many products and successes of Piedmont, like chocolate and safety matches, highlighting an apparent Piedmontese intellectual and moral superiority over the rest of Italy. In showing, once more, how in Italy it has been extremely difficult to create any consensus on memory, Soria is the "son" of an era of accentuated regionalism enhanced by the political success of the Northern League and several regional parties.

Notes

1. For a detailed history of the Risorgimento and the relationship between the north and the south of Italy, see Denis Mack Smith, *Cavour and Garibaldi. A Study in Political Conflict* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985); A.W. Salomone, "The *Risorgimento* between Ideology and History: The Political Myth of *Rivoluzione Mancata*," *American History Review* 68 (October 1962): 38–56; Jane Schneider ed. *Italy's Southern Question*: *Orientalism in One Country* (Oxford: Berg, 1998); Martin Clark, *The Italian Risorgimento* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

2. Norma Bouchard, "Introduction," in *Risorgimento in Modern Italian Culture: Revisiting the Nineteenth-Century Past in History, Narrative and Cinema*, ed. Norma Bouchard (Madison, NJ: FDU Press, 2005), 10.
3. Among other Italian writers, Arrigo (1842–1918) and Camillo Boito (1836–1914), Emilio Praga (1839–1875), Giuseppe Rovani (1818–1874), Federico De Roberto (1861–1927), Giovanni Verga (1840–1922), and Luigi Pirandello (1867–1936) delivered an alternative history of the Risorgimento in their books.
4. The most famous example is Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's *Il gattopardo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1958). Other authors who tackled this topic are: Anna Banti, Luciano Bianciardi, Gesualdo Bufalino, Vincenzo Consolo, Maria Rosa Cutrufelli, Antonio Tabucchi, and Emilio Tadini.
5. *Tangentopoli* scandal was unveiled by the *Mani pulite* [Clean Hands] judicial investigation in Milan. This inquiry started in 1992 and quickly spread to the rest of Italy and exposed a nationwide network of kickbacks and exchanges of illegal favors, such as the assigning of public works projects to private contractors.
6. *Lega Nord* (Northern League) is a federalist and regional political party in Italy founded in 1991 as a federation of several regional parties of northern and central Italy, most of which had arisen and expanded their share of the electorate over the 1980s. Its political program advocates the transformation of Italy into a federal state, fiscal federalism and greater regional autonomy. Its original political agenda advocated secession of the north, which it calls Padania, while, more recently, it has assumed a very strong anti-immigration stance. See Adalberto Signore and Alessandro Trocino, *Razza padana* (Milan: BUR, 2008), 224–241.
7. Bouchard, "Introduction," 11.
8. In Milan the association *Scuola dei duri* [Diehard School], founded by Andrea G. Pinketts, supports and promotes Milanese crime fiction writers. In Bologna, the Gruppo 13 [Group 13], formed in 1990 by a group of writers and artists promotes the culture of the *giallo* in Italy.
9. Canu, "Mille e una maniera di indagare la Storia," 497.
10. Giancarlo De Cataldo, *I traditori* (Turin: Einaudi), 2010.
11. Attilio (1811–1844) and Emilio Bandiera (1819–1844) were members of the Austro-Hungarian navy and Mazzini supporters. Following rumors of unrest in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, they landed near Crotone (Calabria), intending to go to Cosenza, liberate the political prisoners and issue their proclamations. Tragically they did not find the insurgent band they were told awaited them and were ultimately betrayed by one of their party, the Corsican Boccheciampe, and by Calabrian peasants. On 23 July, the two Bandiera brothers and their nine companions were executed by a firing squad.

12. Piero Soria, *La primula di Cavour* (Milan: Mondadori, 2002).
13. Matteo Collura, *Qualcuno ha ucciso il generale* (Milan: Tea, 2006).
14. De Paulis-Dalembert ed., *L'Italie entre le XXe et le XXIe siècle*, 161.
15. In the Battle of Aspromonte (29 August 1862), the Royal Italian Army defeated Giuseppe Garibaldi's army of volunteers, who were marching from Sicily toward Rome, with the intent of annexing it into the Kingdom of Italy. In the battle, Garibaldi was wounded and taken prisoner.
16. Collura, *Qualcuno*, 22.
17. Ibid., 26.
18. Ibid., 17.
19. Ibid., 49.
20. Ibid., 50.
21. Gianni Riotta, "Chi ha ucciso il generale," *Il Corriere della Sera* 2 March 2006, 41.
22. Collura, *Chi ha ucciso*, 43.
23. Mauro Novelli, "Le nuove vie di Andrea Camilleri," in *Gli spazi della letteratura*, ed. Roberto Carnero and Giuliano Ladolfi (Novara: Interlinea, 2008), 89.
24. Andrea Camilleri, *Il birraio di Preston* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1995). Translated by Stephen Sartarelli as *The Brewer of Preston* (New York: Penguin, 2014).
25. Daragh O'Connell, "Mafia and Antimafia: Sciascia and Borsellino in Vincenzo Consolo's *Lo spasimo di Palermo*," in *Assassinations and Murder in Modern Italy*, ed. Stephen Gundle and Lucia Rinaldi (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2007), 127–38 (128–29).
26. Walter Mauro, *Leonardo Sciascia* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1974), 1.
27. Stephen Kolsky, "Montalbano's Mafia," *The Italianist* 31 (2011): 435–461 (438).
28. Quoted in Camilleri, *Il birraio*, 233; *The Brewer*, 234.
29. Ibid., 28; Ibid., 16.
30. Ibid., 40; Ibid., 32.
31. Ibid., 48; Ibid., 40–41.
32. Nino Borsellino, "Camilleri gran tragediatore," in *Storie di Montalbano*, ed. Mauro Novelli (Milan: Mondadori, 2002), ix–lvii (xxi).
33. Italo Calvino, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), translated by William Weaver as *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (New York: A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981).
34. In the novel, two characters are Hoffer's assistant, Nardo Sciascia, and Cecè Consolo. G. Verga is a parish priest in Vigàta, the salt deposit behind the theater belongs to the Capuana Company. Finally, Gegè Bufalino awakens Turiddu Macca to let him know that his mother's house is burning.

35. Camilleri, *Il birraio*, 222–23; *The Brewer*, 223.
36. Bianca Concolino-Abram, "Pluralità di linguaggi e conflitti sociali ne *Il birraio di Preston* di Andrea Camilleri," *Narrativa* 16 (1999): 233–42 (233–34).
37. Camilleri, *Il birraio*, 42–43; *The Brewer*, 34.
38. Ibid., 199; Ibid., 115.
39. Ibid., 41; Ibid., 33.
40. Ibid., 81; Ibid., 76.
41. Antonella Russo, *Il luogo e lo sguardo. Letture di storia e teorie della fotografia* (Turin: Paravia/Scriptorium, 1997), 73.
42. Nelson Moe, "'This is Africa': Ruling and Representing Southern Italy, 1860-1861," in *Making and Remaking Italy. The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento*, ed. Albert Russell and Krystyna von Henneberg (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 119–153.
43. Paolo Bagnoli, *L'idea dell'Italia* (1815–1861) (Reggio Emilia: Diabasis, 2007), 17.
44. Camilleri, *Il birraio*, 145; *The Brewer*, 142.
45. Ibid., 39; Ibid., 31.
46. Ibid.; Ibid.
47. Nicole Prunster, "Poliphony in Andrea Camilleri's *Il birraio di Preston*," *Narrativa* 21 (2007, published in 2008): 51–61 (51).
48. Ibid., 59.
49. Camilleri, *Il birraio*, 106–107; *The Brewer*, 103–104.
50. Ibid., 76–77; Ibid., 70–71.
51. Giorgio Todde, *Lo stato delle anime* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2001), *Paura e carne* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2003), *L'occhiata letale* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2004), *Quale amore non cambia* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2005), *L'estremo delle cose* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2007) are collected in Todde, *Le indagini dell'imbalsamatore* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2011).
52. Giovanni Battista Tuveri, "Initium Sapientiae. Ma chi oserà attaccare i campanelli al gatto?," in *I problemi della Sardegna da Cavour a De Pretis*, ed. Lorenzo del Piano (Cagliari: Casa Editrice Sarda Fossataro, 1977), 213–220 (220).
53. Francesco Alziator, *Storia della letteratura di Sardegna* (Cagliari: Edizioni 3T, 1982), 333.
54. During his sojourn on the island, Delessert took 40 landscape photographs representing villages and towns he visited. He published them in the photo album entitled *Île de Sardaigne. Cagliari et Sassari. 40 vues photographiques* [Island of Sardinia. Cagliari and Sassari, 40 photographic views] (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1854).
55. I would like to acknowledge Sarah Patricia Hill for her help in analyzing the use of photography in Todde's and Fois's novels.

56. Anna Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," in *The Context of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1989), 342–88 (347).
57. Todde, *L'occhiata*, 351.
58. Ibid., 446.
59. Ibid., 352.
60. Ibid., 358.
61. Todde, *Lo stato delle anime*, 89.
62. Todde, *L'occhiata*, 362.
63. Ibid., 326.
64. Giovanni Lilliu, *Costante resistenziale sarda* (Cagliari: Stabilimento Tipografico Editoriale Fossatario, 1971).
65. Lilliu, *La Sardegna* (Cagliari: Edizioni Della Torre, 1982), 60.
66. Todde, *Lo stato delle anime*, 22.
67. Giuliana Pias, "La riappropriazione di alcuni materiali storici nei romanzi del XIX secolo di Giorgio Todde," in *Il romanzo poliziesco*, ed. Claudio Milanesi, 509–526 (520).
68. Todde, *E quale amore*, 556.
69. Todde, *Lo stato*, 61.
70. Todde, *Paura e carne*, 153.
71. Todde, *E quale amore*, 513.
72. Ibid., 514.
73. Ibid., 557.
74. Ibid., 618.
75. Todde, *Lo stato*, 28.
76. Ibid., 57.
77. Ibid., 119.
78. Todde, *Paura e carne*, 146.
79. Todde, *L'estremo*, 767.
80. Todde, *Lo stato*, 16.
81. Todde, *L'estremo*, 807.
82. Todde, *E quale amore*, 548.
83. Fernand Braudel, *Ecrits sur l'histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969), 20.
84. Luciano Carta, "Storia e identità," in *Radici e ali: contenuti della formazione tra cultura locale e cultura globale*, ed. Gabriella Landero and Cesira Vernaleone (Cagliari: CUEC/IRRE Sardegna, 2002), 173–92 (185).
85. Earlier versions of this section have been published as Pezzotti, "Colonialism in One Country," 135–45; and "Marcello Fois" in *Politics and Society*, 167–182. I am also indebted to the conference paper by Sarah Hill and Barbara Pezzotti, "Detecting Sardinian Identity: Photography as Metaphor in the Fiction of Marcello Fois" *Canadian Society for Italian Studies 2011 Conference*, Venice, Italy (24–26 June 2011).

86. Marcello Fois, *Sempre caro* (Milan: Frassinelli, 1998) translated as *The Advocate* (London: Harvill Press, 2004); *Sangue dal cielo* (Milan: Frassinelli, 1999) translated as *Blood from the Skies* (London: Harvill Press, 2010); *L'altro mondo* (Milan: Frassinelli, 2002).
87. "Marcello Fois," http://www.vigata.org/altri_autori/fois.shtml (consulted 5 September 2012).
88. Sebastiano Satta (1867–1914) was a Sardinian lawyer, poet, and journalist. He is famous for his collections of poems, among which are *Versi ribelli* [Rebel Verses] (Nuoro: Ilisso, 1893) and *Canti barbaricini* [Barbagia's Poems] (Cagliari: Nuraghe, 1910).
89. Martin Clark, *Modern Italy. 1871 to the Present* (New York: Pearson, 2008), 84–88.
90. Fois, *Sempre caro*, 33; *The Advocate*, 40.
91. Ibid., 34; Ibid., 42.
92. Barbara Pezzotti, *The Importance of Place in Contemporary Italian Crime Fiction: A Bloody Journey* (Madison: FDU Press, 2012), 187.
93. Richard Lehan, *The City in Literature*: *An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 84.
94. Fois, *Sempre caro*, 30; *The Advocate*, 36.
95. Ibid., 62; Ibid., 79.
96. Ibid., 30; Ibid., 36.
97. Ibid., 30; Ibid., 37.
98. Ibid., 30; Ibid., 37.
99. John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).
100. Gigi Di Fiore, *Controstoria dell'unità d'Italia. Fatti e misfatti del Risorgimento* (Milan: BUR, 2010), 226.
101. Fois, *Sempre caro*, 29; *The Advocate* 35.
102. Ibid., 40; Ibid., 49.
103. Ibid., 45; Ibid., 46.
104. The special laws followed an official report on the economic conditions of the island written in 1896 by a Sardinian member of parliament, Pais Serra. In his report, Serra highlighted the connection between Sardinia's economic underdevelopment and the phenomenon of brigandage.
105. Fois, *L'altro mondo*, 77.
106. *Sangue dal cielo* has been translated as *Blood from the Skies* (2010). However, at the time this book was written *Blood from the Skies* was out of print. I therefore translated the passages quoted from this novel.
107. Ibid., 176.
108. Ibid., 196–7.
109. Ibid., 197.
110. Ibid., 210.

111. As Fois said in an interview, "[h]istorically, [Savoy's exploitation of Sardinia] is an issue, but then you grow up, and you need to mature in your relations with Italy. I try to rebuild a Sardinian condition that isn't necessarily related to the past or, rather, what I call, traditionalism. I don't believe in collective identities. They are more dangerous than useful. I like thinking about a whole composed of intimate identities" (Pezzotti, *The Importance of Place*, 187–188).
112. Pietro Soria, *La primula di Cavour* (Milan: Mondadori, 2002).
113. Piero Soria, *Cuore di lupo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 160–61.
114. Piero Soria, *La donna cattiva* (Milan: Mondadori, 2001), 248.
115. Orsini (1819–1858) was an Italian nationalist revolutionary and conspirator who unsuccessfully tried to assassinate the French emperor Napoleon III on the night of 14 January 1858. He was arrested and executed. Following Orsini's attack, Napoleon, remembering the pro-Italian sympathies of his youth, was prompted to declare war on Austria in 1859, from which Italy's independence followed.
116. Soria, *La primula*, 168.
117. Ibid., 229.
118. Ibid., 305.
119. Ibid., 310, 318, 318, 340, and 339.
120. Ibid., 138.
121. Ibid., 157.
122. Ibid., 161, emphasis in the text.
123. This image contrasts with the description of life in pre-unification Piedmont that can be found in another novel written by De Cataldo entitled *Nell'ombra e nella luce* [In the shade and in the light] (Turin: Einaudi, 2014). In the novel, set between 1846 and 1848, the young officer Emiliano Mercalli di Saint-Just is on the trail of a serial killer who terrorizes Turin. The book relates the inauguration of public gas illumination in the city center on 1 October 1846, but also describes the pitiful living conditions in poor Turinese suburbs like Vanchiglia. Smelling the unhealthy air of Vanchiglia, Emiliano thinks: "C'è ancora molto da fare per Torino" [There is still a lot to do in Turin] (De Cataldo, *Nell'ombra*, 85).
124. Thomas A. Reiner and Michael A. Hindery, "City Planning: Images of the Ideal and the Existing City," in *Cities of the Mind*: *Images and Themes of the City in the Social Sciences*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin and Robert M. Hollister (New York and London: Springer, 1984), 133–147 (133).
125. Joachim von der Thüsen, "The City as a Metaphor, Metonym and Symbol," in *Babylon or New Jerusalem? Perceptions of the City in Literature*, ed. Valeria Tinkler-Villani (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 1–11 (2).
126. Soria, *La primula*, 349.
127. Ibid., 45.

128. Ibid., 107.
129. Ibid., 120.
130. Ibid., 85; emphasis in the text.
131. Ibid., 93.
132. Ibid., 159.
133. Ibid., 316–17.
134. Ibid., 249, 88.
135. Ibid., 354.
136. Ibid., 223.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid., 224.
139. Ibid., 225.
140. Ibid., 46, 301.
141. Ibid., 302.
142. Ibid., 81. A cult of Garibaldi existed, but was the result of a "political and rhetorical strategy" adopted by Garibaldi himself because "the task of Garibaldi was not only to make Italy, he had also to make Italy convincing" [Lucy Riall, *Invention of an Hero* (Boston: Yale University Press, 2008), 18]. In other words, Garibaldi was able to exploit his image in order to get support for his cause abroad, in Great Britain, in particular.
143. Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime*, 140.
144. Soria, *La primula*, 204.
145. For the controversial massacre of Bronte performed by one of Garibaldi's generals, Nino Bixio, see Salvatore Lupo, *L'unificazione italiana*: *Mezzogiorno*, *rivoluzione*, *guerra civile* (Rome: Donzelli, 2011). Analyzing the brand of "war criminal" attributed to Garibaldi by some historians, Salvatore Di Maria demonstrated that they are the result of anti-Risorgimento propaganda and untenable in "La questione del Mezzogiorno e la crisi identitaria del Sud," *Italica* 91, no. 4 (2014): 803–830.

CHAPTER 3

The *Giallo* and the Black: The Representation of Fascism and WWII Between Revisionism and Criticism

The *Ventennio* or the Fascist era (1922–1943) has inspired a large output of *gialli*. In particular, the 1990s have experienced a boom in crime stories set in this troubled period of Italian history, beginning with the publication of Sciascia's *Porte aperte*.[1] Inspired by real events, Sciascia's novella examines a judge's refusal to impose the death penalty during a 1937 murder trial despite the obvious guilt of the accused and pressures from the authorities, who take pride in the fact that under their stern rule "you can sleep with open doors." In the opening scene, the protagonist, called "the little judge," discusses with the prosecutor the case of a brutal and premeditated triple murder: a man has killed his wife, his employer, and the accountant hired to replace him. The employer, Avvocato [lawyer] Bruno, is an exponent of the dominant power and the authority and demands "una sentenza sbrigativa ed esemplare"; "swift, exemplary sentence."[2] Set in Fascist Italy, but also making historical references to the Inquisition,[3] the story highlights the political nature of the death penalty as a powerful weapon for consolidating power. Sciascia's protagonist elaborates eloquently on the connection between the Fascist use of the death penalty and the executions of the Inquisition. However, the novella not only focuses on the *Ventennio*: during a stream of consciousness of the judge, the reader is guided on a journey that leads to the present day: "non si può far arrostire vivo un uomo soltanto perché certe opinioni non condivide. E tranne quella, qui, oggi, anno 1937 (anno 1987) che l'umanità,

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il diritto, la legge …rispondere con l'assassinio all'assassinio non debbano"; "you cannot roast a man alive because he does not share certain opinions. And except for the opinion, here and now in 1937 (1987) that humanity, justice, law…must not answer murder with murder."[4] Interestingly, with this reference to 1987, the passage explains the mental mechanism that allows the protagonist (and the reader of historical crime fiction with him) to make a comparison among the past, the present of the investigation, and the present of the writer (and the reader). Being a meditation on the "noxious effects of the death penalty on civil society,"[5] *Porte aperte* reflects Sciascia's concern about the state of human rights in the 1980s.[6]

Some years after the publication of *Porte aperte*, numerous crime novels set during Fascism were published in close sequence. As with crime stories set in the Risorgimento, the authors of these books seem to have responded to a specific political and social climate and in particular the revisionist debate of the late 1980s and 1990s. In this period, revisionist historians re-interpreted the *Ventennio* as a period of modernization for Italy and criticized anti-Fascism and the Resistance as movements dominated by their communist components. As we will see, while historians debated, right-wing parties used revisionist pronouncements to bolster their political position. In this climate of revisionism and propaganda, several crime writers such as Edoardo Angelino (b. 1950), Corrado Augias (b. 1935), Leonardo Gori (b. 1957) alone and with Franco Cardini (b. 1940), Carlo Lucarelli (b. 1960), Luciano Marrocu (b. 1948), and subsequently Loriano Macchiavelli (b. 1934) and Francesco Guccini (b. 1940), and Maurizio De Giovanni (b. 1958) have set their stories during Fascism and WWII. By reflecting the political debate of the 1990s and its evolution in the 2000s, this chapter highlights how these crime writers have covered a variety of perspectives that range from the problematic representation of the *fascista buono* [good Fascist] to the stigmatization of the ambivalent attitudes of many Italians who survived during Fascism without taking sides, and an open condemnation of a regime that killed freedom of expression in Italy. More recently, Macchiavelli and Guccini's novels seem to have responded to the political climate of the 2000s in the aftermath of a new alliance between *Forza Italia*, *Alleanza nazionale*, and the *Lega Nord* that brought Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi back to power in 2001. In this period, as Dunnage explains, the *Alleanza nazionale*'s success revealed that "a significant number of Italians did not identify with the anti-Fascist tradition on which the Republic had been founded."[7] Last in order of publication, De Giovanni's series represents

a shift from political considerations to a more accentuated interest in the private life of the detective.

This chapter also analyzes film and TV series. It shows how broadcast television, in particular, with its appeal to a more general audience and an almost symbiotic relationship with political parties (both of the right and of the left), offers a problematic representation of important topics related to Fascism. This is the case with the TV adaptation of Lucarelli's trilogy featuring Inspector De Luca, and the *Commissario* [Inspector] Nardone TV series. The film *Il sangue dei vinti* [The Blood of the Defeated][8] is a highly controversial adaptation of Gianpaolo Pansa's non-fiction book of the same name. Finally, by shifting the time setting of Gadda's *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de* via *Merulana*[9] from Fascist Rome to 1950s Italy, Pietro Germi's *Un maledetto imbroglio* illustrates the very function of the historical crime narrative, which is to comment on current issues in Italian society. In other words, by pointing to the flaws in Italian society of the late 1950s through a story originally set during Fascism, Germi's film reveals the subversive potential of historical narratives.

Crime Fiction and the Revisionist Theories

As Dunnage explains, from the late 1980s onwards some "revisionist" historians, in particular Renzo De Felice, argued that the history of twentieth-century Italy had been hegemonized by the left and that Fascism and the Resistance had been misinterpreted.[10] Revisionist historians presented the *Ventennio* as a period of modernization for Italy that had helped to generate a greater sense of national identity among Italians. Revisionists also criticized anti-Fascism and the Resistance as being predominantly Communist. They claimed that if the Fascists had behaved brutally during the war of Liberation, the Communists were also responsible for atrocities.[11] While this position was contested, several left-wing historians and politicians admitted the need for new research into the recent past in order to free the interpretation of this crucial part of Italian history from the ideological constraints of the Cold War period. However, while historians debated, right-wing parties used revisionist declarations to bolster their political position. In particular Berlusconi, in power with the post-Fascist party *Alleanza nazionale*, played down Mussolini's dictatorship[12] and sought to establish an equation between Fascism and Communism, emphasizing Communist crimes globally and the relationship between the Italian left and Communist dictatorships. As Lichtner explains, Berlusconi

"made an excellent use of elements already present in Italy's political and cultural discourse: anti-Communism had been the staple diet of Christian Democratic rhetoric for decades, and Nazi Germany had long been the ideal reference point of Italy's collective postwar acquittal from its Fascist past."[13] The anti-Fascist rhetoric of Berlusconi's Italy had at its center the personal dignity and political legimacy of "i vinti," the defeated. In this period, the proliferation of studies, memoirs, and newspaper articles featuring young men fighting for the Republic of Salò decontextualized the stories of the combatants on both sides, showing what Romanelli describes as a "discursive tendency to dissolve all distinctions, often through an appeal to individual experience and to the emotions."[14] Finally, "thanks to widespread support from the mass media (mainly television) those interpretations have been largely accepted by the public."[15]

This, then, was the climate of revisionism and propaganda which led to crime writers setting their stories in the 1930s and 1940s. As Somigli points out, the development of this particular narrative tendency at the same time as the so-called revisionist debate on the interpretations of Fascism and the Resistance was hardly a coincidence. On the contrary, following a tradition of social and political commitment of the genre in Italy, crime fiction

> intervened, both explicitly and implicitly, in the very public discussion on the meaning and the moral and political implications of a series of pivotal moments and events at the twilight of the Fascist regime and its artificial continuation with the Italian Social Republic.[16]

In other words, using a genre where topics such as the dichotomy between good and evil, and themes such as violence and justice, are central, many writers highlighted the contradictions and flaws of the Mussolini regime in terms of civil rights and personal freedom in their stories set during the *Ventennio* and WWII. These writers also stressed the often ambivalent attitudes of many Italians who survived during Fascism without taking sides.

In crime fiction set during Fascism, all the fictional detectives—who are police detectives and therefore working within Fascist institutions—are investigators interested in justice and do not hesitate to disobey the authorities if they constitute an obstacle to their inquiry. Some fictional detectives—such as Piero Contini in Angelino's *L'inverno dei mongoli* [A Mongolian Winter][17] and Luciano Serra in Marrocu's series—are not able to fully understand the extent of their collusion with Fascism.

By contrast, other sleuths, such as Inspector Flaminio Prati in Augias's *Quella mattina di luglio* [That July Morning][18] and Bruno Arcieri in Gori's *Il passaggio* [The Passage],[19] question their role and responsibilities as individuals in the chaos of the war and make choices of a moral and political nature.

Particularly interesting in this respect is Augias's *Quella mattina di luglio*.[20] The title refers to 19 July 1943, the date of a devastating Allied bombing of Rome in which 3000 people lost their lives. Augias's novel is notable for the historical accuracy and for the vivid description of the destruction of parts of Rome.

> Uscì assieme agli altri. […] Nulla era più come prima. Le strade erano invase da montagne di macerie, ai lati si vedevano mozziconi di case, pareti, franantі come quinte di teatro dove ancora si riconoscevano resti di mobilio e di tappezzeria. La prima cosa riconoscibile fu un cavallo morto con la testa adorna da un pennacchio nero. La carogna giaceva tra corone di fiori sfrante, il groviglio giallastro delle viscere che fumavano nell'aria satura di polvere.[21]
>
> [He left with the others. (…) Nothing was like before, anymore. Streets were invaded by heaps of rubble. On all sides you could see stubs of houses and crumbling walls like theatre wings. You could still see remains of furniture and wallpaper. The first recognizable thing was a dead horse. Its head was still adorned with a black plume. The corpse lay among rotten garlands of flowers, the yellowish tangle of its entrails steaming in the air full of dust.]

Many pages are dedicated to the capital city, the chaos and panic after the bombing, and the historical events that led to the fall of Mussolini. It is precisely on 19 July 1943 that *commissario* Flaminio Prati starts investigating the murder of a young woman, Franca Gandolfo. He is on the crime scene in Via dei Reti when the air-raid sirens start blaring and Prati is forced to flee. After the bombing, Franca's apartment is destroyed and almost all the clues obliterated, with the exception of some letters, but Prati is reluctant to drop the case. His sense of professional duty and the awareness that his job is "il solo elemento di certezza di cui poteva disporre" [the only certainty left to him],[22] spurs him to continue his investigation. Nevertheless, he questions the moral validity of his obsession with the investigation when Rome is mourning thousands of nameless victims. Finally, he comes to the conclusion that it is precisely when confronted with the tragedy of the bombing that the young woman's death becomes especially significant. Indeed, by investigating Gandolfo's

death, *commissario* Prati seems to resist "the terrifying objectification of human lives that occurs in times of war."[23] Meditating upon his own personal story, Prati thinks: "la vita di un uomo […] assume il suo significato solo nel momento in cui è ricordata e ricostruita" [the life of a person becomes meaningful only when it is remembered and reconstructed].[24] Thus the investigation—that is, the reconstruction of the life of a victim—becomes an ethical task that aims at preserving the memory of an existence and giving it a meaning.

In the aftermath of the bombing, Prati also questions his belief in Fascism:

> Poteva essere quello il suo fascismo? Il sentimento d'appartenenza a una nazione e a una terra? A un popolo che sapeva così di rado riconoscersi e comportarsi come tale? Un uomo come lui, un uomo dei suoi anni e della sua educazione, non aveva quasi visto altro né saputo altro che non fossero i riti e le parole d'ordine del fascismo.[25]
>
> [Was this his Fascism? Was it a feeling of belonging to a nation and a land? To a people that only seldom could recognize themselves and behave as such? A man like him, a man of his years and education, who hadn't seen or known virtually anything else other than the rites and slogans of Fascism.]

Born in 1911, Prati grows up during the *Ventennio* and has been exposed to Fascist propaganda during his formative years. At the beginning of the novel, he is described as a melancholic and insecure man who has adhered to Fascism more because of his obedient nature than for political convictions. Now, the political crisis following the bombing of Rome mirrors his own personal dilemma. The investigation, which takes him to places of the rich and powerful, also allows him to experience the superficial life of the political elite. He therefore becomes progressively aware of the political inadequacy of Fascism and the incoherence in its leaders' behavior. Eventually, he finds out that the victim—who worked as a prostitute—has been killed by one of her lovers, Attilio Zanna, a Fascist Party leader who gives himself up to the police the day after Mussolini's arrest on 25 July 1943. Zanna prefers to be arrested than face the Roman population who may want to lynch him. He is subsequently found dead. Prati discovers that Zanna's murderer is Gino Tiberi, Franca's occasional lover. However, the *commissario* decides not to pursue him. In the epilogue, set in the 1980s, the narrative voice shifts from the third to the first person. The new narrator relates a fictional conversation with an old Prati. Asked why he did not bring Tiberi to justice, the *commissario* answers:

> "Nello sfacelo generale, fare valere il normale codice penale […] era come se…mi sembrò che…insomma non me la sentii. So che un funzionario di polizia o un giudice devono avere come solo riferimento la legge. Sapevo allora di infrangere con il mio comportamento il precetto fondamentale. È stato più forte di me. Pensai che, al di là della legge, Tiberi…non voglio dire altro a questo proposito, preferisco fermarmi qui."[26]
>
> ["In the general havoc, applying the normal penal code […] was as if…I felt that…well, I couldn't do it. I know that a police officer or a judge must have the law as their only guide. I knew at the time that I was breaking a fundamental principle by behaving in this way, but I couldn't help it. I thought that, over and above the law, Tiberi…I don't want to say any more about this. I'd rather stop here."]

According to Bertini, Prati is a disempowered character and is unable to oppose the regime.[27] Yet in this passage, Prati's reticence in fully explaining his behavior is symbolic of his uneasy position as a champion of law and order in the months following the fall of Mussolini. In a situation of uncertainty, he finally no longer hides behind his institutional role. Torn between the "normal penal code" and his own conscience, he chooses to follow his personal belief and not to arrest Tiberi. I therefore agree with Somigli when he argues that in so doing, he makes a moral and a political decision.[28]

Another fictional sleuth who problematizes his loyalty is Bruno Arcieri in Gori's *Il passaggio*. Arcieri differs from most of his fictional colleagues: the typical detective operating during Fascism is a disillusioned and marginalized, middle-aged man with a disappointing career who finds it difficult to react to the challenges of history. By contrast, after finding himself in an ambiguous position, in *Il passaggio* Arcieri is finally and clearly able to get his power back and become a protagonist of history. This novel is the second book of a series featuring Arcieri and follows *Nero di maggio* [Black in May] (2000) and *La finale* [The Final] (2003).[29] After *Il passaggio*, Arcieri is also the protagonist of *L'angelo del fango* [The Angel of Mud] (2005) and *Musica nera* [Black Music] (2008).[30] In *Nero di Maggio*, Arcieri had privately expressed reservations about Mussolini. In *Il passaggio*, set in 1944, he is now attached to the Psychological Warfare Branch of the British Army. An agent of the Badoglio government, Arcieri works in liaison with the Allies and as an information officer. In a Florence divided between the advancing Allied army and the retreating German army, with the help of an art historian, a partisan, and an American journalist with

Esquire magazine, Arcieri investigates several murders connected to the disappearance of a fabled work of art. The investigation is complicated by the war: if Florence is split into two by an impassable Arno, Italy is pulled apart by two foreign armies that want to keep or seize control of the territory. Italians are also divided into factions: the partisans on one side and the Salò Fascists on the other engage in a fratricidal struggle. For his part, Arcieri is equally hated by Italians and the Allies:

> la situazione di Arcieri era la più scomoda: il suo compito di saggiare la lealtà e l'affidabilità dei suoi stessi connazionali, vestendo una divisa britannica, lo rendeva odioso sia ai partigiani sia agli altri ufficiali alleati.[31]
>
> [Arcieri's situation was the most uncomfortable of all: his task of testing the loyalty and reliability of his fellow Italians while wearing a British uniform made him disliked by both the partisans and the other Allied officers].

Arcieri's uneasy position is the result of the division of the country after the armistice and of his decision to side with the monarchy. Arcieri sees his choice after 8 September as an attempt to make up for his previous wrongs: "A un certo punto ho sentito l'obbligo di fare una scelta, non fosse altro perché non esisteva più alcuna mediazione possibile" [At a certain point I felt obliged to make a choice, if nothing else because there was no longer the possibility of a mediation].[32] However, this "scelta obbligata" is the first step toward a process of emancipation. The *commissario* is conscious of the shortcomings of the king, but learns how to see the armistice as the final stage in the process of the separation of the institutions of the State from the Fascist regime. In other words, he is progressively able to consider 8 September as the rebirth of the Italian nation and not its end. For this reason, he definitely renounces his passive role and takes an active role in the liberation of Italy. As Somigli explains, the most evident symbol of this stance is the re-appropriation of his attire.[33] If at the beginning of the novel the British uniform he wears is symbolic of his submission to the Allies, at the height of the insurrection against the retreating Nazi-Fascist army, he puts on his *carabiniere* uniform again.[34] In this way, he re-appropriates his social role as policeman only after he has endowed it with new meaning through personal engagement and sacrifice. Indeed, Arcieri is the most assertive of the fictional detectives working in this difficult period of Italian history: unlike Prati who renegotiates his role of policeman by choosing not to persecute a murderer, he actively takes part in the construction of a new and free Italy.

If the fictional sleuths Prati and Arcieri show different degrees of awareness and empowerment, other protagonists of crime fiction set during Fascism feel uneasy in their position of representative of "law and order" but do not act accordingly. This is the case with Luciano Serra, one of the two detectives featuring in Marrocu's series set in Italy, France, and Ethiopia between 1934 and 1939. Serra is the young assistant of Eupremio Carruezzo, head of the Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati [Divison of General and Private Affairs] of the Italian police. The pair recalls the famous duo of Nero Wolfe and Archie Godwin; while Carruezzo is an obese middle-aged man who mainly works behind his desk, Serra is the long arm of the investigation: he meets witnesses and looks for clues, and often finds himself in danger. The young policeman is often in charge of delicate investigations that involve powerful members of the Fascist party. He does not like the arrogance and stupidity of the *gerarchi* [Fascist Party officials] he meets, but he keeps his thoughts to himself. The series, which does not follow a chronological order, increasingly reveals Serra's unease at working for the Fascist regime. Particularly relevant to our discourse is *Debrà Libanòs*, set in Ethiopia in the aftermath of the attempted assassination of Rodolfo Graziani, Viceroy of Italian East Africa.[35] Serra and a reluctant Carruezzo are asked to go to Ethiopia to investigate the death of Lieutenant Bellassai, a spy for the OVRA.[36] Graziani asks Carruezzo to find a culprit as soon as possible:

> Se qualcun altro avesse assistito al colloquio tra Graziani e Carruezzo ben difficilmente avrebbe colto nel leggero aggrottare la fronte di quest'ultimo quel segno di disappunto che invece Serra era in grado di coglervi.[37]
>
> [If anybody else had been present at the meeting between Graziani and Carruezzo, they would barely have been able to notice in Carruezzo's slight frowning a sign of annoyance, which Serra instead could see.]

Carruezzo's annoyance is strictly professional as he does not like to be rushed. By contrast, experiencing Graziani's vulgarity and superficiality, Serra shows a deeper discomfort: "Non era certo la prima volta che assisteva muto a simili farneticazioni, ma mai come in quel momento aveva avuto la sensazione di esserne contaminato" [It was not the first time that he listened—without commenting—to such nonsense, but never before had he experienced the feeling of being contaminated by it].[38] Serra feels contaminated by Graziani's rhetoric of violence and machismo, but he keeps quiet ("muto"). Several pages later he remembers what his father, a

policeman himself, used to say: "'Vedrai non è un mestiere difficile. Basta fare quello che ti dicono i superiori'" ["You'll see it's not a difficult job. You just need to do what your superiors say"].[39] However, doing as told in the Fascist police is not as easy as it may seem. During his investigation, Serra finds out that Bellassai, a womanizer and a gambler, was involved in the massacre of the monks of the ancient monastery of Debre Libanos and a large number of pilgrims (who had traveled there to celebrate the feast day of the founding saint of the monastery), which had been ordered by Graziani in response to the attempt on his life.[40] At this revelation, Serra loses interest in finding the culprit: "Chiunque aveva sparato [...] aveva comunque la sua approvazione" [Whoever had shot [...] had received his approval].[41] However, he has to keep searching. At the end of the novel, he finds out that the killer is Sara Dirasse, a young woman, half Ethiopian and half Swedish, who has killed Bellassai as a revenge for the monastery massacre. Her accomplice is Eulo Fracassi, an Italian businessman and lover of Sara's aunt Jesciac Dirasse, widow of a Haile Selassie minister. Interestingly, an alleged crime of passion is revealed to be a political crime and the investigator needs to face the brutality of the Italian presence in Ethiopia. The final showdown sees Sara questioning Serra:

> "Ma voi cosa cercate? Cercate la verità? Ve la dico io la verità. La verità è che il giorno dopo l'attentato al viceré, bande d'italiani hanno cominciato a mettere a ferro e fuoco Addis Abbeba, spaccando teste, incendiando, uccidendo, sparando nel mucchio. Sono morti migliaia di abissini. A nessuno importava che gran parte di loro non avesse nulla a che fare con la resistenza agli italiani. La volete sapere una seconda verità? A Debrà Libanòs, il vostro glorioso esercito coloniale in ventiquattro ore ha fucilato più di mille monaci. [...] Ecco cosa siete voi italiani, siete dei maiali. Perché non ve ne andate? Perché non ci lasciate in pace?"[42]
>
> ["What do you want? Are you looking for the truth? I'll tell you the truth. The truth is that the day after the attempted murder of the viceroy, Italian gangs laid waste Addis Abeba, bashing heads, setting fire, killing, shooting randomly. Thousands of Abyssinians died. Nobody cared that the vast majority didn't have anything to do with the resistance. Do you want to know a second truth? In Debre Libanos, your glorious colonial army executed more than a thousand monks in twenty-four hours. [...] This is what you are, you Italians. You are pigs. Why don't you leave? Why don't you leave us alone?"]

Serra answers: "'Non sono stato io a decidere di conquistare l'Etiopia. E neppure a decidere di venirci, se è per questo. Faccio il poliziotto.'"

["It wasn't my decision to conquer Ethiopia. I didn't even decide to come. I'm a policeman"].[43]

Serra's defense is purposely very weak and unconvincing. His few words, uttered hesitantly, contrast with the power of Sara's accusations. The last few pages of the novel reproduce some extracts from Serra's diary of the days following the investigation. The entry for 10 October reads: "Eupremio era visibilmente imbarazzato. Anch'io sono dell'idea che si tratta di un lavoro da macellai. È un'idea, però, che tengo rigorosamente per me. Sono stufo" [Eupremio was visibly embarrassed. I also think it was a butcher's job. However, this is something that I keep to myself. I'm fed up].[44] Once again, in spite of witnessing the atrocity of the Fascist regime, Serra decides not to give voice to his opposition. He will keep on working for the police until his resignation in post-war Italy. Serra's inability to act is explained in the last book of the series, *Il caso del croato morto ucciso* [The Case of the Dead and Killed Croatian] which is set before *Debrà Libanòs*, in 1934. In this novel, written in the first person, Serra admits: "Sono una persona per cui la scelta è angoscia e che ha un solo modo di contrastare l'angoscia, quello di assentire" [I'm a person for whom choosing is distressful. My only way to fight distress is to oblige].[45] He adheres to Fascism because he is not able to make a choice, but this non-choice troubles him throughout the series, even though he never confronts his own responsibilities as a police officer. However likeable the character of Serra, he ends up frustrating the reader who is exposed to all the compromises that Serra needs to make in order to survive.

Another frustrating character is Pietro Contini, Salò officer and accidental detective in Edoardo Angelino's *L'inverno dei Mongoli*. This character is very similar to his more famous fictional colleague, Lucarelli's Inspector De Luca, who we will examine in the next few pages. In *L'inverno*, the murder of Omero Turrelli, a retired *gerarca* in a small village in the Ligurian Apennines, may unleash the reprisal of a German unit quartered in the area during an operation against the partisans. Contini is attached to the German contingent, which also includes former Russian prisoners of war now embedded in the German army (these are the Mongols referred to in the title). He faces a terrible challenge: either he finds the assassin within 36 hours or the village will be razed to the ground. Contini is a "militare dimesso, dagli occhi vivaci e un poco malinconici" [an unassuming soldier with lively but somewhat melancholic eyes][46] and a veteran of the Ethiopian and Libyan campaigns. When he was young, he enthusiastically adhered to Fascism, but in the last few years, he has grown disillusioned. However, this

new awareness does not spur him to distance himself from the Mussolini regime: "un assurdo senso del dovere e una romantica coerenza a ideali in cui non credeva più gli impedivano di arrendersi o di fuggire, ma non di ignorare le atrocità commesse dai tedeschi o dai suoi commilitoni" [an absurd sense of duty and a romantic coherence to ideals in which he didn't believe anymore prevented him from surrendering or running away, but they didn't prevent him from ignoring the atrocities committed by the Germans and by the Italians].[47] He asks to investigate the murder because he wants to prevent the massacre of the village and he is given a strict deadline to carry out his enquiry.

Contini's investigation presents many characteristics of the classic whodunit, such as an enclosed location (the small village and the mountain hotel where the interrogations are held), a hideous victim (the *gerarca* was a blackmailer and a womanizer), and a number of possible suspects. Also in the tradition of classic detective fiction, the apparent peace and tranquility of the village hide a web of conflicts and hatred caused by personal motivations, such as love and money. The more Contini investigates, the more he confronts an increasing number of possible suspects. With the help of a group of local dignitaries, Contini eventually finds the culprit, Fantoni, a Jewish music teacher whom Turrelli had threatened to denounce to the authorities. As in *Debrà Libanòs*, the investigation of an apparently bourgeois crime takes an unexpected turn and becomes an inquiry into a crime strictly related to the regime and in particular to the infamous racial laws.[48] At the end of the novel, Bellini, one of Contini's assistants, accuses Fantoni of being unethical and asks him why he did not give himself up in order to save the village from the German reprisal. The music teacher answers:

> "Dovere? Non siate ridicolo! Nessuno ha aperto bocca quando Mussolini ha promulgato le leggi razziali, nessuno ha mosso un dito quando i tedeschi hanno portato via la mia famiglia, eppure erano anche loro innocenti. Per chi avrei dovuto sacrificarmi, io?"[49]
>
> ["Duty? Don't be ridiculous! Nobody said a word when Mussolini passed the racial laws; nobody moved a finger when the Germans took my family away, and they too were innocent. Who should I have sacrificed myself for?"]

None of the interlocutors can find a reply to this, which is indicative of their problematic stance. On the one hand, they want to ensure justice; on the other, they represent an unfair power that does not pursue justice

for all. Contini feels a growing sense of unease as he prepares to hand the teacher over to the Germans: "l'idea di consegnare ai tedeschi il musicista ebreo gli dava sempre più fastidio, anche se andava ripetendosi che era un assassino e che si trattava di salvare il villaggio dalla rappresaglia" [the idea of turning the Jewish musician over to the Germans increasingly bothered him, even though he kept telling himself that he was a murderer, and he had to save the village from reprisal].[50] However, because of his absurd sense of duty, he finally turns the killer in. On that occasion, the German commander congratulates him for capturing a Jew. Contini protests: "'Io non ho arrestato un ebreo. [...] Ho arrestato un assassino che deve essere giudicato da un tribunale della Repubblica sociale italiana'" ["I did not arrest a Jew. [...] I arrested a murderer who must be tried by the Italian Social Republic"].[51] Yet, in spite of his own will, Contini has ended up being directly implicated in the persecution of the Jews and has become even more complicitous with a regime from which he cannot distance himself. Indeed, both Contini and the villagers end up being associated with the Shoah, whether they like it or not. However, he is not able to realize this:

> Devo avere addosso una specie di maledizione. È da quando sono partito volontario nel '35 che non ne azzecco una. Cerco di fare del mio meglio, di agire secondo coscienza e mi trovo sempre dalla parte sbagliata al momento sbagliato. Non riesco mai a combinare qualcosa di buono.[52]
>
> [I must be under some sort of curse. Ever since I volunteered in '35 I've got everything wrong. I try to do my best and to act according to my conscience, but I'm always on the wrong side at the wrong time. I never manage to do anything right.]

Cooke highlights that Angelino's novel poses "some very awkward questions about morality" and personal responsibilities in a dictatorship.[53] As Sangiorgi rightly argues, Contini's invoking a curse to justify his failure to act in accordance with his sense of justice expresses "the failure of a whole generation that can only pity itself, but is unable to assume responsibility for its wrongs."[54] Ultimately, Contini embodies the ambiguities and the miseries of the self-absolving image of the "good Italian" that has prevented many Italians from coming to terms with their historical responsibilities.[55]

All the novels analyzed raise questions about legality and personal responsibilities in a troubled period of Italian history and are set in a few

crucial years before and after WWII. They contribute effectively to the debate opened in the 1990s, whether to have a protagonist who distances himself from the brutality of Fascism or create disempowered characters who are not able to come to terms with history. They all mirror an unresolved historical and political legacy, the repercussions of which still inform and affect life and political practices in the present day. As Cooke rightly argues for Angelino, in the 1990s historical *gialli*, "the idea of a potential moral *parificazione* between the two sides involved in the civil war" seems to be "more problematic than was being claimed in the press and elsewhere."[56] Among these writers, the most successful is Carlo Lucarelli, who, with his Inspector De Luca trilogy set in the Republic of Salò and post-war Italy, gives a vivid portrait of the flaws of the majority of Italians who decided not to take sides in a pivotal moment of Italian history. In the section of this chapter dedicated to television series and film, Lucarelli's series will be contrasted with the television adaptation where the themes of coherence and personal and political responsibilities are watered down in order to create a more palatable Inspector De Luca.

Carlo Lucarelli's Inspector De Luca Series

Carlo Lucarelli is one of the most famous Italian crime writers. Born in Parma in 1960, he is a television celebrity who hosts shows about unsolved crimes and mysteries in Italy. He is mostly famous for writing two series of *gialli* set in contemporary Bologna and the Emilia-Romagna regions.[57] However, he made his debut with a trilogy set between 1945 and 1948, featuring Inspector De Luca as the main protagonist. The trilogy comprises *Carta bianca*, *L'estate torbida*, and *Via delle Oche*.[58] He also wrote other novels set during Fascism, such as *Indagine non autorizzata* [Unauthorized Investigation] and *L'isola dell'angelo caduto* [The Island of the Fallen Angel].[59]

Carlo Lucarelli's De Luca series, which has enjoyed great success, is particularly notable for historical accuracy and the ability to re-create a 1940s atmosphere without indulging in a problematic nostalgia. These were also the first novels to investigate the dissociation of individuals from the responsibilities of the regime they served in the name of alleged apolitical professionalism or loyalty. In particular, in spite of being openly challenged throughout the series, the protagonist, Inspector De Luca, invariably refuses to admit to being compromised by association with the regime. He never expresses doubt or disgust (unlike Marrocu's Luciano Serra) and he never feels he is under a curse (unlike Angelino's

Bruno Contini), but thinks he is doing the right thing. Only his physical discomfort (he cannot sleep and feels nauseous) betrays his unacknowledged uneasiness. Since it provides the first and most extreme example of self-absolution for the policeman-protagonist, this series is worth an analysis in length.

As Lucarelli explains, the figure of De Luca was inspired by a real policeman whom the writer had interviewed in the course of doing research for his university thesis on the police of the Italian Social Republic or Republic of Salò.[60]

A former commander of the notorious "Brigata Ettore Muti"[61] and inspector of the Republic of Salò police, the protagonist of the trilogy, De Luca, is only interested in solving crimes. In the first novel, set in 1945 during the last days of the Fascist puppet regime in the north of Italy, De Luca has transferred back to the "normal" police from the political police and is tasked with finding the murderer of a wealthy playboy and prominent member of the Fascist Republican Party, Vittorio Rehinard. De Luca is promised he will have full cooperation or carte blanche. However, his investigation is soon compromised by an internal political battle within the Fascist party. De Luca's chief, who belongs to one of the many factions of the Fascist party in disarray, presses him to charge an important member of a rival faction with the murder. During the investigation, De Luca also finds out that the victim and a network of corrupt Fascist officers are involved in drug trafficking. In addition, the inspector's investigation reveals that several influential members of the Fascist party are secretly negotiating their way out of Italy either through the Vatican or with the Allies. Finally, after escaping an assassination attempt, De Luca solves the crime, but he is forced to leave before the arrival of the partisans. The culprit is not delivered to justice.

As Barwig comments, De Luca is an ambiguous character whose failure in the process of detection is symbolic of his own personal ethical failure.[62] In a situation of political turmoil, De Luca is characterized by a selective desire for truth that he only applies to his investigation, while ignoring the big picture. Unlike his fictional colleague Prati, his obsession with his investigation isolates him from the wide historical context in which he operates and he never questions the moral validity of his job. De Luca justifies his obstinacy: "'Il mio guaio è che sono nato curioso, è sempre stato così…Bisogna che tutto sia chiaro, tutto a posto, nei minimi particolari, con un come e un perché razionali, se no impazzisco'"; "'I was born curious, that's my problem. It's always been the same…everything has to be clear, everything in order, even the slightest detail, with a rational how and why, otherwise I go out of my mind.'"[63]

Obesessed by his investigations, De Luca is hardly the good-looking hero of some American crime fiction. His face is "ispido e rugoso"; "wrinkled and unshaven."[64] His look is unappealing, as his colleagues point out: "brutta cera"; "rotten."[65] He is often "cupo e silenzioso"; "grim and silent."[66] He is in bad health and he walks "barcollando"; "unsteadily" and "ansimante"; "panting."[67] He is compromised by Fascism, and in the falling days of the regime, his life is in jeopardy. His investigations are always dangerous and his ability as a policeman is always used for political purposes without his knowledge. He cannot sleep at night and he feels exhausted: "non si era mai sentito così stanco, appannato, e avrebbe voluto spegnersi"; "He'd never felt so tired, dulled, and would have liked to turn himself off."[68] His actions are often useless: "De Luca si sentì vuoto e ridicolo"; "De Luca felt empty and ridiculous."[69]

From the very first novel, it is clear that De Luca is a disempowered character. The title of the first novel alludes to a freedom of movement that he does not possess. He has a brilliant mind, but his meetings with his chief clearly indicate his subordinate position: "Il Questore si alzò dalla poltrona e girò attorno alla scrivania, piantandosi davanti a un De Luca che sedeva scomodo su una sedia di legno, rigido come un imputato, con le braccia conserte sul petto, guardando per terra"; "The Chief got up out of the armchair and came out from behind his desk, planting himself in front of De Luca, who was sitting uncomfortably in a wooden chair as stiff as an accused man, his arms folded across his chest, looking at the floor."[70]

At the beginning of the novel, De Luca is summoned by the police commissioner. He sits uncomfortably like a defendant ("imputato") in front of a judge. He does not meet his superior's eyes and listens to him passively. Later on, he does not openly oppose his Chief when the latter wants to instigate a dubious line of investigation:

> [Vitali] "C'è odore di folle gelosia, orge, riti massonici…questa è la strada giusta!"
> "La strada giusta!" disse il questore.
> De Luca li guardò rigido, pieno di brividi, e annuì lentamente.
> "Lo farò" disse, "lo farò."
>
> "There's the smell of wild jealousy, orgies, masonic rites…This is the right direction!"
> "The right direction!" echoed the Chief.
> De Luca watched them stiffly, his skin crawled and he nodded slowly.
> "Will do," he said. "Will do."[71]

De Luca is unconvinced by his superior's theory, and he senses that he wants to manipulate him, but he does not contradict his chief. On the contrary, he shows complete submission ("Lo farò"). However, De Luca is a policeman obsessed with his cases, and he wants to find the real culprit. Like many of his fictional colleagues, he finds ways to pursue his own investigation. During his inquiry, several characters who are aware of his past in the "Brigata Muti" challenge his political and career choices. He obsessively repeats that he is only a policeman, and tries to justify why, for a brief period in the past, he had joined the Fascist political police:

> "Quando mi hanno chiamato alla sezione speciale della Muti ci sono andato subito, di corsa. Perché là si lavorava bene, capisci? [...] Là era tutto efficientissimo, c'erano gli investigatori migliori, gli schedari migliori, c'erano fondi... Da sempre è così il mestiere del poliziotto ed è quello che ho sempre fatto io. Non si chiedono scelte politiche a un poliziotto, gli si chiede solo di fare bene il suo mestiere."

> "When they called me into the Muti special division I went immediately, jumping at the chance. Because at the Muti you could do good work, get it? [...] There everything was so efficient, there were the best investigators, the best police records, there were resources...Police work has always been like this and it's what I've always done.
> You don't ask a policeman to make political choices, you ask him to do his job well."[72]

According to Hall, novels featuring police protagonists in dictatorial states "risk generating a textual crisis" if the reader is unable "to identify with the detective as an upholder of justice."[73] Barwig argues that in this trilogy "Lucarelli breaks the boundaries of 'good' and 'evil' and subverts the traditional pattern of the reader identifying with the detective."[74] This may not be completely true. Lucarelli is shrewd in depicting a flawed detective who nonetheless is honest, allowing the reader to identify, at least partially, with him. In the novel, it is explained that De Luca has never tortured anyone and that his job was more investigative than "physical." However, in spite of distancing himself from any ideological affiliations, he shares the responsibility for being part of a police force that has tortured partisans and civilians. In a highly volatile historical situation, when people are asked to make their choices—either supporting the Republic of Salò or joining the Resistance—De Luca's answer is weak and fails to convince his interlocutors, in the case of the above passage his subordinate Pugliese. In *L'estate tor-*

bida, he also tries to justify himself with his sidekick, the partisan-policeman Guido Leonardi: "'Non sono stato nella Squadra Politica perché ero fascista, lo ero come lo erano tanti, non me ne fregava niente'"; "'I wasn't in the Political Squad because I was a fascist, I was there for the same reason that a lot of other people were'".[75] If in *Carta bianca*, Pugliese responds with an embarrassed silence, in this novel his interlocutor sharply replies:

> "Oh certo, lei faceva solo il suo dovere…"
> "No, il mio *mestiere*! È diverso…"
> "Sì, è diverso. Così è anche peggio."
>
> "Right, you were only doing your job—"
> "No, not my job, Leonardi, my profession! It's different—"
> "Yeah, it's different. It's even worse."[76]

In all these exchanges, De Luca is clearly a disempowered figure, whose inability to take responsibilities for his choices is constantly exposed. In spite of his constant justifications, he seems the first person not to believe in what he says. In particular, his refusal to negotiate his difficult position causes him both psychological and physical discomfort:

> Non aveva fatto colazione ma come al solito quando si sedeva a tavola la fame gli passava, come il sonno la sera, per tornare quando era meno opportuno. In quel momento aveva addirittura la nausea. […] Bevve un sorso di vino rosso e attese con una smorfia che il bruciore allo stomaco si facesse sentire e allora, ostinato, ne bevve un altro.
>
> He hadn't eaten breakfast, but, as usual, the minute he sat down at a table his appetite left him, like sleep at night, only to come back when it was most inopportune. At that moment, he even felt nauseous. […] He took a sip of red wine and waited with a grimace for the heartburn to arrive, then obstinately drank another.[77]

De Luca lives a very difficult life: he cannot sleep at night, and during the day, he cannot eat. He often smells a "pesantissimo odore di fritto"; "suffocating odor of frying," or an "odore insopportabile di cavoli e di chiuso"; "the intolerable odor of cabbage and stale air" that nauseates him.[78] He feels weak and he paces like a sleepwalker during his investigations. In the above passage, in spite of his nausea, he keeps on drinking wine, in an unconscious attempt to punish himself. A character, Valeria, a clairvoyant and De Luca's love interest in *Carta bianca*, acutely sees De Luca for the person he is:

> "In mezzo a tutta questa confusione pochi sanno veramente chi sono e cosa fanno ed è per questo che ti tieni così attaccato al tuo ruolo, tu che ce l'hai, da dirlo ogni volta che puoi, sono un poliziotto, sono un poliziotto. […] Sei solo, ma non ti importa finché il tuo lavoro ti impedisce di pensare."

> "In the middle of all this confusion, few people really know who they are and what they're doing, and this is why you hold on to your role, you who have got one, mentioning it whenever possible: I'm a policeman, I'm a policeman. […] You're alone, but that doesn't worry you so long as work keeps you from thinking."[79]

According to De Federicis, De Luca would be the prototype of the "innocent Fascist" and Lucarelli's novels would end up endorsing revisionist theories.[80] On the contrary, Lucarelli shows how De Luca uses his job as a shield against a reality that he cannot face. Indeed, this trilogy exposes the weakness of the new revisionist mythology of the innocent Fascist.

Equally interesting are the other two novels of the series, set when the Fascist regime has finally collapsed. In *L'estate torbida*, the *commissario* is hiding in Sant'Alberto di Romagna, a small village of Emilia-Romagna, posing as an engineer, Giovanni Morandi, to avoid reprisals for the role he played during the dictatorship. Exposed by Leonardi, a member of the partisan police, De Luca is forced to investigate a series of brutal murders, becoming a reluctant player in Italy's post-war power struggle. Slowly dragged into the investigation, De Luca examines a murder apparently motivated by greed. Very soon this inquiry becomes an investigation into partisan violence and revenge at the end of WWII. Finally, *Via delle Oche* finds *commissario* De Luca back in Bologna. It is April 1948, and although De Luca has survived the downfall of Mussolini's government, he is now demoted and assigned to the vice squad. In Bologna, he meets up with Pugliese again, one of his subordinates in *Carta bianca*. Against the backdrop of the first post-war general election in Italy, De Luca begins to investigate the death of Ermes Ricciotti, an employee in a bordello on Via Delle Oche. Ricciotti's death has been staged to look like a suicide and De Luca's superiors insist that the case needs to be closed. Once again the volatile political situation in Italy intrudes into De Luca's investigation. Soon more corpses appear, and they are all the corpses of members of the Communist party, while a suspect, Antonio Abatino, is an influential member of the Christian Democrats (DC). The fake suicide is finally revealed to be a murder to cover the embarrassing sudden death of a DC politician in the Via delle Oche bordello on the eve of the general elections. De Luca and Pugliese solve the mystery, but there is no glory for the

investigators. Pugliese is punished through the typical move of "*promuovi e rimuovi*"; "promoted and made remote"[81] and De Luca is again put under trial for his Fascist past. This time he is almost waiting for it: "'Be'" disse De Luca, "'prima o poi doveva succedere, credo…'"; "'Well,'" said De Luca. "'I reckon it was bound to happen sooner or later.'"[82]

The last two books of the trilogy also feature political obstacles that get in the way of De Luca solving the case. It is also clear that the respective systems—namely the Allied forces in *La stagione torbida*, and the DC supported by the American government in *Via delle Oche*—regardless of the importance they officially give to the rule of law, ignore it when it is more convenient to them. Consequently, a Fascist police unit kills one of De Luca's colleagues during the *Carta bianca* investigation; the Military Police tear up Leonardi's report at the end of *La stagione torbida* because the truth could be embarrassing for the Allies; and, as mentioned, people are killed merely to protect the reputation of a DC politician in *Via delle Oche*. It could be argued that, by representing a policeman fighting against political pressure during both Fascism and democracy, Lucarelli ends up delivering a criticism of power per se. Indeed, Lucarelli's trilogy can be read as a tale of abuse of power over truth and justice.[83] However, in Lucarelli's series, and especially in *La stagione torbida*, the writer is careful to highlight important differences between Fascism and the Resistance, in particular. On more than one occasion Leonardi marks this difference: "'Tra Carnera e i fascisti c'è un bel fischio di differenza!'"; "'There's quite a difference between Carnera and the fascists!'".[84] At the end of the novel, in spite of being shocked by the result of the investigations, the partisan policeman helps Lucarelli to arrest a partisan hero, Carnera. Moreover, while in *Carta bianca*, the *gerarchi* cowardly try to negotiate their way out of Italy selling their former friends and escaping justice, the partisan chief Learco Padovani aka Carnera does not deny his responsibility in the murders and shoots himself. For his part, De Luca cannot avoid being arrested by the *carabinieri*: his figure, shaken and humiliated, is in stark contrast to the dignified character of Carnera. Finally and more importantly, in *Via delle Oche*, the flaws of Italian democracy are also clearly attributed to Italy's inability to confront its past, which has ended in the self-absolution of an entire generation.

In *L'estate torbida*, De Luca is always "spaventato," "frightened"; "smarrito," "confused"; and his voice is like a "lamento"; "lament."[85] He is hungry, but he cannot eat: "la nausea si era fatta più forte e più forte era diventata anche la fame"; "his nausea had gotten worse and so his hunger."[86] In the house of a massacred family whose murder he is asked to investigate, De Luca finds a golden brooch and a buckle confiscated from a missing aristocrat who was a collaborationist. Suspicions fall on a group

of partisans and especially Carnera. While local politicians, such as Veniero Bedeschi, and Savioli, the mayor of the village, are eager to move on from the partisan war and concentrate on the reconstruction of Italy, Carnera represents the old guard who would like to see a revolution in Italy:

> [Bedeschi] "Adesso, cacciati i fascisti e cacciati i tedeschi, si tratta di ricostruire. È d'accordo, ingegnere?"
> De Luca si strinse nelle spalle, imbarazzato. "Ecco, io…" iniziò, ma la voce profonda di Carnera lo coprì e coprì anche il brusio indistinto che c'era nella stanza.
> "Via i fascisti e via i tedeschi, bravi! E adesso che è finito tutto possiamo tornarcene a casa. Come dici tu, Savioli? *Normalizzazione…*"
> "La guerra è finita, Learco…" disse il sindaco, duro, con la voce che gli tremava.
>
> "The fascists and the Germans have been given their marching orders and now it's time for us to rebuild. Don't you agree, Engineer?"
> De Luca shrugged, embarrassed. "Well, now…I" he said before Carnera's deep voice drowned his out and pierced the indistinct murmur circulating in the room.
> "Good riddance to the fascists, good riddance to the Germans, and well done boys! Now it's all over we can all go back home. What's your word for it, Savioli? *Normalization…*"
> "The war's over, Learco," said the mayor, harsh, his voice shaking.[87]

Once again, De Luca is stuck in a power struggle between partisans and politicians for the control of Italy at the end of WWII. His inability to express an opinion also in this case is symbolic of his ineptitude. A few moments later, spurred by his table companions, De Luca cowardly toasts "al popolo"; "to the people" and "al progresso"; "to progress".[88] When it is his turn, he is only able to toast a banale "alla salute"; "to good health" before losing consciousness.[89]

Later in the novel, the mayor asks Leonardi and De Luca to continue their investigation as this may weaken Carnera and the partisans. De Luca is frightened: in the local newspapers, several articles recount the story of Fascists and collaborationists killed by partisans. However, he cannot stop being a policeman:

> "Per Dio, brigadiere!" ringhiò, mentre Leonardi si voltava, di scatto, "Abbiamo risolto il caso, abbiamo preso l'assassino, è fatta! Vuole lasciare perdere tutto, così? Non si può, non si può farlo, è un poliziotto!"

> "Ingegnere…"
> "Basta con questa storia dell'ingegnere!". De Luca urlò così forte che la voce gli deformò le parole, rimbombando nella stanza. "Non sono un ingegnere! Sono un commissario di polizia!"
>
> "Good God, brigadier!" he roared, as Leonardi turned with a start. "We've solved the case, we've got the killer. It's over! Do you want to turn your back on the whole thing just like that? You can't, you can't do that! You're a policeman!"
> "Engineer…"
> "That's enough of this Engineer business!" De Luca cried, so loudly that his words were distorted, echoing in the room. "I'm not an Engineer! I am a Police Commissario!"[90]

Amrani argues that De Luca's apolitical stance makes him a moral figure similar to a detached historian who impartially searches in the past.[91] However, De Luca's obvious moral and physical uneasiness seems to contradict this. It can only be argued that one of De Luca's characteristics, and the one that allows readers to root for him, is his obstinacy in pursuing truth in spite of everything. In so doing, Lucarelli is able to avoid Hall's "textual crisis" that looms over crime stories set during the dictatorship. Nevertheless, De Luca is stigmatized by his collusion with the regime and his inability to take sides throughout a series that powerfully exposes personal responsibilities in the *Ventennio*.

Seven years after the publication of Lucarelli's *Carta bianca*, Macchiavelli and Guccini published the first volume of their series (featuring *maresciallo* Sansovito as the main protagonist) which builds on previous crime novels set during Fascism. As we will see, by choosing a former partisan as their sleuth, these writers explicitly react to the attempt of Berlusconi's government to demonize anti-Fascism in the 2000s.

Francesco Guccini and Loriano Macchiavelli's Inspector Sansovito Series

Born in 1934 in Vergato, near Bologna, Loriano Macchiavelli is a master of Italian crime fiction and the author of various novels and spy stories.[92] Macchiavelli started his career as a detective fiction writer in 1974 with *Le piste dell'attentato* [The Track of the Terrorist Attack].[93] With this novel, he gave birth to Sergeant Sarti Antonio, one of the most beloved *giallo* characters in Italy. Macchiavelli is also the co-founder of Gruppo 13, an association that aims to defend the genre from the attacks of critics and

scholars while championing its literary dignity. His works and his passionate defense of detective fiction have been a source of inspiration for a new generation of *giallo* writers in Italy.

Born in Modena in 1940, Francesco Guccini is considered one of the most important Italian *cantautori* [singer-songwriters]. During the five decades of his music career, he has recorded 16 studio albums and collections, and six live albums. He is also a writer and a comic book author. His lyrics have been praised for their poetic and literary value and have been used in schools as an example of modern poetry.[94] Over the years, Guccini has gained the appreciation of critics and fans alike, who regard him as an iconic figure. Both Macchiavelli and Guccini share a love for the local traditions of Emilia-Romagna and the landscapes of the Apennines.

With the investigations of the sleuth, *maresciallo* [warrant-officer] Benedetto Sansovito, into a number of crimes, Macchiavelli, and Guccini re-interpret a period of Italian history that stretches from the end of the nineteenth century (when Italy was a land of migrants) to the 1970s, which were characterized by social and political unrest. The fictional investigations span 30 years and do not follow a strict chronological order: in *Macaroní. Romanzo di santi e delinquenti* [Macaronì. A Novel of Saints and Criminal], a young Sansovito investigates a series of crimes in a small village in the Apennines in the 1940s whose roots go back to the 1880s.[95] Sent to the Russian front as a punishment for his heterodoxy, he survives and, once back in Italy, joins the Resistance. In *Un disco dei Platters. Romanzo di un maresciallo e una regina* [A Platters Record. A Novel About a Warrant-Officer and a Queen], already in his forties, he investigates two murders that have their origins in episodes dating back to WWII[96]; in *Tango e gli altri. Romanzo di una raffica*, *anzi tre* [Tango and the Others. Novel of a Burst of Gunfire or Rather Three], he investigates a cold case connected to the Resistance;[97] finally, ten years later, he confronts a new "Fascism" and the strategy of tension in *Questo sangue che impasta la terra* [This Blood that Soaks the Earth].[98]

In their series, Macchiavelli and Guccini present a sleuth who is a clever and brave detective inspired by a love of truth. Like his fictional colleagues in Italian crime stories set during Fascism and the Resistance, Sansovito also likes to investigate alone and is not afraid to confront complacent authorities in order to pursue justice. However, the choice of a former Resistance fighter as a sleuth who ensures a positive closure to an investigation and who values honesty and incorruptibility is a novelty in the genre. As a southerner and as an investigator who does not accept the

official version of the truth, Sansovito is an "away-outsider," marginalized in the same way as migrants and misfits.[99] In *Macaroní* in particular, he is marginalized in the village because he is a Southerner living in the north; as a detective, his superiors marginalize him because he does not bow down to the Fascist authorities. Although he is finally accepted by the villagers in this story, in the following novels, he becomes an outsider as an ex-partisan in a world that has forgotten the sacrifice of thousands of men and women during the Second World War. This leads him to sympathize with people who live at the margins of society or who fight against the status quo.

From the flow of emigration at the end of the nineteenth century through the last years of WWII to the years of the Economic Boom and the troubled 1970s, Sansovito's adventures compel the writers (and the reader with them) to examine the most important transformations of Italian society in the microcosm of a small mountain community. As De Paulis observes, this examination provokes in the reader a critical and dialectic questioning about pivotal moments in history.[100] Although set in different periods of Italian history, all the novels deal with themes connected to Fascism and the Resistance, placing this period at the core of the narratives. This does not come as a surprise as Macchiavelli explored Fascism and the Resistance in earlier novels.[101] The first novel of the series sees a 20-something Sansovito investigating a series of murders in a small village in the Apennines in 1939. The narrative presents several flashbacks that take the reader to the end of the nineteenth century through the story of a young villager, called Ciarèin, who migrates to southern France in search of a better life. This story, which alternates with the main story set between 1939 and 1940, proves to be critical for solving the mystery. In the novel, it is also revealed that *maresciallo* Sansovito had been transferred to the village as punishment for having investigated the children of some important Fascist officers. In *Macaroní*, Sansovito is a disillusioned officer who resents being sent to a cold and isolated village in the mountains and who is worried about his career and future with the *carabinieri*. This does not prevent him from rescuing an anarchist, Libero Guidotti, from the harassment of four Blackshirts in the local pub. The next day, Guidotti's body is found down a precipice, triggering an investigation and the questioning of the *squadristi* [Blackshirts] involved in the incident. At this stage of his personal story, Sansovito is similar to all the other fictional detectives of the Fascist era who display a firm sense of justice even when they find themselves in delicate circumstances. Indeed, Sansovito's

decision to investigate Guidotti's death as a murder proves to be another blow to his career. Furthermore, like the fictional inspectors Flaminio Prati and Bruno Arcieri, the sleuth also shows clear signs of uneasiness toward the regime:

> [Il Federale] [si] guarda attorno e senza aspettare l'indicazione da un appuntato ancora irrigidito sull'attenti, va alla porta, la spalanca, si ferma sulla soglia e saluta fascistamente.
> Il maresciallo si alza e ricambia sollevando il braccio destro a metà strada fra uno stanco saluto fascista e un annoiato saluto militare. Con un po' di fantasia.[102]
>
> [(The Fascist) looks around and without waiting for any sign from a corporal still standing stiffly to attention, goes to the door, opens it wide, stops on the threshold and does the Fascist salute. The *maresciallo* stands up and reciprocates, lifting his right arm half way between a tired Fascist salute and a bored mitary salute. With some imagination.]

In this passage, Sansovito returns the salute of a superior who has come from Bologna in order to interfere with the sleuth's investigation. His half gesture, something between a Fascist and a military salute, is symbolic of his problematic adherence to Fascism, which, as he has already painfully experienced, fails to deliver the values of justice and equality he pursues. This gesture also hints at his future decision to distance himself from the Fascist ideology as also happens with the protagonists in Augias's and Gori's historical crime novels. Throughout the novel, Sansovito is increasingly worried about his future, but he continues to investigate the death of the anarchist: "'Il vostro dovere è quello di arrestare i sovversivi e proteggere i cittadini onesti!' 'Il mio dovere è di ricercare l'assassino o gli assassini'" ["Your duty is to arrest subversives and protect honest citizens!" "My duty is to look for the murderer or the murderers"].[103] Sansovito points out to his superior that his job is devoid of any ideology and his aim is to find the culprit no matter what the political consequences might be. In this sense, he is also similar to De Luca, even though he is far from being the disempowered figure represented by Lucarelli's detective and he is not afraid of voicing his dissent. As Chirumbolo points out, by refusing to insert the murder into defined ideological schemes (such as "the anarchist was an enemy and deserved his death") and defending an interpretation of reality that takes the individual into consideration ("Libero Guidotti is a human being and deserves justice"), Sansovito is

the champion of the "counter-history" or micro-history as opposed to the power of the official history, invariably written by winners.[104] The novel ends with the discovery of a different culprit for each of the four murders, all of them connected to the figure of Ciarèin.

An unresolved confrontation with Italy's Fascist past is the topic of *Un disco*. In this story, set in the 1960s, Sansovito comes back to the Apennine village at the center of his first investigation and sees some Fascist slogans still visible on the walls of a building:

> Una sorta di libretto rosso scritto sul bianco dei muri. In pochi si sono presi la briga di cancellarle e chi ha provato a passarci sopra una mano di bianco se le è viste riaffiorare, quasi che il tempo, a dispetto degli uomini, volesse mantenere vivo il ricordo di una tragedia.[105]
>
> [It was a sort of red book written on white walls. A few people had taken the trouble to erase the writing with some white paint but then they saw the words resurface. It was as if time wanted to keep the memory of a tragedy alive, in spite of the will of the people.]

In this passage, the Fascist slogans are an embodiment of Italy's recent past, which Italians would rather hide. However, the authors seem to suggest that it is impossible to wipe the slate clean. In spite of people's attempts to forget, the past is destined to resurface, often generating more violence, as evoked by the red paint of the writing. In the novel, the deaths of two children—one blown up by walking on an unexploded mine from WWII, and the other drowned—unveil crimes that occurred during the war. Indeed, Macchiavelli and Guccini's sleuths perform a function which is typical of both the detective and the historian:[106] Sansovito, like a historian, digs into the past, symbolically wiping the white paint from the wall to reveal the naked truth written underneath that sheds light on both the past and the present. By solving a case which has its roots in WWII, Sansovito is confronted with a present of political and social struggle. Mainly through the figure of Collina, aka Stalín, a communist who lives in the village, the reader is reminded of several events of the 1960s, such as the establishment of the Tambroni government, a controversial coalition that included DC, the neo-Fascist Movimento sociale (MSI), and the monarchists:

> "Compagni, gli ottantatré feriti di Genova; Vincenzo Napoli, ucciso dalla polizia a Licata, e i suoi ventiquattro compagni feriti; i manganellati dalla

> Celere a Roma, a Porta San Paolo, e soprattutto i cinque compagni caduti e i feriti di Reggio Emilia, esigono giustizia!"
> "Cosa stai facendo, Collina?"
> Stalín posò la sinistra verso Sansovito: "Attività politica. Diffondo le notizie che i giornali e la televisione servi dei padroni e del governo non diffondono!"[107]
>
> ["Comrades, 83 wounded in Genoa; Vincenzo Napoli killed by the police in Licata and his 24 comrades wounded; people cudgelled by the public order police in Rome at Porta San Paolo; above all five comrades killed and there are the wounded in Reggio Emilia. They all demand justice!"
> "What are you doing, Collina?"
> Stalín put his left hand on Sansovito. "Political activity. I'm spreading news that newspapers and the TV, which are subservient to employers and the Government do not spread."]

In his analysis of historical crime fiction, Milanesi detects a pattern that allows crime authors to reflect upon the present through past events.[108] In the passage above, the authors refer to some recurrent events in Italy's recent history, such as the infamous 1960 coalition, which is implicitly linked to Berlusconi's alliance with the *Alleanza nazionale*. Thus, *Un disco* intertwines the past (the 1960 alliance), the present (the alliance between Berlusconi and the *Alleanza nazionale*), and the past again (the investigations into the 1960s), which is typical of the historical crime novel. Moreover, the reference to the flaws of the Italian press may remind readers of the unresolved question of Berlusconi's de facto ownership of a large part of the Italian media. Undoubtedly, even after formally distributing ownership of his empire to various members of his family, Berlusconi kept control of his companies and exploited this situation for propaganda purposes.[109] The reference to "giornali e televisioni servi dei padroni e del governo" in the abovementioned passage can act as a cogent reminder to readers of the present state of the media in Italy.

The *maresciallo* never explicitly comments on the facts of his times, but he helps Stalín and ridicules a colleague who wants to stop his protest in front of the village church. Thus, Sansovito implicitly supports Stalín's views. Similarly, in *Questo sangue*, Sansovito covertly fights the criminalization of the student and pacifist movements of the 1970s by helping Raffaella, a young woman falsely accused of a crime committed by an agent from a deviant section of the secret services. While several members of the police force only want to persecute students and political activists who they brand collectively as criminals ("'Un branco di delinquenti!

Se dipendesse da me li sbatterei tutti al muro!'") ["A bunch of criminals! If it depended on me, I would execute them all!"],[110] Sansovito does not accept this generalization and is determined to find the real culprit. In the novel, individuals and authorities plot an authoritarian shift in the Italian government and the writers highlight the idea that the danger of despotism is still present in Italian society.

In these stories, Sansovito only incidentally refers to his past as a partisan. In *Tango*, however, Macchiavelli and Guccini make a significant contribution to the debate about historical revisionism by linking Sansovito's values of justice and fairness with his experience as a Resistance fighter. In the years around the publication of *Tango*, the *Alleanza nazionale* had succeeded in gaining middle-class support. The ex-Fascists held key government posts and, in a revisionist era, "might claim to be the last custodian of the ideals and myths of 'united Italy.'"[111] Anti-Fascism, which had been very significant in the past and synonymous with "public interests," had lost ground in some strata of the Italian population, while Cold-War-like propaganda promoted by Berlusconi had erased in many people's minds the political and criminal responsibilities of the moderate parties which had ruled Italy for more than 30 years.[112] It is precisely in this political context that *Tango* operates. In this novel, set again in the 1960s, Inspector Sansovito investigates a cold case from 1944. The case concerns the execution by his own comrades of a young partisan, Bob, accused of the massacre of a civilian family for personal vengeance. In the beginning of the book, it is explicitly revealed that Sansovito had refused to wear the new uniform of the *carabinieri* under the Republic of Salò and had joined the Resistance following his experience on the Russian front. As a partisan under the name of Salerno, *maresciallo* Sansovito had investigated the massacre of the civilian family without solving it. Almost 20 years later, in 1960, a character asks Sansovito to re-open the case and to clear Bob's name. During the new investigation, the motivations of the group of partisans involved in that event are put under scrutiny in a political climate where Fascists and partisans are placed on the same level: "'Lei non sarà mica uno di quelli che dice che i partigiani hanno ammazzato a destra e a sinistra senza guardare in faccia a nessuno'" ["You're not one of those who says that partisans killed indiscriminately regardless of anyone, are you?"].[113] More than evoking the political climate of the 1960s, these observations echo the often provocative statements of revisionist historians such as Galli Della Loggia and journalists, such as Pansa who, from the 1980s onwards, argued that the partisans had also committed crimes

against civilians.[114] However in *Tango*, Macchiavelli and Guccini almost obsessively point out the difference between the Fascists and the partisans.

> "Chi scava la fossa?" domandò il vecchio. "La fate scavare a lui?"
> "No, non siamo fascisti e neanche tedeschi. La faremo noi."
> [...] Tango lo interruppe con un gesto della mano. "No, la fossa la scaviamo noi, combattiamo anche per questo, l'avete detto anche voi prima, combattiamo per avere e fare giustizia, non per la vendetta."[115]
>
> ["Who's going to dig the grave?" asked the old man. "Will you make him do it?"
> "No, we won't. We're neither Fascists nor German. We'll do it."
> [...] Tango stopped him with a gesture of his hand. "No, we'll dig the grave. We're also fighting for this just as you said before. We're fighting to get and do justice, not revenge."]

In the novel, during flashbacks to 1944, several partisans highlight the difference between the Fascists' and the partisans' behavior. In this passage, by digging the grave for their victims, partisans show respect for their rivals and demonstrate that they are fighting for justice and not revenge. The partisans also repeat that in order to reconstitute justice, they have to first do justice, even though that means condemning one of their own. In the part of the novel set in the 1960s, several official documents are read or explained by different characters in order to prove this point.

> Scorre le righe e legge fra sé: "Regolamento di disciplina... Subordinazione... Armi... Ecco". Legge a voce alta: "Rapporti con la popolazione civile. È considerato reato ogni atto di violenza, di minaccia a mano armata, di rapina eccetera a danno della popolazione civile eccetera eccetera...Poi sono proibiti:
>
> a) Violazione di domicilio e perquisizioni.
> b) Qualsiasi requisizione o prelievo individuale di denari e generi vari...
>
> Punizioni. Le punizioni sono: a) richiamo; b) biasimo; c), d)... g) pena di morte..."[116]
>
> [He looks through the lines and read to himself: "Disciplinary Regulations... Subordination...Arms...Here." He reads aloud: "Relationship with civilians. Any violent act, threat with weapons, robbery etc. etc. against civilians is considered a crime...The following actions are forbidden:
>
> a) Unlawful entering and perquisitions.
> b) Any requisition or individual withdrawal of money and goods...
>
> Punishments. Punishments are: a) warning; b) reprimand; c), d)...g) death penalty..."]

The difference between the code of conduct of the partisans and that of the Nazi-Fascist army, which had orders to retaliate against civilians, is striking, adding to the numerous references to war crimes that are scattered throughout the novel. In this passage in particular, Macchiavelli and Guccini refer to an actual historical document to support their thesis. The reference to actual places, dates, people, newspaper articles, and documents assures verisimilitude as, according to Porter, "[p]art of the pleasure of reading depends on this sense of authenticity, allowing the reader to experience normally inaccessible or forbidden activities."[117]

At first sight, the above passages may deliver a simplistic distinction between the opposing sides. This is far from being true as *Tango* assimilates many elements of the revisionist debate. First of all, the crime investigated is a case of miscarriage of justice perpetrated by the Resistance. Second, the real culprit is not a Fascist, but another member of the Resistance movement, who has joined the Resistance for opportunistic reasons, and this element also challenges a "black-and-white" depiction of the war of Liberation. Third, Sansovito struggles with his investigation because in post-war Italy nobody—from the left or the right—seems interested in re-opening a cold case. Indeed, just like Sansovito, who feels the urge to re-open the case and bring the perpetrators to justice, the authors argue that an investigation into the Resistance should not be opposed despite the fact that some former partisans, in the narrative as in reality, are afraid to harm the memory of the war of Liberation. This necessity is exemplified by Tango's character, a former partisan who ordered Bob's execution. Having realized his mistake in executing Bob, Tango goes to his political commissioner to ask for the rehabilitation of the dead partisan. The answer "'Lascia stare, Tango, che servirebbe solo a gettare discredito sulla Resistenza'" ["'Leave it, Tango. It will only bring discredit to the Resistance'"][118] throws Tango into a state of guilt, marginalization, and mental illness. Macchiavelli and Guccini criticize many former partisans who reached positions of power in the new Italian society and were not interested in controversies concerning the past. However, in spite of embracing a more problematic interpretation of those important years of Italian history, they oppose the "tendency to dissolve all distinctions" that Romanelli underlines.[119]

As opposed to Lucarelli's Inspector De Luca, Sansovito has chosen a side in the ongoing Italian conflict and joined the Resistence once back from the Russian campaign. He comes to believe that at a certain juncture in one's life, doing one's duty is not enough. Later in the novel, he also

attributes his desire to deliver the culprit to justice to his partisan past rather than to his job as a *carabiniere*.

> "Questo non c'entra con la Resistenza, avvocato. Anzi, scoprire la verità vorrebbe dire rendere onore, visto che nessuno può restituirgli la vita, al povero Bob. E vuol anche dire che noi, che nella resistenza eravamo, non abbiamo paura della verità e aggiungerebbe più valore alla nostra lotta di allora."[120]
>
> ["This has nothing to do with the Resistance, avvocato. Finding the truth would honour poor Bob, since nobody can give him back his life. It would also mean that all of us, who were in the Resistance, aren't scared by the truth. This would add more meaning to our old fight."]

In this passage, the use of the "we" conveys Sansovito's affiliation to a group with precise values ("verità" and "lotta"). In other words, he explicitly associates himself with the struggle for freedom. Far from presenting a hagiographic representation of the Resistance, the Sansovito series delivers a strong affirmation of the core values of a movement that, with all its flaws, fought against a dictatorship and a brutal Nazi occupation of Italy. Therefore, the two authors are on the same line with historians, such as Luzzatto most recently, who reaffirm the Resistance movement as a crucial experience for a democratic and free Italy.[121] More importantly, the Sansovito series also represents a passionate reaction against the instrumental use of the revisionist debate for political purposes as propounded by the political right in the 1990s and 2000s.

For Inspector Sansovito, solving the mystery is a moral imperative. In this sense, the detective behaves like a historian admitting the necessity for a new search into the past. In *Tango*, violence and death result from the refusal to come to terms with history and its wounds. *Maresciallo* Sansovito's rejection of this attitude, which turns his implicit anti-Fascism into a political stance, becomes evident in the narrative and forms the foundation of the novel's political framework. This also gives the authors the opportunity to comment on the present. Thus, when the MSI town councilor fears that the *maresciallo* is intent on rehabilitating the memory of a "bad" partisan, Sansovito indignantly replies to Mayor Olmi: "'Al consigliere del Movimento Sociale non dobbiamo niente né noi né voi, sindaco'" ["We and you don't owe anything to the Movimento Sociale counsellor, Mayor"].[122] These words mark a need for juridical independence. The use of "we" in this passage may refer to Sansovito's belonging

to the *carabinieri*, but can equally refer to Sansovito's past as a partisan. Incidentally, this past is shared by the mayor, a DC ("voi") who fought in the war of Liberation. The declaration "al consigliere del Movimento Sociale non dobbiamo niente" can also be read as a criticism of the alliance between the DC and MSI of those years.

Sansovito's superior, Friggerio, warns the investigator of the highly sensitive case at hand, particularly complex because of the difficult political climate produced by the controversial Tambroni government: "'Vogliamo parlare del governo Tambroni, governo con i fascisti che ci eravamo illusi di aver cacciato fuori dall'Italia?'" ["What about the Tambroni Government, a government with the Fascists? We thought we had booted them out of Italy"][123] states a former partisan. Here the typical pattern of historical crime novels becomes intricate because it ties the past of the crime (1940s) not only to the present of the reader (2000s) but also to the present of the investigation (1960s), creating a fil rouge insinuating a Fascist presence in Italian history from the Mussolini era to the 2000s. Finally, it is no coincidence that the real criminal of the massacre in *Tango* is finally revealed to be Mayor Olmi himself, a representative of the party that had masterminded the alliance with the neo-Fascists. Through the figure of Olmi, Macchiavelli and Guccini reveal that political opportunism and the cynicism of some Italians who view politics in terms of personal advantage are both legacies of the past, dating back to the post-Risorgimento period.

The insistence on the values of the Resistance—while acknowledging the betrayal of those very values in different periods of Italian history—is a central theme in Macchiavelli and Guccini's series. After exploring this issue in *Un disco* and *Questo sangue* in particular, the authors felt compelled to revisit it in *Tango*, explicitly positioning their detective as a bearer of partisan values in order to respond to the political reality of their time. Through a typical pattern of historical crime fiction, Macchiavelli and Guccini's sleuth digs into the past to shed light on the present. By re-establishing historical differences between the Republic of Salò and the Resistance, they are acknowledging a problematic vision of the Resistance, as well as fighting the instrumental use of "revisionist" theories in a critical period of Italy's recent history.

Maurizio De Giovanni's Inspector Ricciardi Series

The latest and incredibly successful crime series set during the Ventennio is Maurizio De Giovanni's series featuring Inspector Luigi Alfredo Ricciardi as the main protagonist. De Giovanni was born in Naples in 1958 where he

still lives and works. In 2005, he won a writing competition for unpublished authors with a short story set in the 1930s, which was then turned into a novel and published first by Graus under the title *Le lacrime del pagliaccio* [The Clown's Tears] (2006) and after as *Il senso del dolore. L'inverno del commissario Ricciardi*.[124] Three other novels followed: *La condanna del sangue. La primavera del commissario Ricciardi* (2008; translated as *Blood Curse*, 2013); *Il posto di ognuno. L'estate del commissario Ricciardi* (2009; translated as *Everyone in Their Place*, 2013); and *Il giorno dei morti. L'autunno del commissario Ricciardi* (2010; translated as *The Day of the Dead*, 2014).[125] The tetralogy was an immediate success among Italian readers, and De Giovanni was able to publish the subsequent adventures of Ricciardi with the prestigious Einaudi publishing house. They are: *Per mano mia. Il Natale del commissario Ricciardi* (2011; translated as *By My Hand*, 2014); *Vipera. Nessuna resurrezione per il commissario Ricciardi* (2012; translated as *Viper*, 2015); *In fondo al tuo cuore. Inferno per il commissario Ricciardi* (2014; translated as *The Bottom of Your Heart. Inferno for Inspector Ricciardi*, 2015); and *Anime di vetro. Falene per il commissario Ricciardi* [Glass souls. Moths for Inspector Ricciardi] (2015).[126]

Ricciardi, the protagonist of this series set in Naples in the 1930s, is a police inspector supernaturally sensitive: he is attuned to the inner nature of those who die violently. He actually sees these victims in their last moments and suffers intensely from the occult experiences he "shares" with them, overhearing their final words or thoughts at the time of their deaths. This occult power, inherited from his mother, is both a gift and a curse: it has helped him to become one of the most acute and successful homicide detectives in the Naples police force, but all that horror and sufferings have hollowed him out emotionally. He often sees ghosts—sometimes the ghosts of those he could not help—and each time, they repeat the same last words. Many of them lurk in the shadow and are not connected to the investigations, but haunt his everyday life, making a normal life impossible for Ricciardi. Gloomy and introverted, he is not popular among his superstitious colleagues who think he brings bad luck. He is also feared by his own boss, the vain deputy commissioner Angelo Garzo. His only friend and sidekick in the police force is Brigadier Raffaele Maione. Ricciardo also has a love–hate relationship with Doctor Modo, a forensics pathologist who works in Ricciardi's murder cases.[127] Maione is a middle-aged man in his fifties, a simple and honest man with a wife, Lucia, and four children. Modo, a former medical officer, who fought during WWI, is single and enjoys wine and prostitutes. He is also

the only anti-Fascist character in the series and his political stance will get him into trouble in *Vipera*.

Women also play an important part in Ricciardi's life. Coming from a rich and aristocratic family, the police inspector lives alone assisted by his old nanny, Rosa. He is secretly in love with Enrica, a young single woman who lives with her parents in a building opposite the place where Ricciardi lives. Ricciardi is also attracted to Livia, a former opera singer and a widow whom Ricciardi meets during his first investigation in *Il senso del dolore*. Enrica and Livia represent two opposites of the spectrum of stereotypical representations of women: Enrica is sweet and submissive, and aspires to a typical bourgeois life with a husband and children; Livia is aggressive and seductive and embodies a life of passion. The police inspector swings between the two, who are both in love with Ricciardi's green eyes. The police inspector's private life takes a consistent part in the plot and each adventure ends with one woman apparently winning over the other. Other recurrent characters are don Pierino, a compassionate Catholic priest and lover of the opera, and Bambinella, a transgender person who works as a prostitute and acts as a police informant for Maione.

In spite of these stories being labeled as noirs in their English translations, Ricciardi's investigations are in fact typical of the whodunit where all the clues are scattered along the narrative and the police inspector solves his crimes thanks to a sudden enlightenment. All the solutions are clear-cut and justice is assured in Fascist Italy, a problematic characteristic of these *gialli* that we are going to analyze in the next few pages. In *Il senso del dolore*, Ricciardi investigates the death of one of the world's greatest tenors, Maestro Arnaldo Vezzi, who is found brutally murdered in his dressing room at Naples' famous San Carlo Theatre. Arrogant and bad-tempered, Vezzi was hated by many, and, as in the typical whodunit, the police inspector is confronted with a large number of possible suspects. The solution of the case where the crime setting is another *topos* of classic crime fiction—a locked changing room in a theater—arrives thanks to an elaborate *mise-en-scène*, again typical of the classic detective story. In *La condanna del sangue*, an elderly woman by the name of Carmela Calise has been viciously beaten to death and found in a working-class apartment in the Sanità neighborhood. Inspector Ricciardi and Brigadier Maione find out that Carmela was a fortune-teller and moneylender who manipulated and deceived her clients, among them some of the city's rich and powerful. Again in the typical fashion of a whodunit, the victim had many enemies (those who were indebted to her, or had been manipulated

by her lies, disappointed by her prophesies or destroyed by her machinations) which constitutes the usual mix of poor but honest workers and corrupt and unhappy wealthy. In *Il posto di ognuno*, Ricciardi conducts an investigation into the death of the typical *femme fatale*, the beautiful and mysterious Duchess of Camparino, whose connections to privileged Neapolitan social circles make the case a powder keg waiting to explode. In *Il giorno dei morti*, the police detective investigates the death of Matteo, one of the many street kids who live hand-to-mouth in the dark alleys of 1930s Naples. Ricciardi's instincts tell him that the boy's death is not a result of natural causes, but his superior wants to dismiss the case and concentrate police attention on Mussolini's imminent state visit to Naples. In *Per mano mia*, as Naples prepares for the Christmas celebrations, in a luxurious apartment on the Mergellina beach lie the bodies of a Fascist militia officer and his wife. At the scene of the crime, Ricciardi, accompanied by his faithful partner, Brigadier Maione, and once more troubled by two women who compete for his attentions, moves between poor suburbs and spaces of power in order to uncover the truth. In *Vipera*, one week before Easter 1932, at the high-class brothel in the center of town known as "Paradiso," Viper, the most famous prostitute of Naples, is found dead. Ricciardi has to untangle a complex knot of greed, frustration, and jealousy, and the usual platoon of suspects, in order to solve the riddle of Viper's death. In *In fondo al tuo cuore*, the middle of a summer heat wave, as Naples prepares for one of its most important holy days, a renowned surgeon falls to his death from his office window. For Commissario Ricciardi and Brigadier Maione, it is the beginning of an investigation that will bring them to investigate their own feelings of love and betrayals. Finally, in *Anime di vetro*, Ricciardi unofficially investigates a cold case for Bianca Borgati, a beautiful countess.

Ricciardi's first four adventures take place in four different seasons. The second tetralogy instead takes place in four different major festivities, including Christmas and Easter. The weather and the festive atmosphere seem to influence the mood of the various characters and allow the writer to use his descriptive skills in depicting a vivid portrait of Naples in the first years of the Fascist regime. In an interview, the writer explains that his research into the 1930s included reading narrative and newspapers of the period as well as viewing documentary movies and talking films that, incidentally, debuted in Italy precisely in 1931. His research also included a study of the Neapolitan dialect, which at the time was the most common language of the people. However, contrary to other writers analyzed

in this chapter, De Giovanni did not choose Fascism as a setting for his series in order to tackle issues of personal responsibilities in a dictatorship, as Lucarelli did. He simply wanted a period setting for his stories and he chose the *Ventennio* by pure chance as he explained in an interview with Palamidese:

> De Giovanni is very clear on that. […] It was simply the continuation of the location already present in his lucky first short story written live at a Gran Caffè Gambrinus table, where the Neapolitan phase of a writing contest was held. It was a historical café with art nouveau furniture: from here came the idea—completely impromptu—of the Fascist era as the setting.[128]

This functional choice, however, results in a contradictory representation of life in Italy during Fascism. On the one hand, De Giovanni acknowledges Fascist violence and restriction of civil liberties in his books. On the other, he seems to downplay the control of the Fascist party over Italy, portraying in fact an Italy of the 1930s where the police were completely independent from the regime and the press could freely express criticism. Novels are not history books, and we obviously cannot expect novels to have the rigor of historical essays, but it is interesting to investigate why De Giovanni decided to give a sanitized version of those years. Rather than intentionally promoting a benign version of Mussolini's rule, De Giovanni may be more interested in ensuring a freedom of movement for the protagonist, Inspector Ricciardi, and an unambiguous and satisfying solution to his cases. Moreover, freeing Ricciardi from the troubles of a twisted conscience also allows him to concentrate on his personal life: indeed, Ricciardi's adventures are strictly intertwined with his sentimental adventures. In De Giovanni's hybrid *gialli*, the romance—that is, Ricciardi's tormented relationship with Enrica and Livia—takes the same amount of pages as the investigation itself. It can be argued that this mix of *romanzo rosa* [romance] and whodunit is indicative of a shift that the *giallo* has made in the last few years. After the political wave of the 1990s, Italian crime fiction in the new millennium seems to privilege small settings and private stories, as demonstrated by other successful crime series, such as that written by Gianrico Carofiglio featuring lawyer Guerrieri. The next few pages give an account of an "edulcorated" or "light" Fascism in De Giovanni's series, starting from the representation of the setting and everyday life and then moving to an analysis of the main characters and the crime investigations themselves.

In De Giovanni's crime series, Naples is an extensive urban landscape depicted through the lives of its inhabitants. It is a city traditionally portrayed as split into two spaces: the space of the rich and the space of the poor, with Via Toledo as a divide between the wealthy areas at the bottom of the hill, and those of the working class and poor near the top. This divide is not connected to the Fascist regime, but it is seen as an endemic condition of the city. In spite of the description of some poor areas, such as Sanità, De Giovanni mostly describes an industrious city and the lively life of its inhabitants, especially through the description of food:

> Spettacolari le vetrine dei dolcieri, al centro delle quali si stagliava un Bambinello di zucchero filato, traboccanti di ogni genere di croccante, di colline di struffoli, le palline di pasta fritta guarnite con miele e confetti colorati, di cassate, e degli immancabili dolci tradizionali, dalle coloratissime paste di mandorla disposte su ostie tagliate a misura ai taralli duri a base di mandorle, chiamati roccoccò.
>
> The shop windows of the confectioners and pastry shops were especially spectacular, and at the center, enjoying pride of place, was a Christ Child made of spun sugar. Surrounding him was an overabundance of cookies and cakes, small hillside of *struffoli*, balls of fried dough dripping with honey and colourful candy pellets, cassata, along with the traditional pastries and confectioneries that no Christmas in Naples could do without, from the brightly colored almond pastries arranged on specially cut biscuits to the hard-almond dough *taralli* also known as *rococo*.[129]

De Certeau identifies two spatial practices as analogous to the linguistic figures of asyndeton and synecdoche.[130] The first, the figure of disconnection, undoes continuity and fragments places into separate islands; the second is the figure of displacement where a part is taken to stand for the whole that includes it. In this passage, the narrator describes the Neapolitian city center through its Christmas shop windows. They display an abundance of festive food from dried fruit to suckling pig, from quarters of beef to sophisticated treats filled with honey, cream, and nuts sold in "quintali"; "hundreds of pounds,"[131] in stark contrast to some sparse comments about a hard life during Fascism, conveying an image of a wealthy city. This opulence is not confined to the space of the rich, but is also present in the poorest suburbs where delightful food is sold in the streets.[132] Not only do the numerous descriptions of lively markets, shops, and food deliver the idea of a good life in Naples in the 1930s,

but also signs of the *fascistizzazione* [conversion into a Fascist society] of Naples society are seen as un-problematic: "I giorni degli incontri, della messa e della danza. I giorni dei bambini in divisa che fanno ginnastica in mezzo alla piazza, diretti da belle signorine col megafono"; "Two days of seeing friends, attending mass, dancing. Two days of uniformed children doing calisthenics in the middle of the piazza, guided by lovely young ladies with megaphones."[133] As we can see from this passage, the reference to "bambini in divisa"—that is, wearing the black uniform imposed by the regime—practicing sport under the vigilant care of "lovely young ladies" gives in fact an idyllic representation of life under the dictatorship that contrasts with other literary representations, such as Camilleri's *La presa di Macallé*.[134] Harmonious descriptions of youngsters participating in the rallies organized by the Fascist regime are scattered throughout the series:

> Le antiche tradizioni si mischiavano felicemente ai nuovi costumi, e donne con enorme ceste di uova in bilico sulla testa, incedevano inseguite da stuoli di bambini vestiti da balilla, che andavano all'adunanza in piazza.[135]

> Venerable traditions mingled gleefully with new customs, and women with enormous baskets of eggs balanced on their heads walked along followed by swarms of children dressed in junior Fascist *balilla* uniforms, on their way to attend the rally in the square.[136]

Even more explicitly, this passage refers to the Fascist youth paramilitary organization, the *Balilla*, described as a new custom that "gleefully" blends with old traditions, such as elderly women carrying baskets of eggs on top of their heads.

In this Naples, where Fascist customs and ideals mix unproblematically with old habits, political debates are downplayed as family disputes. In *Il senso del dolore*, Enrica witnesses an argument between her father, who is anti-Fascist, and her brother-in-law, who is a fervent supporter of Mussolini. This event, which seems at first to address important themes such as political repression during the *Ventennio* and the indoctrination of younger generations, ends with a disconcerting comment: "A Enrica spiaceva sentirli in disaccordo. Ma sapeva che si volevano bene e che anche quella discussione sarebbe terminata con un bicchierino di cognac, davanti alla radio"; "Enrica hated to hear them arguing. But she knew they loved each other and that this dispute too would end with a glass of cognac, in front of the radio."[137]

In other words, an important political clash is downplayed as a domestic argument that can be easily resolved with a glass of French cognac. Enrica, Ricciardi's love interest, does not know what to think, but she notices that being anti-Fascist is making her father miserable, and hints at the fact that opposing Mussolini may be counterproductive to one's peace of mind.

This game of throwing a hasty discussion about the flaws of the regime into the narrative and concluding with an equally hasty smoothing over is also present in the dialogues between Inspector Ricciardi and his friend, the anti-Fascist doctor Modo: "'Caro il mio intellettuale, per tua norma io il tempo di leggere non ce l'ho e sono più ottimista di te che vedi il futuro più nero del presente. Vieni, che ti offro il caffè e una sfogliatella, come promesso'"; "'My dear intellectual friend, for your information, I don't have time for reading—and I'm more optimistic than you are, since you see a future darker than the present. Come along, and I'll treat you to an espresso and a sfogliatella pastry, as promised.'"[138] Like this one on Fascist literature, all the skirmishes between Ricciardi and Modo invariably end peacefully in front of a pastry and hot coffee, making the debate around important issues such as freedom of speech and repression become just *chiacchiere da bar* [small talk].

Moreover, Fascism is seen as an "external body" in Italian society. In various parts of De Giovanni's series, a precise distinction between the police force and Fascism is underlined. For example, in *La condanna* Ricciardi's boss, social climber Garzo meditates with satisfaction that, contrary to the majority of policemen, he has been able to climb the social ladder thanks to his collusion with the Fascist government.[139] He also comments that in the police force there are a lot of respectable people who do their job. On the one hand, this remark emphasizes a divide between the police and Fascism, and on the other, it supports the idea that during the *Ventennio* most Italians were *brava gente* [good people]. Indeed, between 1925 and 1932, police officials and guards were legally prohibited from joining the Fascist party in order to guarantee independence for the police. However, from the very start the police hierarchy "went some way towards accommodating fascist positions" through recruitment and promotions and "element of fascist ideology were incorporated into training programmes."[140] Moreover from October 1932 onwards, "party membership became more or less obligatory" and chief of police Arturo Bocchini "officially welcomed this as an honour for the police."[141]

In De Giovanni's novels where the police force is unconvincingly depicted as completely autonomous from the Fascist government, nobody,

not even Maione or Ricciardi, knows what the various Fascist militias operating in Italy at the time really do. As Maione states in *Per mano mia*: "'sapete, questa cosa dei fascisti che sta al porto e si occupa del movimento delle merci e del controllo della pesca'"; "'you know, that Fascist agency that's based down at the harbor and oversees the transit of goods as well as monitoring fishing.'"[142] By defining the port militia as "questa cosa dei fascisti" underlines an alleged separation between the organizations of the Fascist party and those of the Italian state, in a period when Mussolini's party had already taken control of Italian society and the the militia had become "an organic part of the new state."[143] Maione's attitude of separating the Fascist party from the Italian state is reinforced a few pages later when Ricciardi goes to the headquarters of the militia:

> Ricciardi, mentre con Maione si dirigeva alla caserma, pensava che un'organizzazione militare parallela a quella dello stato ma riferita a un partito fosse tendenzialmente pericolosa. D'altra parte, era anche vero che quel partito aveva riscosso alle ultime elezioni oltre il novanta per cento dei consensi, e quindi era facile confonderlo con lo stato stesso.
>
> As Ricciardi made his way to the barracks with Maione, he thought that a military organization parallel to the administration of the state but answerable to a political party was potentially dangerous. But then it was also true that the party in question had won the most recent elections with more than ninety percent of the votes, and so it was hard to tell the Fascist party apart from the state itself.[144]

What Ricciardi seems to forget here is that in 1931, the year when the action in *Per mano mia* takes place, the Fascist party was not "a party," but the only legal party in Italy.[145] It was therefore very easy to confuse it with the Italian state because it had already assumed its control.[146]

However, this questionable separation between Fascism as an external if disturbing "something" and Italian society—reiterated throughout the series—allows Ricciardi do his job as a policeman without being compromised with the regime. As the police inspector repeats several times: "'Sì, Maione. Facciamo i poliziotti'" "'That's right, Maione. We're cops.'"[147] This constant repetition of Ricciardi's affiliation may sound similar to De Luca's justification for being compromised with the Republic of Salò. However, this is far from the truth. While De Luca is uncomfortable with his role in the police force during the Republic of Salò—and his uneasiness is symbolized by his lack of sleep and a persistent nausea—Ricciardi does

not find any contradictions in representing law and order in a dictatorship and happily eats his beloved *sfogliatelle*. The investigations—which in many other crime series (especially in Lucarelli's novels) are hampered by constant interference from the militia or the Fascist secret services—are very easy tasks in Ricciardi's and Maione's world. One may argue that—while surprising in a man who otherwise possesses a superior intelligence—Ricciardi's lack of awareness and incapability of seeing the evils of his times are a realistic representation of a widespread attitude among Italians in this dark period of Italian history. However, this attitude is shared by many other positive characters and is never problematized in the series, as otherwise happens in many crime novels set during Fascism.

Together with a fictitious separation between Fascism and the state, the series also gives a contradictory representation of the Italian press during the *Ventennio*. As early as 1923, the government was allowed to suspend publications accused of preaching class hatred or being disrespectful toward the executive, the church, and the monarchy.[148] By 1928, journalists were required to register in the professional directory of the Fascists' Journalist Association. News of murders and violent crimes, or suicide, was strictly forbidden by the regime, which wanted to impose an image of an Italy free from crime.[149]

In spite of this, in 1931, the year when *Il posto di ognuno* is set, deputy commissioner Garzo is afraid of what Mario Capece, editor-in-chief of the daily *Roma* and a suspect in the murder investigation of the Duchess of Camparino, may publish because he "'non perde occasione per metterci in croce'"; "'never misses an opportunity to nail us to the cross.'"[150] This is a bizarre comment, considering that the new pro-police penal code called "Codice Rocco" had come into effect on 1 July 1931—therefore it would have been effective on 23 August 1931, the date when *Il posto*'s investigations started.[151] In spite of this, the novel repeats that "'la stampa rimane potente, anche dopo le ultime direttive'"; "'the press is still powerful, even after the most recent directives.'"[152]

In a Fascist Italy where the press is still powerful and openly criticizes the regime, private citizens are also free to express their criticism. This is the case with several characters in De Giovanni's series who voice their dissent in front of the police. For example, in *Il senso del dolore*, Don Pierino accuses the king and Mussolini of disregarding the poor and favoring the powerful: "'I vostri signori, invece,—e indicò le due fotografie alla parete,—siete sicuro che diano, per esempio, all'omicidio di Vezzi la stessa rilevanza che a quello di un qualsiasi carrettiere dei Quartieri Spagnoli?'";

"'Your lords and masters on the other hand—he pointed to the two photographs on the wall—are you sure they attach the same significance to the murder of any common pushcart vendor in the Quartieri Spagnoli as they do to Vezzi's murder, for example?'".[153] By contrast, Brigadier Maione is surprised to hear Ettore Musso di Camparino express his Fascist faith:

> Maione sudava in silenzio sotto il cappello. Considerò che non ci si vergognava più di dire certe cose, nemmeno davanti a due sconosciuti. E che il fatto che portassero la divisa, almeno lui, spingesse gente come Musso a ritenere che fossero pure loro fanatici del regime.
>
> Maione sweated in silence, under his cap. He was thinking that people were simply no longer ashamed to say certain things, even in the presence of two strangers. And that the fact that they were in uniform, or at least that he was, must make people like Musso assume that they too were fanatical supporters of the Fascist regime.[154]

The "certe cose" Maione is referring in this extract are in fact the distorted vision of the regime as a bearer of progress and civilization that was a common view in Italy and a constant topic in police manuals and publications in those years.[155]

In this *papier-mâché* scenario for Fascism, the main characters in de Giovanni's series can afford to be *qualunquisti*.[156] *Qualunquista* is Ricciardi whose personal tragedy (the ability to see and listen to dead people) becomes a comfortable fig leaf for his paralyzing pessimism; *qualunquista* is Livia who exploits her friendship with powerful Fascist figures, but then defines herself as apolitical; *qualunquista* is Enrica who is not able to understand the important political changes occurring in her country because she is focused only on her dream of a bourgeois life. None of these attitudes is ever challenged in the narrative where, on the contrary, these characters are portrayed as likeable. The champion of *qualunquismo* is Ricciardi himself:

> Lesse la nuova data: domenica, 23 agosto 1931-IX. Anno nono. Della nuova èra. L'èra dei fiocchetti sui cappelli e degli stivaloni, delle fotografie a tutta pagina in maniche di camicia e con l'aratro. Dell'entusiasmo e dell'ottimismo. Dell'ordine e delle città pulite, per decreto.
> Magari bastasse un decreto, rimuginò. Il mondo gira uguale a prima dell'anno primo, purtroppo: gli stessi delitti, le stesse passioni corrotte.

> He read the new date: Sunday, August 23, 1931-IX. Year Nine. Of the new Era. The year of black ribbons on hats and high black boots, the era of full page newspaper photographs of men in shirtsleeves, guiding a plow. The era of enthusiasm and optimism. The era of law and order and clean cities, by government decree.
> If only a decree were enough, thought Ricciardi. The world keeps spinning the way it always has, since long before Year One, unfortunately: the same murders, the same corrupt passions. The same blood.[157]

In this passage, the use of "same" repeated three times in the English translation reinforces the idea that unhappiness, hunger, and violence are endemic to human conditions. Therefore, the inability of Fascism to provide peace and happiness is not the regime's fault but a permanent condition in Naples and in Italy. In this way, the regime is associated with any other government that preceded it, reiterating the idea that any opposition would be fruitless.

Ricciardi's attitude is even more problematic because he exploits Fascism in order to get what he wants. While interrogating a reticent witness, sexton Nanni, he threatens: "'Di questi tempi, non serve una condanna: basta spargere una voce. […] E trovi pure una bella squadra di quelli con gli stivaloni, che ti ammazza di botte per ripulire le strade'"; "'These days, we don't need a guilty verdict: it's enough to spread a rumor. And you'd find yourself face-to-face with a nice squad of jackbooted enforcers, who'd beat you to death to help keep the streets safe.'"[158] In other words, Ricciardi is aware that the Blackshirts are in fact dangerous and uses it to scare his witness.

Ricciardi's aspirations are far from being inspirational: he wants to have a normal life. He wants a wife and children. His bitterness goes toward whoever may have this opportunity and wastes it. This is the case with a political activist killed by a group of Blackshirts. When Ricciardi sees his ghost, he comments:

> Si disse: avresti potuto vivere una vita normale, avere una moglie, dei figli. Avresti potuto mangiare e bere, ridere e scherzare. Avresti potuto sedere su un divano, di sera, a sussurrare parole dolci a una ragazza. E invece eccoti qui, ammazzato a botte per toglierti lo sfizio di provocare chissà quale imbecille con un manganello. Il solito maledetto spreco.

> He thought to himself: you could have lived a normal life, had a wife and children. You could have eaten and drank, laughed and played. You could have sat on a sofa, at night, whispering sweet words to a girl. And instead, you got yourself beaten to death in exchange for the satisfaction of talking smart to some idiot with a billy club. The usual damned waste.[159]

Here, anti-Fascist stances are seen as a "satisfaction of talking smart" as a man should instead see "a normal life" as a privilege, something that is denied to the police inspector. As we will see the reference to a serene family life as the main ambition for a human being (and especially women) is widespread in the series, giving a troubling reactionary tone to the novels. When in the same adventure, Ricciardi and Livia are attacked by a group of *squadristi*, the police inspector is—unsurprisingly—able to get rid of them very easily. His comment: "Gli dispiaceva per Livia, che si era trovata in mezzo a una situazione che non era frequente"; "he was sorry for Lidia, who had found herself in the middle of a highly unusual situation"[160] downplays Blackshirt violence during the dictatorship. Not only does he trivialize the accident, but he is also afraid that fearing for her safety, Livia may decide not to see him anymore. Livia herself is not able to see the consequences of this event. Instead of questioning her life and her (Fascist) circle of friends, Livia is only interested in her love affair with Ricciardi. At the end of the novel, Ricciardi realizes that he needs "un atto di volontà"; "initiative."[161] However, instead of fighting the influence of Fascism in Italian institutions, as a frustrated reader may hope, he resolves to write a letter to Enrica, asking for permission to greet her in the street.

As mentioned, Livia also is a champion of opportunism: "Livia non si sentiva fascista, e nemmeno antifascista. La politica, come aveva detto anche in quell'occasione, non la interessava; ogni volta che durante le feste o a teatro i suoi accompagnatori si mettevano a discuterne, si astraeva e pensava ad altro"; "Livia didn't think of herself as a Fascist, or for that matter as an anti-Fascist. Politics, as she had said on that occasion too, was of no interest to her; anytime she was at a party or at the theater and her companions started arguing about politics, she lost interest and thought about other things."[162]

The only openly anti-Fascist character is Doctor Bruno Modo. However, as we are going to see, the description of this character is also problematic. In *La condanna del sangue*, Modo is described as following:

> Osservava la sua epoca tenendosi a distanza, insofferente verso il nuovo potere incline alla violenza. Non ammetteva che si potesse fare del male in

> nome del bene: lo diceva chiaramente, e questo lo aveva isolato privandolo di una vita sociale e della carriera che avrebbe meritato.
>
> He watched the fascist era unfold from a distance, unwilling to tolerate a new power with such violent inclinations. He was unable to accept the idea of doing evil in the name of a greater good, and made no bones about making his opinions known. This had isolated him, depriving him of a social life and of the career that he would have otherwise deserved.[163]

However, in spite of an end to his career, throughout the series Modo is far from being a suffering character: he keeps his job and happily enjoys life by drinking, eating, and visiting Naples brothels. More interestingly, his attitude in voicing his dissent against the regime is stigmatized in all the novels. For example, in *Il posto di ognuno*, the narrator comments that Modo "purtroppo, non aveva peli sulla lingua"; "he had no difficulty voicing his opinions."[164] Interestingly, "purtroppo" that is "unfortunately" is missing in the English translation. Whenever the doctor attacks the regime, Inspector Ricciardi reproaches him:

> "Pietà, Bruno. Ti prego, non stamattina, con la politica. Non ce la faccio. Ho passato il turno di notte a compilare verbali e ce l'ho più di te con l'apparato e la burocrazia; ma credo che tu, con questa fissazione di Mussolini e dei fascisti, prima o poi ti metterai nei guai seri."
>
> "Have mercy, Bruno. I beg you, no politics this morning. I can't take it. I spent most of my night shift filling out reports and I'm even more disgusted with our political system and bureaucracy than you are; but I think that, with this fixation you have on Mussolini and the Fascists, you're going to get yourself into trouble sooner or later, and very serious trouble, too."[165]

Again, Modo's stance is downplayed. Ricciardi believes that he has more right to complain because he has spent most of the night signing off documents. Even worse, the doctor's anti-Fascism is equated to a psychotic fixation. To be true, Modo's political opposition is only expressed verbally. In other words, he never acts. Ricciardi can therefore say:

> "Io ti capisco, e forse, dico forse, se mi interessasse qualcosa di tutto questo, sarei d'accordo con te. Ma, e me ne devi dare atto, mi sembra ingenuo e sciocco andare incontro ai guai, e guai grossi, solo per lo sfizio di parlare a voce alta. Pensa a quanta gente ha bisogno di te, del tuo mestiere, delle tue mani."

> "All kidding aside, Bruno. I understand where you're coming from, and maybe, I'm saying just maybe, I'd even be inclined to agree with you. Still, and this is a point you have to concede, I think it's naïve and foolish to open yourself up to a world of trouble, serious trouble, just for the fun of hearing yourself talk. Think of all the people who rely on you, on your work, on your hands."[166]

In this passage, Ricciardi reiterates his *qualunquismo* ("se mi interessasse" that is "If I cared"), a phrase curiously absent in the English translation of the novel. He describes Modo's behavior as "naïve" and "foolish" and also makes an appeal to the doctor's common sense when he reminds him of how many people need him as a doctor. This line of thought seems to endorse the idea that it is enough to do one's job to feel at ease with one's conscience, a stance put under scrutiny in previous crime series.

Equally interestingly, Modo's authority is undermined by his behavior with women. When he meets Livia in a café, he sings for her and "arrossì come uno scolaretto"; "blushed like a schoolboy."[167] When Livia hastens to justify her collusion with the regime, he is equally ready to support her: "'Io parlo troppo e non nascondo le mie idee, è vero. Ma certamente ognuno può avere gli amici che vuole'"; "'I may talk too much and make no secret of my opinions, that's true. But of course everyone should be free to have the friends they choose.'"[168] In other words, his alleged anti-Fascism crumbles in front of Livia's beautiful eyes, making Modo a disempowered character.

If Doctor Modo is a ridiculous anti-Fascist, De Giovanni's representation of Fascist characters is equally questionable. There are two kinds of Fascists in De Giovanni's series: the comic and the grotesque Fascist or the "humanized" Fascist. As we will see, both of them are devoid of any real danger, making Ricciardi's life and work very easy. The quintessential comic character is deputy commissioner Garzo, Ricciardi's immediate boss. Childish in his aspirations, Garzo is not clever enough to hide his agenda:

> "Se dovessimo trovare il colpevole con la solita rapidità e con completezza, come sapete fare voi, insomma, questo mi…ci porterebbe direttamente all'attenzione delle massime cariche dello Stato, Ricciardi. Lo capite questo?"
>
> "If we were to find the perpetrator with our usual speed and thoroughness, as you so often do, well, this would bring me…would bring us directly to the attention of the highest offices in the nation, Ricciardi. Do you understand that?"[169]

His ambition and pompousness are similar to the characteristics of police commissioners depicted in other crime stories set during Fascism. What makes him different is that he is curiously submissive to Ricciardi. The reason for this behavior given in the series is hardly convincing:

> Non erano tempi, quelli, in cui si poteva facilmente fare a meno di un uomo con grandi capacità. Sempre più spesso Roma interferiva con l'autonomia della questura, e si doveva rendere conto dell'efficacia delle indagini con un colpevole da dare in pasto alla stampa. Il regime esigeva che l'immagine della vita fascista nelle grandi città trasmettesse sicurezza e ottimismo: Ricciardi, con le sue rapidissime, irrituali soluzioni, era perfetto.
>
> These weren't years in which one could easily afford to dispense with the services of such a talented individual. Increasingly, Rome had been interfering with the independence of police headquarters, and the police were expected to provide evidence of their successful investigations by tossing a guilty party to the press. The regime demanded that the image portrayed of Fascist life in the big cities convey safety and high hopes. Ricciardi, with his rapid and unorthodox way of cracking cases, was perfect.[170]

Ricciardi's intellectual superiority and ability as a sleuth becomes a sort of license to do and act as he wants. A typical maverick of the crime fiction tradition, he is problematically described as untouchable. Moreover, Garzo fears him:

> E poi quegli occhi: quegli inquietanti occhi verdi, trasparenti come il vetro, con le palpebre che non sbattevano mai; quegli occhi che ti sfidavano senza sfidarti, che ti mettevano di fronte alla parte peggiore di te stesso, quella che non volevi conoscere, quella che non sapevi di avere. Garzo rabbbrividì.
>
> And then, those eyes of his; those unsettling green eyes, clear as glass, that never blinked; those eyes that challenged you without challenging you directly, that put you face-to-face with the worst part of yourself, the part you'd rather not know about, the part you didn't know was there. Garzo shuddered.[171]

Ricciardi's supernatural powers allow him to tame Garzo who is always ridiculously servile toward him.

Ricciardi has an easy life with other representatives of the Fascist Party. In *Per mano mia*, Ricciardi and Maione meet the head of the port militia, Consul Freda di Scanziano. He is described as a curious and clever man:

"gli occhi, che sotto il fez con al centro il fascio, l'ancora e la corona, esprimevano curiosità e intelligenza"; "his eyes, looking out from under the fez emblazoned with the Fascist lictor's staff, anchor and crown, [...] expressed an unmistakable curiosity and intelligence."[172] The Consul explains that as an officer of the Navy he has been asked to manage this corps and that he feels trapped in this position and would like to go back to sea. This confidence stirs up feelings of sympathy in Maione and Ricciardi. The Consul politely asks if Ricciardi can update him about the investigation that could cause embarrassment to the militia. Ricciardi, who is always ready to oppose his own boss' interferences, obliges: "Ricciardi volle essere più conciliante; aveva apprezzato l'approccio del console, che aveva condiviso con loro la propria difficile posizione"; "Ricciardi decided to be conciliatory. He'd appreciated the consul's approach, the way he'd shared with them the difficulty in which he found himself."[173] In return, he asks for *carte blanche*, and this is immediately granted by a benevolent Freda. During the investigation, Ricciardi finds out that a disgraced militiaman, Lomunno, may have killed militiaman Garofalo and his wife. However, another suspect could instead be Aristide Boccia, a fisherman who paid kickbacks to the victim. Ricciardi is afraid that the unveiling of Garofalo's illicit behavior could be embarrassing for the militia and that Freda might ask him to accuse Lomunno of the murder instead. His worries are dispelled when the Consul tells him: "'ve lo chiedo da uomo e da padre: fate in modo che Lomunno sia accusato solo se davvero siete persuaso che non può che essere stato lui'"; "'I ask you as a man and as a father: make sure that Lomunno is brought up on charges only if you're absolutely sure that it couldn't have been anyone other than him.'"[174] The reference to his manhood and fatherhood make the Consul very human. This gives Ricciardi a smooth path to conduct his investigation without interference.

Il posto di ognuno starts as a promising story because one of the suspects of the murder of beautiful Duchess Adriana Musso di Camparino is her stepson Ettore Musso di Camparino, who is a Fascist fanatic. However, at the end of the novel, the murderer is revealed to be a servant, Giuseppe Sciarra, who has been caught stealing food from the pantry. Ettore is only incidentally involved in the investigation. In order to check Ettore's alibi, Ricciardi goes to the headquarters of the Fascist Party in Naples. Once there, he meets Achille Pivani, a secret service officer who will also appear in *Vipera*. Pivani is described as a man with a "voce pacata"; "a calm voice" who "sorrise affabile"; "smiled, affably."[175] When Ricciardi

accuses members of a Fascist action squad of killing an anti-Fascist activist, Pivani answers: "'Provvederò, commissario. Non è per spargere sangue, che sono qui'"; "'I'm not here to shed blood,'" a peculiar statement from a person belonging to an organization guilty of ruthless actions against dissidents.[176] When Pivani says that he could hurt Ricciardi if he wanted, the police inspector promptly answers: "'non mi sembrate il tipo'"; "'you hardly strike me as the type.'"[177] At this point of the conversation, it is clear that OVRA officer Pivani is a clever, honest, and levelheaded man and another prototype of the "good Fascist." Subsequently, as it will also happen in *Per mano mia*, the good and honest Fascist also shows his true colors. He confesses that he is homosexual, he is Ettore's lover, and that the night of the crime the suspect was with him:

> "Per rispondere alla vostra domanda, dunque, vi dico che Ettore Musso di Camparino la notte tra il 22 e il 23 era qui da me. A fare l'amore con me. E poi a piangere, disperato, insieme a me. Chiedendoci che cosa sarà di noi, perché nel mondo che tutti e due stiamo contribuendo a creare, per quelli come noi non c'è posto. E non ci sarà mai."
>
> "To answer your question, I can tell you that Ettore Musso di Camparino, on the night between the 22nd and the 23rd, was here, with me. Making love with me. And then sobbing, despairing, along with me. Wondering what would become of the two of us, because in the world that the two of us were helping to create, there was no place for people like us. And there will never be."[178]

This declaration represents the apex of the humanization of the good Fascist Pivani. However, as shown in this very passage, Pivani seems not to perceive the flaws of his contradictory stance, as he is admittedly working for a dictatorship that fights homosexuality ("per quelli come noi non c'è posto"). In this sense, Pivani is the mirror image of Ricciardi: neither can see the contradictions of their life choices. Even more interestingly—and differently from Lucarelli's series—the narrator also does not highlight these contradictions. It is obvious that in *Il posto di ognuno* there is a problematic representation of a good—and very human—Fascist with whom readers may identify or sympathize and which waters down the official anti-Fascist stance of the series. Again, De Giovanni may not consciously sanitize Fascism, but his decision to portray an invincible detective who always solves his "whodunit" ends up giving a distorted representation of life under the dictatorship.

In this respect, *Vipera* is also highly problematic. In this story—where Ricciardi investigates the death of Vipera, a prostitute killed in a brothel—Doctor Modo is arrested and he is about to be sent into exile. However, Ricciardi manages to rescue him, thanks to the help of the two good Fascists: Pivani and Falco. Pivani is described once more as a calm and intelligent man. On this occasion, Ricciardi says: "'Spero di ottenere che qualcuno […] si assuma la responsabilità di rimettere un uomo speciale in condizione di svolgere il proprio lavoro'"; "'I'm hoping that someone […] will take responsibility for putting a very special man back to the place where he can do his work.'"[179] By pleading Modo's case, Ricciardi treats him as an exception. In other words, Ricciardi does not question the practice of the *confino* [internal exile] as immoral.[180] He only thinks that Modo deserves to be freed by virtue of his qualities. Pivani also thinks that Modo is a good man who simply "'è stato sfortunato'"; "'he was unlucky,'"[181] because he had the misadventure to have a fight with the son of a very powerful politician from Rome. In other words, bad Fascists exist in De Giovanni's novels, but they are unnamed "others" living far away. Most importantly, they do not live in Naples and that makes Ricciardi's life much easier. The anonymity and the distance of these people contrast with the closeness and humanity of Fascists who live in Ricciardi's world. Even more problematically, Pivani also contrasts the Fascist secret service with similar organizations in other countries:

> "al confronto con le paritetiche organizzazioni degli altri paesi noi siamo una specie di banda musicale. Ho visto accadere cose, altrove, che non riuscirei nemmeno a descrivervi, tale è l'orrore che, come sapete, mi ispira ogni forma di violenza gratuita."
>
> "compared with our counterpart organizations in other countries, we're nothing more than a music combo. I've seen things happen, elsewhere, that I wouldn't even know how to describe to you, so great is the horror that, as you know, all forms of wanton violence inspire in me."[182]

Again this passage reinforces the idea of *italiani brava gente* ("banda musicale") that Ricciardi supports with his silence. Pivani suggests that Ricciardi should ask Livia to talk to her contact in the Fascist secret services, Falco, who could help with freeing Modo. Evidently another good Fascist, Falco decides to oblige. At the end of the novel, Modo is rescued by this bizarre group of good Fascists (Pivani and Falco) and good *qualunquisti* (Ricciardi and Livia). Even the violin of a street musician,

broken by the Blackshirts during Vipera's funeral, is easily repaired and "suonava come prima"; "played just as well as it had before."[183] Indeed, in Ricciardi's Naples—where the police inspector only meets stupid and harmless Fascists or good and honorable *camerati* [comrades]—everything is easily adjusted and repaired.

This is possible because in De Giovanni's series, Ricciardi investigates bourgeois crimes. In *Il senso del dolore*, the culprit is a woman, Maddalena, whom the tenor Vezzi seduces and deserts; in *La condanna del sangue*, the murderer is an actor, Attilio Romor, the secret son of a fortune-teller, who beats his mother to death for money; in *Il giorno dei morti*, Carmen Fago poisons street kid Matteo because she does not want people to know that he is her illegitimate son; as mentioned, in *Il posto di ognuno*, the beautiful Duchess Musso di Camparino is killed by a servant; in *Per mano mia*, Veronica, a nun and sister of the female victim, slaughters militiaman Emanuele Garofalo and his wife Costanza out of jealousy; and Vipera is murdered by her fiancé's brother who fears losing an inheritance. If there are bourgeois motives at the roots of most crimes, state or Fascist crimes are occasional and sparse. Some people who have colluded with the regime may be involved in the investigations, but they are never the culprits. More importantly—and contrary to what happens in many crime stories set during this turbulent part of Italian history—the investigations never intertwine with broader investigations into the corruption and violence of the regime. De Giovanni seems more interested in writing crime stories in the classical Agatha Christie tradition, where the culprit is the least likely of all the characters to have committed the crime. In order to add intricacy to his plots, the author uses the device of alternating his characters' narratives. Sometimes he identifies them, but at other times ends up creating a series of red herrings and dead ends which make it difficult for the reader to discover the real culprit. However, in spite of making fun of foreign crime fiction where everything is explained at the end,[184] Ricciardi also successfully solves all his crimes. Even the many ghosts he meets in the streets of Naples are victims of bourgeois crimes: out of the dozens who hunt Ricciardi's life, only one is a victim of the Blackshirts.

This undervaluing of repression in Italy's everyday life is very interesting. Having Ricciardi as an anti-Fascist or a police inspector whose efforts to bring justice are hampered by an overarching dictatorship would have added a layer of complication in De Giovanni's novels the author simply did not want to have. His main interest is Ricciardi's private life. The Ricciardi series follows a common trend in recent crime fiction which has

registered a progressive shift "from investigation and case to protagonist and life."[185] This shift has allowed Walton and Jones to compare crime series to an autobiographical style of writing.[186] After satisfying crime readers with well-structured stories where the solution of the crime comes mostly as a surprise, De Giovanni proceeds to create continuous obstacles in Ricciardi's private life: the real unsolved case in De Giovanni's novels is who Ricciardi will choose between Livia and Enrica. This keeps the reader hooked to the series. This retreat into the private life of the characters marks a change—and perhaps an involution—in a genre in Italy historically characterized by social and political engagement.

In the last analysis, De Giovanni's series trivializes a crucial period of recent Italian history by using it as a mere background—described sometimes with nostalgic tones—to Ricciardi's adventures.

Andrea Camilleri's *La presa di Macallè*

Born in 1925, three years after the March on Rome, Sicilian writer Andrea Camilleri grew up during Fascism. The son of a low-level Fascist official, he nearly died in an Allied bombing raid in Porto Empedocle, his hometown, in 1943.[187] Growing up as a Fascist, in his biography he recalls his conflicting sense of liberation and occupation which made him cry at the arrival of the Allied troops in Sicily. Only many years later was he fully able to realize the extent to which Fascism, through its powerful propaganda machine, had been able to brainwash an entire nation. Camilleri returns to those traumatic years in some contemporary works, such as *Il cane di terracotta*, and the short story "Un diario del '43" [A Diary from 1943], and at various levels in some of his historical crime writing, namely *Il gioco della mosca* [The Game of the Fly], *La presa di Macallè* [The Macallè siege], *Privo di titolo* [Untitled], *La pensione Eva* [Hotel Eva], *Il casellante* [Signalman], *Il nipote del Negus* [The Negus's Grandson], and *Gran Circo Taddei e altre storie di Vigàta* [Circus Taddei and other Vigàta's stories].[188]

This section concentrates on *La presa di Macallè*—undoubtedly the most controversial of Camilleri's novels set during Fascism—as it deals in particular with the indoctrination of children during the dictatorship.[189] The representation of youth and its loss of innocence in this novel is particularly relevant and contrast with the glossy representation of childhood in De Giovanni's series.

The novel deals with the political, religious, and erotic education of a young boy at the time of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1935).

Six-year-old Michelino/Michilino Sterlini, the only son of the local Fascist secretary, is endowed with an enormous male member, a characteristic that makes him an unintentional bearer of Fascist machismo and the victim of adult abuse. Loyal to the regime and to the Catholic Church, Michilino embraces a blind obedience that ultimately brings him to violence and murder. The sensitive topic of child sexuality and exploitation, and the numerous sex scenes in the narration, has caused outcry and discomfort among many of Camilleri's fans, and some critics have accused Camilleri of pornography.[190] These negative reviews seem to have misunderstood the purpose behind this work, where the Sicilian author describes, through the rape of a boy, the rape of a nation by a dictatorship built around pretentious virility and the cult of Mussolini.[191] *La presa di Macallè* is set in a fictional Sicilian village, Vigàta, the setting for all Camilleri's novels. The story is based on Carlo Emilio Gadda's *Eros e Priapo.* (*Da furore a cenere*) [Eros and Priapus. From Frenzy to Ashes], a satiric pamphlet in which the Milanese writer comes to terms with his own experience of Fascism.[192] In his work, Gadda describes Fascism as a degradation of the positive principle of life and love, Eros, into Priapus, a violent and destructive force, "a true rape of culture and civilization."[193] Similarly, Camilleri's novel describes the physical and metaphorical rape of the protagonist and his forced sexualization by the macho culture imposed by the regime. Moreover, it is Michilino's strict adherence to the principles of Fascism and the dictates of a reactionary Catholic Church that leads him to violence. In other words, consistent with the regime's philosophy, Michilino ends up killing the son of a Communist and, in the last pages of the novel, even his own father and his mistress, before committing suicide. Thus, Michilino's destiny is symbolic of the deadly consequences of the fanatism of an entire generation that grew up during the *Ventennio.*

More than a traditional *giallo*, *La presa di Macallè* is a noir and a novel of counter-initiation that follows the misadventures of a young boy from innocence to evil. As Demontis points out, this novel evaluates all aspects of the Fascist regime from colonialism to autarchic economy to relationship and connivance with the Catholic Church.[194] Divided into eight parts, the novel follows a chronological order characterized by an irresistible crescendo that also shows the consequences of a totalitarian education. The narration adopts Michilino's point of view and makes the reader see the events through the darkened mind of the young criminal. Michilino makes clear who he stands for: "'Io amo Gesù, Mussolini, il papà e la mamma'" [I love Jesus, Mussolini, dad and mum].[195] In other

words, in Camilleri's novel, three entitities—God, fatherland, and family—conspire to devastate a young mind. The father Gherlando aka Giùgiù, a local representative of the Fascist regime, is a violent man who preaches hatred against anybody who is not committed to the regime and often takes the law into his own hands. He is also a hypocrite as he repeatedly cheats on his wife Ernestina, but he is ready to punish her when he finds out she has been unfaithful. Equally hypocrital is the local priest, Father Burruano, who preaches restraint and morality, but has numerous sexual relationships with women of his congregation, Michilino's mother included. He is also a racist who justifies the colonial wars by associating them with crusades against the infidels. At school, Fascist culture is in the curriculum:

> Il secunno jorno il maestro Panseca parlò di Benito Mussolini, contò che era nasciuto poviro, figlio di un fabbro firraro, che aviva fatto la granni guerra come caporali e che era stato firuto.
> Spiegò la storia del fascio e della marcia su Roma. Disse che a un omo come Benito Mussolini tutti i popoli della terra ce lo invidiavano e che assai presto quest'omo mannato dalla Pruvidenzia avrebbe fatto la guerra agli abissini, l'avrebbe vinciuta e l'Italia da regno che era, sarebbe addiventata impero.[196]
>
> [On the second day teacher Panseca talked about Benito Mussolini. He told us that he was born poor, being the son of a blacksmith, that he fought in the Great War as a corporal and that he was wounded. He explained the story of Fascism and the March on Rome. He said that the entire world envied us Benito Mussolini and that very soon that heaven-sent man would go to war against the Abyssinians, he would win and Italy would turn from a kingdom into an empire.]

This scene exemplifies the control that Fascism had over children's education. As Whittam explains, the regime made sure it raised "perfect fascists."[197] New Fascist textbooks became mandatory in the 1930s and "Fascist culture" became a compulsory topic. Later on in the novel, the army chaplain Baldovino Micciché repeats the Fascist propaganda to the class:

> "E sapete pirchì noi siamo andati a combattere in Abissinia?" ripigliò il parrino. "In primisi pirchì siamo, grazie a Benito Mussolini, una nazioni forti, armata, capace di conquistarsi un impero. E sapiti che ci faremo noi in questo impero? Ci faremo terra da travagliare per i nostri viddrani, officine

> per i nostri operai, cantieri per i nostri muratori. Ma soprattutto ci faremo conversione d'anime, tutti devono cridiri alla nostra santa matre chiesa!"[198]
>
> ["Do you know why we went to fight in Abyssinia?" continued the chaplain. "First of all, because thanks to Benito Mussolini we are a strong and armed nation, able to conquer an empire. And do you know what we are going to do with this empire? We will give land to our farmers, create workshops for our workers and building sites for our builders. However, above all, we will convert souls. Everybody must believe in our Holy Church!"]

Indeed, in Camilleri's novel, the Catholic Church is an arm of Fascist propaganda. As Whittam explains, the Vatican and Fascism had a similar approach toward the family, the role of women, and a form of corporativism "that would bring end to the class war."[199] The Vatican also actively supported the "fascist crusade against socialism"[200] as is shown elsewhere in the novel, when Michilino asks Father Burruano about Communism. This is the priest's answer: "'I comunisti, Michilì, quelli sono i veri nemici di Gesù che bisogna combattere e sconfiggere. È questo il primo impegno di un soldato di Gesù. Ricordatelo'" ["Communists, Michilì, these are the real enemies of Jesus. We need to fight and defeat them. This is the first duty of a soldier of Christ. Don't forget it!"].[201] Finally, Michilino's private tutor, Olimpio Gorgerino, passes his sexual abuse of the boy off as an expression of machismo and stoicism. In other words, at home, school, and church, Michilino is exposed to a culture of sham and abuse.

Indeed, Camilleri's Vigàta of the 1930s is a village completely *fascistizzato*. Not only children but also adults have succumbed to the propaganda. In order to highlight the cultural impact of Fascism, the author makes frequent references to murals, cartoons, wall calendars, songs, and political speeches on the radio of the time:

> Erano tempi che 'a mamà non cantava più le canzuna di Carlo Buti, ora cantava quello che ascutava alla radio, ma una in particolare era capace d'arripeterla dalla mattina alla sira, una canzuna che principiava accussì: "Faccetta nera/bell'abissina". A mamà fece catunio quanno trovò in una sacchetta della giacchetta do papà una cartolina indovi era reppresintata una fimmina nìvura con le minne tutte di fora. Macari nel giornaletto "Il Balilla", che 'u papà gli accattava 'nzemmula a "Topolino", "L'Avventuroso" e "L'Audace", comparivano questi tirribili e firoci bissini che avivano un re impiratori con la curuna 'n testa e i pedi scàvusi, senza scarpi, e questi pirchì era re sì, ma sempri un serbaggio che di nome faciva Alè Selassè.[202]

> [It has been a long time since Mum sang Carlo Buti's songs. She now sang what she was listening to on the radio. She used to sing one in particular the whole time. It was a song that started with: "Little black face, beautiful Abyssinian girl." Mum became angry when she found a postcard with a bare-breasted black woman in the pocket of my dad's jacket. In the magazine "Il Balilla," which my dad used to buy along with "Mickey Mouse," "L'Avventuroso" and "L'Audace," there were images of terrible and ferocious Abyssinians who had a crowned but bare-foot emperor. He was without shoes, because in spite of being king, he was still a savage. His name was Haile Selassie.]

The change in Ernestina's repertoire is indicative of the progressive invasion of Fascism not only in the political life of Italians but also in their leisure time. During the *Ventennio*, the regime established a strict economic and cultural autarchy. Every aspect of Italian life was controlled from education to information and entertainment. In this passage, the control is symbolized by Ernestina who does not sing Buti's songs,[203] such as the famous "Vivere" [Living], anymore, but "Faccetta nera" [Little Black Face], a popular marching song of the Fascist regime.[204] From the extract, it is also clear that Michilino—like all the youth in Italy—was exposed to publications such as "Il Balilla" [The Balilla] and "L'Avventuroso" [The Adventurous], which objectified Abyssinian women and represented Abyssinians as a backward population. They would also read "L'Audace" [Bold] where popular comic characters were Italianized to please the Fascist censorship.[205] Not only was the cinema controlled through a series of new laws passed between 1931 and 1933, but, in order to fight against the predominance of Hollywood, Mussolini created Cinecittà studios in 1937. At the movies, there is no respite for Michilino and Vigàta villagers who are exposed to Fascist propaganda:

> Prima della pillicula, fecero il Cinegiornali Luce nel quale si vidiva la guerra in Bissinia, i nostri sordati che salutavano gli areoplani Caproni che ci vulavano sopra a protezioni e si vidivano macari i bissini che scappavano e un centinaio di bissini pigliati prigionieri.[206]
>
> [Before the movie, the Cinegiornale Luce was screened. We saw the Abyssinian war, our soldiers who greeted the Caproni airplanes that were flying over for their protection. We could also see the Abyssinians who were running away and one hundred of them taken prisoners.]

Even a private celebration such as Ernestina's birthday is imbued with rhetoric and instead of toasting Michilino's mother they all celebrate the regime:

> "Viva la Bissinia taliana!".
> E un altro gli fece secuito:
> "Viva il Duce!"
> "Ebbiva!" sclamarono tutti in coro.[207]
>
> ["Long live Italian Abyssinia!"
> Another one followed:
> "Long live il Duce!"
> "Long Live" they all exclaimed together]

Setting this story in the autarchic years and during the colonial campaign is a deliberate choice on Camilleri's part as it gives him the opportunity to reflect upon the Fascist focus on childhood. The regime wanted to raise soldiers and mothers to feed Mussolini's imperialistic dream. Moreover, according to Gibelli, the communications techniques used by the regime with children were also a testing ground for the indoctrination of an entire population.[208] The institution of the *Sabato fascista* [Fascist Saturday] aimed to form the "perfect Fascist." In the 1930s, five million children were enrolled in the *Opera nazionale Balilla*, a youth organization which functioned as an addition to school education between 1926 and 1937. The organization went beyond its purpose as a cultural institution, and served as a paramilitary group, as well as providing education in career choice, in technology, or related to the home and family (solely for the girls). In particular, male children wore a uniform adapted from that of the Blackshirts.[209] During military exercises, they were armed with a scaled-down version of the Royal Italian Army service rifle, *moschetto Balilla*. The colonial wars were a dominant topic in the indoctrination of the youth. This is represented in *La presa di Macallè* where young Balillas, including Michilino, enthusiastically engage in a re-enactment of the famous siege that gives the title to the novel:[210]

> In mezzo al campo sportivo era stato costruito in ligno una specie di castello che parse a Michilino priciso 'ntifico a uno di quei fortini che aviva visto addisignati in un giornaletto e che servivano nel Farvest ai soldati del ginirali Custer per arripararsi dagli attacchi dei pellirussa Sioux.[211]
>
> [In the middle of the sports ground a wooden castle had been built. To Michilino it looked identical to one of those forts that he had seen in a children's magazine where in the Far West General Custer's soldiers used to take shelter from Sioux attacks.]

In Michilino's mind, the fake Abyssinian fort becomes an American fort assaulted by Native Americans. Africa and the Wild West are part of an

indistinguishable fascination for the foreign and the exotic that he sees through the eyes of the perfect Balilla as a clash between savages and civilization. Interestingly, Camilleri's description of this event is based on the author's life: young Andrea also took part, at the age of ten, in Porto Empedocle's re-enactment of the historical episode. The following pages of the novel give ample details of the battles between the Italians, played by Michilino and a group of friends, and the "bissini" (Abyssinian), acted by another group of young boys, among whom is Alfio, the son of the local Communist tailor Totò Maraventano. The re-enactment terminates with the victory of the Italians:

> Arrivarono altri balilla di rinforzo, i dù bissini s'arresero, il balilla Spampinato Benito acchianò supra la torretta, ci chiantò la bannera driccolore. La banna attaccò "Salve o popolo d'eroi" e la rappresentazioni finì in un subisso di battimani.[212]
>
> [Other Balillas arrived as reinforcement. The last two Abyssinians surrendered. Balilla Spampinato Benito climbed the tower, and raised the Italian flag. The band played "Hail, people of heroes" and the re-enactment finished with a thunderous applause.]

This representation of the *sabato fascista* contrasts with the sanitized version given in De Giovanni's novels, where young people practice sport under the vigilant care of "lovely young ladies" or gleefully run to the main square dressed in impeccable black uniforms. Interestingly in *La presa di Macallè*, the re-enactment of an act of violence perpetrated against marginalized people is the trigger for another act of violence perpetrated this time against a single person. During the event, the Italian played by Michilino is overpowered by Alfio, who plays an Abyssinian. The shame is almost too much to bear, and Michilino wants to kill his "enemy." Yet first of all, the act needs to be endorsed by the Fascist doctrine. He decides to ask his father if killing a Communist is a deadly sin:

> "Ma ammazzare un omo non è piccato?" spiò.
> "C'è omo e omo, Michilì. Un comunista non è un omo, ma un armàlo e pirciò se s'ammazza non si fa piccato."
> Dopo tanticchia, Michilino spiò nuovamenti:
> "Papà, un figliu di un comunista è macari lui comunista?"
> "[…] Al centu pi centu, un figliu di comunista addiventa comunista come a sò patre. Non si sgarra. […] L'erba mala è megliuo estirparla prima che tutto

> il terrenu addiventi sulamenti un campo d'erba mala che non ci fa criscìri l'erba bona. È ragiunato?"
> "È ragiunato" disse Michelino.
> Aveva avuto via libira.[213]
>
> ["Isn't killing a man a sin?" asked Michilino.
> "There is man and man, Michilì. A Communisti isn't a man. He is an animal, so if you kill him, you don't commit a sin".
> After a while, Michilino asked again:
> "Is the son of a Communist, a Communist himself?"
> "(…) 100% yes, the son of a Communist becomes a Communist like his father. You can't get it wrong. (…) It's better to eradicate a weed before the field becomes full of weeds and you can't grow anything. Do you understand?"
> "I understand" Michilino said.
> He had just been given the go-ahead.]

Being a conscientious Fascist, Michilino needs a "go-ahead" that his father promptly gives. Subsequently, he is reinforced in his resolution by Father Burruano who tells him that Communists are enemies of the Church. In Michilino's mind, one does not need to reason but only to obey the Catholic and Fascist commandments, which clearly endorse the suppression of the enemy:

> Devi farlo, si disse, altrimenti non sei digno d'esseri un soldato di Cristo e di Mussolini. Forsi una soluzioni c'era. Con gli occhi serrati per non farisi disturbari manco dai rumori della pioggia che ora si era fatta più forti, recitò un patrennostro, un credo e un'avimmaria. Doppo disse ad alta voci il punto 8 del decalogo del balilla: "Mussolini ha sempre ragione!"[214]
>
> [You need to do it; otherwise you're not worthy of being a soldier of Christ and Mussolini. Maybe there was a solution. With his eyes closed in order not to be disturbed by the noise of the rain that had become stronger, he recited the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and said a Hail Mary. After that, he proclaimed aloud point 8 of the Balilla Manual: "Mussolini is always right."]

From here Michilino's escalation into violence becomes unstoppable: first because the investigation into Alfio's death ends with the convenient arrest of Alfio's father who is later executed (therefore, Michilino is granted immunity from his acts, and in his mind, this reinforces the idea that he was right); second, because he discovers the falsehood of the people around him and feels betrayed by the people he loves. In a

long sequence of painful discoveries, he finds out that the so-called commemorations of Italian victories with his tutor are in fact pederastic practices; he also finds out that his mother had an affair with Father Burruano; the local priest breaks his seal of confession by telling Michilino's parents about his murder; and finally, Michilino's father has an affair with a young relative Marietta, with whom the boy had started an emotional and physical relationship. Armed with his false political, religious, and moral beliefs, the protagonist of the novel becomes a lethal weapon who ends up murdering his father and his young lover, before committing suicide. As Novelli rightly points out, while the adults in the novel do not put into practice what they preach, Michilino reads Fascism and a misinterpreted Catholicism literally.[215] Being both an investigator and a criminal, he punishes whoever does not follow the rules. The only character in the novel to keep a paradoxical coherence, he is transformed into a fanatical murderer.

Among the criticisms of triviality and pornography, a few voices have acknowledged the value of *La presa di Macallè*. Defining the novel a masterwork, the Wu Ming collective of authors argues that the real power of the book lies in the denunciation of the political and social practices of the Church and the State, widening the novel's scope from a criticism of Fascism to a critique of these two institutions per se.[216] While the collective of authors may have a point, it is also clear that Camilleri was particularly interested in exposing the flaws of the Fascist regime. More recently, referring to Camilleri's comments on the controversial statements about the superiority of the western civilization that Berlusconi made in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attack,[217] Eckert argues that "[b]y drawing parallels between fascist propaganda and recent attempts of what the author perceives as political and cultural indoctrination by the media, Camilleri warns his reader of the possible consequences of blind faith in (political and religious) leaders as well as unquestioning acceptance of public opinion."[218] In the Montalbano series, Camilleri has showed a concern for what he perceives as a systematic brainwashing through the private television channels owned by Berlusconi. In 2010, this concern made him state in front of an audience of students that "Under Fascism, I was freer than you are now."[219] This provocative statement generated reactions, especially from the conservative press. For example, *Il Giornale*, a newspaper belonging to Berlusconi's brother Paolo, described it as a "ridiculous remark in its bloody-minded obsessive-compulsive anti-berlusconism."[220] Controversy aside, it seems obvious that not only does Camilleri return to a traumatic period of his youth, investigating the way an entire generation

was manipulated by Fascist propaganda, but in the typical pattern of the historical novel, he also comments upon contemporary events, such as the state of the media in recent Italy, in a similar way to Macchiavelli and Guccini in *Questo sangue che impasta la terra*. In so doing, he reinforces the role of political watchdog for historical crime fiction in Italy.

Fascism, WWII, and the Resistance in Film and TV Series: *Girolimoni*, *Un maledetto imbroglio*, Inspector De Luca TV Series and Inspector Nardone TV Series

Like Sciascia's *Porte aperte*, Damiano Damiani's *Girolimoni/The Assassin of Rome* (1972) is an antecedent for the Fascist "season" in film and TV series of the 1990s. *Girolimoni* is a fictionalized version of the real case of Gino Girolimoni, a photographer wrongly accused of raping and killing seven young girls (aged between one and six) in Rome between 1924 and 1928. For tackling a real story, this film falls into the category of true crime and mixes suspense and political satire as it details the efforts of Mussolini's Italy to deal with the public outcry over the child sex murders.[221] The film shows how, in the first years of his leadership, Il Duce needed to find someone to serve as a plausible culprit in order to restore public order in a Rome shaken by riots and improvised manhunts. It also describes how a subservient police fabricated false evidence against a very convenient culprit, Girolimoni (Nino Manfredi). When the photographer was released after only a year in prison for lack of evidence, newspapers of the time did not acknowledge his innocence. Therefore, he returned without having his name officially exonerated and was an outcast in society: his name became a byword for sex crimes against children.

Damiani's film is a merciless analysis of abuse of power and popular hysteria that turns into mob justice. It highlights the personal and collective responsibilities in crushing an individual for personal gain. For example, it shows how the Fascist State was responsible for arranging a convenient culprit in order to save its "law and order" reputation. Particularly interesting are some scenes that feature Mussolini, at the time Prime Minister and Minister of the Police. In a chilling sequence, Il Duce explains why a culprit for the murders must be found at any cost: "'Un attentatore accresce la gloria del fascismo, un criminale simile in libertà ne diminuisce il prestigio'" ["A murder attempt against me increases

the glory of Fascism; such a criminal at large reduces its prestige"]. He continues by saying: "'Sapete cosa chiede questa gente? La fantomatica libertà? No. Vogliono un capo ed essere protetti'" ["Do you know what people want? Do they look for an elusive freedom? No. They want a leader and to be protected"]. By demanding a culprit be found as soon as possible, Mussolini also wants to exploit the situation and reintroduce the death penalty. Even chillier is the scene when Il Duce orders the news blackout over the Girolimoni case, in order to cover the police's mistake: "'Il Girolimoni deve cessare di essere un uomo-notizia'" ["Girolimoni must cease to be a man-in-the-news"]. Mussolini explains that this "'significa che da questo momento la stampa deve ignorare Girolimoni e tutto quello che si riferisce al mostro. Se qualche altra bambina viene uccisa, basterà non parlarne'" ["That means that, from now on, the press needs to ignore Girolimoni and anything connected with the monster. If some other girls are murdered, it will not be written about"]. If the regime refuses to take reponsibility for its mistakes and in so doing decrees Girolimoni to a social death, many individuals are also responsible for the photographer's fate. Many took advantage of the situation: from the culprit's mother, ready to accuse anyone in order to deviate suspicions from her degenerate son; to the various adult "witnesses" eager to "recognize" Girolimoni in order to get a monetary reward; to young children in search for attention; to detectives and journalists who wanted to ingratiate themselves with Mussolini and get a promotion. Greed and opportunism mark Girolimoni's descent into poverty and despair in a story which is also a parable for the fascination and evils of the search for fame at any cost. As Girolimoni notices regarding the victims' families that are flattered by the media attention: "'La notorietà è un grande conforto al dolore'" ["Notoriety is a great comfort for grief"]. If many participate in the investigation in order to have their picture in the newspaper, initially Girolimoni only wants to be forgotten and bitterly asks: "'Come si fa a uscire dalla storia?'" ["How can you be forgotten by history?"] However, in a powerful final scene set in the Italy of the 1970s, an old and homeless Girolimoni runs into a demonstration. A group of protesters ask for the re-introduction of the death penalty following a case of child murder. While this scene reminds the audience of the danger of mob justice, it also becomes an incisive critique of the cult of fame: Girolimoni is upset, but not because he can see a case of history repeating. He is desperate because nobody—either passersby or journalists—recognize him anymore. The film ends with a distressed Girolimoni addressing the crowd: "'Sono stato

famoso. Ero il mostro di Roma, capite?'" ["I was famous. I was the monster of Rome, do you understand?"]. Together with dictatorship and mob justice, Damiani's movie becomes a merciless analysis of the perversions of fame, a topic still central today when reality shows dominate the entertainment industry.

After *Girolimoni* it was not until the 1990s that other crime films were set during Fascism. Apart from Amelio's transposition of Sciascia's *Porte aperte* in 1990, *Il sangue dei vinti* (*Blood of the Defeated*, 2008) is the only crime fiction movie of this period. Equally interestingly *Il sangue dei vinti* is also a perfect showcase of revisionism performed by state television. Furthermore, because of its appeal to a more general audience and its almost symbiotic relationship with political parties (both of the right and of the left), broadcast television has offered unconvincing representations of important topics related to Fascism, in TV series. This is the case not only with the television adaptation of Lucarelli's trilogy featuring Inspector De Luca, but also with the *Commissario* Nardone TV series, an example of a cursory representation of important issues related to Fascism and the persecution of Jews in Italy. Finally taking a step back in time, we will look at Pietro Germi's *Un maledetto imbroglio* (1959). By shifting the time setting of Gadda's *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana* from Fascist Rome to 1950s Italy, *Un maledetto imbroglio* illustrates the very function of historical crime narrative of commenting on current issues of Italian society. In other words, by pointing to the flaws of Italian society of the late 1950s through a story originally set during Fascism, Germi's film reveals the subversive potential of historical narratives.

During the "revisionist" period, after the controversial screening of a series entitled "Combat Film" which featured footage taken by American soldiers in Italy in the final weeks of the war,[222] state-owned RAI produced and distributed three historical films: *Porzûs* never broadcast and only released for the home video market in 2010; *Il cuore nel pozzo* [A Heart in the Well], commissioned to celebrate the first memorial day for Italian victims in Yugoslavia and presented to the public by *Alleanza nazionale*'s telecommunications minister Maurizio Gasparri;[223] and *Il sangue dei vinti* which commanded an audience of over five million television viewers.[224] Moreover, RAI produced a two-part miniseries *Perlasca*: *un eroe italiano* [Perlasca: an Italian Hero] (Alberto Negrin, 2001), the story of a veteran of Ethiopia and Spain and official of the Fascist state, but also a rescuer of Jews, which makes him the perfect representation of the *fascista buono*.[225] The 1990s also saw the screening in movie theaters of Guido Chiesa's

Il caso Martello [The Martello case] (1991), Massimo Guglielmi's *Gangsters* (1992), Daniele Luchetti's *I piccoli maestri* [Little Teachers] (1998), and Guido Chiesa's *Il partigiano Johnny/Johnny, the Partisan* (2000).[226] These four films give a post-revisionist and sympathetic representation of the Resistance, unlike *Il sangue dei vinti* which embraces a complete revisionist view.

Il sangue dei vinti is an adaptation of the controversial volume of the same name written by journalist Giampaolo Pansa. The book, a popular non-fiction bestseller, is a history of the massacres committed by partisans in northern Italy after 25 April 1945. This volume generated a heated debate: praised by revisionists, it was challenged by left-wing historians.[227] Among other comments, Corni argues that this book provides a "decontextualization of the violence undoubtedly committed by the Partisans, some of whom were also Communists, where activities were attributed to the Communists' nefarious political design to sweep aside any potential obstacles to their assumption of power."[228] Moreover, in his book Pansa "does not pay sufficient regard to the trail of violence that had bloodied the country in the two preceding years" and does not acknowledge the fact that "the same phenomen took place on a much larger scale in a democratic and modern country such as post-war France."[229] If hostility to Pansa's work allowed him to claim that "the left had tried to (and was still trying to) suppress knowledge about the *resa dei conti*,"[230] researchers—often from the network of Resistance history institutes—had been studying this phenomenon for a long time.[231]

The film is a mix of melodrama and murder mystery and concentrates on a policeman, Francesco Dogliani (Michele Placido), obsessed with solving the murder of a prostitute, Costantina aka Tina la Tosca, in Rome, while his family is torn apart by the civil war. In particular, his sister Lucia (Alina Nedelea) joins the *repubblichini* [Italians who fought for the Republic of Salò] after her husband is killed in an Allied raid while on their way to Rome on their honeymoon. His brother Ettore (Alessandro Preziosi) leaves the paternal home in Piedmont to fight with the Communist partisan brigades. The movie director stated that he wanted to shoot his film in the style of the "Combat Film." He added that he did not want to re-write history, but rather shed lights on the respect due to all people who died during the war.[232] In discussing his inspiration, during interviews and at the end of the film itself, Soavi quoted Sophocles's *Antigone*. As we will see, by referring to the Greek tragedy where Antigone asks for the burial of her brother defeated in battle, Soavi in fact decontextualized history and appealed to the audience's emotions.

Dogliani (a Pansa figure recast as a detective) is a policeman committed to the state and uninterested in politics. He is obsessed with his investigation like the typical sleuth of crime fiction set during Fascism and WWII. The inquiry starts on 19 July 1943 during the famous Allied attack on Rome that catches Francesco while searching Costantina's apartment. The investigation is interrupted by the bombing that destroys the prostitute's apartment and with it all the main evidence. As one can see, this story has a striking resemblance to Augias's *Quella mattina di luglio*, analyzed at the beginning of this chapter, which also starts on 19 July 1943. Like Augias's Flaminio Prati, Dogliani also rescues a piece of evidence from the devastation, in this case a half-burned picture that links Costantina to her twin sister, the actress Anna Spada. Like Prati, he suspects the dead woman's boyfriend. More importantly, like Prati, Francesco Dogliani comes to the conclusion that the young woman's death is significant even on the day when Rome is mourning thousands of nameless victims. He promises the victim's daughter, little Elisa, that he will find the culprit, a device that is used to justify Francesco's stubbornness in pursuing justice amid anarchy. The viewer knows that the protagonist of the story is not a fanatic Fascist as he wears civilian clothes and he is reproached by his superiors for this. He also avoids commenting when his subordinate Petrucci rejoices at the news of Mussolini's liberation. However, unlike Augias's Prati, he never questions his role as a policeman in a dictatorship and, like Lucarelli's De Luca, is initially only driven by curiosity: "'Brutta bestia, la curiosità, non ti fa dormire'" ["Curiosity is an ugly thing. You can't sleep"].

His curiosity only increases when he discovers that Nardi, a Fascist officer and lover of the victim's sister, has stolen Costantina's dossier. Again, like Prati, Francesco is convinced the elite want to bury the investigation. After arresting Costantina's boyfriend, Nello Foresi, Francesco is sure that he is not the culprit. His investigation is however stalled when he is imprisoned for refusing to collaborate with the Nazis in an occupied Rome. Once out of prison in 1945, he goes to his parents' home in Saluzzo (Piedmont). Here he realizes the extent to which his family has been torn apart by the war. His sister joins the *repubblichini* for revenge and a misplaced sense of honor: "'Sto con la patria, quella che papà ha difeso lasciando le gambe sul Carso'" ["I'm with our homeland that our father defended on the Carso losing his legs"]. His brother is already fighting for the Resistance. Notwithstanding his brother's insistence and his own feelings—"'Condivido molte delle vostre idee. Per gli altri non ho mai avuto simpatia'" [I agree with many of your ideas. I was never sympathetic

with the others]—Francesco refuses to join the Resistance. In spite of his father's prayers, he does not try to convince Lucia to change her mind. Instead, he keeps pursuing whoever is responsible for Costantina's death. His search for the solution of the mystery makes him travel extensively and witness horror and violence. In spite of Soavi's proclaimed equidistance, the film shows many scenes of (often unnecessary) violence perpetrated by the partisans and only a couple of scenes where the *repubblichini* and the Germans are the protagonists of raids and reprisals. In her review of the movie, Falcone states that Soavi delivers a "discoloured history."[233] It may rather be argued that the movie director waters the black and reinforces the red with a bright tint of blood. For example, while in Rovegno in an area controlled by the partisans, Francesco attends the execution of his colleague Petrucci and a group of Blackshirts. He also meets Foresi who has become an arrogant leader of the partisan movement and confronts him: "'Voglio fare soltanto il mio lavoro, come il povero Petrucci'" [I just want to do my job, like poor Petrucci]. In this scene, the mantra of doing one's own job becomes a sign of Francesco's moral superiority over the partisans' desire for revenge. This reading is reinforced by the setting of the meeting, an abandoned school where partisans are shown torturing prisoners. The next scene follows Lucia and a group of *repubblichini* led by the German officer Kurt (Stefano Dionisi) as they round up hidden Jews. In this sequence, Lucia allows a child to run away. Interestingly, she is not the only Nazi-Fascist character to show humanity: when Kurt sees the child leaving, he points his gun in his direction, but his hands are shaking and the scene dissolves without the audience knowing what happens to the child. In the entire movie, there is not a single scene where the audience actually sees *repubblichini* kill innocent civilians as opposed to bloodshed perpetrated by the partisans in many sequences of *Il sangue dei vinti*. This culminates in a very disturbing scene where a commando of partisans attacks the Dogliani's farm only because of Lucia's collaboration. The elderly Doglianis, one of whom is wheelchair-bound, end up committing suicide in order to avoid partisans' violence. Significantly the following sequence sees Francesco being arrested by the *repubblichini* who are, however, more than eager to free him as soon as they know he is Lucia's brother. As Lichtner observes, in the film, "partisan violence is always Communist, but Fascist crimes are almost invariably carried out by Germans."[234] The film seems to endorse the idea of "italiani (or rather *repubblichini*) brava gente" as opposed to cruel Germans and de-humanized Communists. This biased representation is symbolized

by the characters of Lucia and Ettore. Lucia is depicted as a sensitive and courageous woman deprived of Fascist fervor who, for personal reasons, chooses to collaborate. Not only does she try to save the young Jewish boy in the village, but also helps Francesco to rescue Costantina's sisters and Elisa who have been arrested by the Fascist police. By contrast, Ettore is a fanatical Communist who boasts about his bloody ventures ("'quando li becchiamo, non scherziamo!'"; "when we catch them, we don't joke!"), and he is never shaken in his beliefs, not even by his parents' tragic death. When Francesco and Ettore meet in the aftermath of the partisan attacks against the Dogliani's farm, Francesco shouts at Ettore: "'Oggi tu hai la faccia degli assassini di papà e mamma'" ["Today you have the face of our parents' assassins"]. At this point, the detective has lost any illusions regarding the Resistance and sees the partisans as merciless assassins.

Between misplaced loyalty and a blind support to a ferocious Communism, the policeman stands out as the only moral and uncompromising figure in the film. At the beginning, Francesco refuses to take part in the war because his sense of duty compels him to find a solution to Costantina's case. While this stance is exposed in a lot of crime fiction set during Fascism and WWII as an excuse not to confront reality, in *Il sangue dei vinti* it ends up becoming a mark for a superior morality. Indeed, when freed from his duty (he manages to solve the case and keep his promise to Elisa), he still does not choose sides but instead maintains a strong fraternal (and emotional) tie with both his siblings. At this point, however, his alleged equidistance (like the alleged equidistance of the movie itself) is flawed as he only sees the partisans-Communists as merciless murderers and the *repubblichini*, the defeated, as their victims.[235] As the war is ending, the *repubblichini* are increasingly isolated. Left behind by the treacherous Germans ("'I tedeschi hanno trattato la resa per conto loro'"; "The Germans had discussed the terms of surrender without us"), trapped in an abandoned school, Lucia and her comrades decide to fight to the end. The melodrama unfolds when she unknowingly kills Ettore, and is then captured by the partisans who savagely shave her head and expose her tormented body to the crowd. In a scene that recalls the passion of Christ, Lucia is then taken to a field and summarily executed. At this point, Francesco-Antigone devotes his time to rescuing Lucia's corpse. His search lasts decades. In the 1970s he finally approaches Elisa, who in the meantime has become a history lecturer, and takes a trip with her to the place of the execution. When asked what he wants to do, he answers Elisa: "'Voglio solo seppellire i morti. Tutti i morti. Tutti'"

["I only want to bury the dead. All the dead. All of them"]. What he really wants is to pay homage to his sister, one of the defeated, as "'Ettore ha avuto una medaglia d'oro e una degna sepoltura. Lucia no'" ["Ettore received a gold medal and a worthy burial. Lucia didn't"]. With his appeal to emotions and pity, in *Il sangue dei vinti*, the detective, a central figure in crime fiction, "embodies key rhetorical characteristics of the right's revisionist effort" (Lichtner 37). He also endorses a re-reading of history that sees the experiences of the Resistance and the Republic of Salò being placed on the same moral ground and the atrocities committed during WWII as almost solely the responsibility of the Communist party. This reading is reinforced by the solution of the crime. The murderer is in fact Costantina who has killed her sister Anna because the latter wanted to expose Costantina as a partisan. Costantina then takes Anna's place and takes advantage of her position to spy on the Germans for her lover, the bad partisan chief Foresi. With the unveiling of the culprit/winner—a bad female partisan who does not hesitate to murder her sister—and the real victim/defeated—the lover of a Fascist officer and a collaborationist—the revisionist theme of the film finds its climax. At the end of the story in the 1970s, Francesco finds out that Elisa—interestingly a left-wing historian—always knew about the exchange of identity. Therefore, in the last sequences, through the character of Elisa, the film also accuses left-wing historians of hiding the atrocities committed by the partisans, an allegation that Pansa has made several times in defending his controversial book.

In the last analysis, *Il sangue dei vinti* fails to address lesser-known aspects of the Italian civil war by giving a biased and historically decontextualized representation of the civil war that took place in Italy after the armistice. In spite of its highly charged revisionist agenda, the film also failed to satisfy its audience, even on the right. While the left criticized the film's refusal to draw a moral distinction between Fascists and anti-Fascists or to link anti-Fascist violence to 20 years of oppression, Gasparri lamented that the film was too gentle with the Resistance (Conti 2008). On 6 and 7 December 2009, RAI broadcast an extended version of the film that attracted an audience of 5,821,000 people (i.e., an audience share of 21 %), prompting the right-wing press to celebrate Italians' desire for "true" history,[236] and contributed to a distorted interpretation of Fascism and the Resistance.

In the same year as *Il sangue dei vinti*, and 18 years after the publication of *Carta bianca*, state television RAI screened four TV movies featuring Inspector Achille De Luca based on both the De Luca trilogy

(1990–1996) and *Indagine non autorizzata* (1993), a crime novel set during Fascism also written by Carlo Lucarelli but with a different protagonist, Inspector Marino.[237] The series was directed by Antonio Frazzi, who also co-wrote the episodes with his brother Andrea and with the supervision of Lucarelli. The writer publicly declared that the movies were wonderful, and the De Luca movies were awarded several prizes, such as the Kineo prize for the best TV film at the Venice Film Festival in 2008 and the *Efebo D'Oro* for the best adaptation from a literary text. While highly entertaining and characterized by an accurate if not didactic representation of the Fascist era, the adaptation waters down the political themes and the issue of personal responsibilities in a dictatorship in order to create a more appealing Inspector De Luca.

The protagonist is interpreted by Alessandro Preziosi, a popular actor famous for his roles in soap operas and romantic miniseries, and also supporting actor in *Il sangue dei vinti*.[238] As mentioned, the TV series stretches to four episodes and some characters appear more frequently than in the books. For example, Leopoldo Pugliese (played by Corrado Fortuna) appears in all four episodes instead of two (i.e., *Carta bianca* and *Via delle Oche*), Guido Leonardi (Stefano Pesce) features in *L'estate torbida* and then in *Via delle Oche* (replacing Serra), and De Luca's love interest Valeria Suvich (Raffaella Rea) appears both in *Carta bianca* and *Via delle Oche* (as la Slava replacing la Tripolina). Unlike the book series, characterized by a gloomy and desperate atmosphere, the TV version presents comedic scenes that provide entertainment and give a more cheerful portrayal of De Luca. In the novels, the police detective's physical appearance is never described and the reader only knows that he is always deprived of sleep, nauseated, and scared. In the movies he is very attractive, the first sign of a concession to the TV medium. More importantly, filmic De Luca is more courageous and resolute. His loss of sleep and hunger, confined only to the *Carta bianca* episode, loses its existential meaning to become a sign of his obsession for his investigations. His inquiries are still hampered by his superiors' interference, but this time he confronts them with his head held high, even in defeat. Finally, he is definitely more presentable: he is not compromised with the Brigata Muti, like his written version, but still persecuted by partisans. His misadventures are explained by an *escamotage*: he saved Mussolini's life by chance and was awarded the title of best Italian detective. Therefore, the partisans list him as a dangerous Fascist to arrest and put on trial in *Carta bianca*. In *L'estate torbida*, a shooting in which he is unwillingly involved explains his final arrest by the *carabinieri*.

The TV audience is introduced to De Luca with *Indagine non autorizzata*, an episode based on Carlo Lucarelli's novel of the same name which featured Inspector Marino instead, a middle-ranked *vice-commissario* who shares De Luca's insecurity and an obsession for his investigations. In the television version of *Indagine*, the story is shifted from 1936 to 1938 so that the events can fit better with the remaining De Luca adventures. The setting also becomes Rimini instead of nearby Riccione. The investigation is however the same: at the height of the tourist season, on the beach, just a few steps away from the seaside residence of Mussolini, the corpse of a prostitute is discovered. The murder, which threatens to disturb the holiday of Il Duce, throws the police station into a panic: the police commissioner pushes for a rapid investigation and within hours arrests the alleged offender, the victim's pimp. The prompt solution of the case is celebrated with a telegram of congratulations from Mussolini himself. The case seems closed, but Inspector De Luca is not convinced.

The first scene of the film follows the beginning of the novel and takes place on a beach where a policeman is taking some police dogs for a run, and a group of children from a holiday home walk down to the shore. The children are all dressed in white, like Mussolini's bodyguards who are patrolling the beach. The music in the background is "Fiorin Fiorello," a famous song from the 1930s. The clothes and the music contribute to create a nostalgic undertone in the film that is not found in the novel. When the corpse of Miranda Rubino aka Palmina aka "la bella culona" [beautiful ass] is discovered, the police chief and his pool of investigators rush to the beach. De Luca is the last to enter the police car to signify that he does not belong to the group of careerists who want to ingratiate themselves with their boss. In spite of clearly being a competent policeman, De Luca is ill-treated by the police chief who gives him the less important task of interrogating the children. His conversation with the group leader Luce Marianna from Naples who defines herself as "Giovane italiana" [Young Italian] becomes an excuse to show the influence of propaganda on Italian youth. Marianna does the Fascist salute, but De Luca responds with an irritated gesture, another mark of his distance from the regime. As one can see from the first sequences of the film, the movie director clearly intended to present a De Luca marginalized by his own choice. This image of "good Italian" and good policemen is subsequently reinforced when, during the interrogation of the victim's pimp, Oscar Tabonelli, he does not participate in his beating. Once alone with the prisoner, he instead offers him a cigarette. De Luca's integrity is confirmed further in a

conversation the police detective has with his newly acquainted subordinate, Pugliese, who states: "'Qualcuno dice che avete la testa dura, che non sapete stare al mondo […] e che arrestereste pure il Duce'" ["Someone says that you're pig-headed, that you don't know much […] and that you would even arrest il Duce"]. From what Pugliese says, it is clear that De Luca's apolitical stance in the TV series makes him a moral figure, unlike in the novels where he is stigmatized by his refusal to take sides. In *Indagine non autorizzata*, some of De Luca's mantras are introduced, such as "Non sono dottore" ["I'm not a graduate"], "Sono un poliziotto" ["I'm a policeman"], and "Io non mi interesso di politica" ["I'm not interested in politics"]. When Silvestri, a high-profile member of the Fascist Party, visits the police headquarters everybody, except De Luca, do their best to ingratiate themselves with him. De Luca asks his colleague Rassetto about Silvestri: "'Ho bisogno di sapere qualcosa sulle storie di partito. Lo sai, non ci capisco niente'" ["I need to know some stories about the Fascist Party. You know, I don't understand a thing"]. He also shows disrespect toward Fascism when he makes fun of Rassetto, calling him "camerata" [comrade] in an ironic way and mocking a Fascist salute. As one can see, the filmic (and fearless) De Luca is more assertive than the powerless De Luca of the novel. Once the case is officially closed, the police detective decides to collaborate with Gabriele Dannunzio, a journalist (as opposed to Gabriele D'Annunzio the writer), and investigative judge Tarantini to investigate the prostitute's death informally. The investigation is constantly hampered by Silvestri and his Blackshirts. Eventually, Tarantini is arrested and Dannunzio escapes to Paris. De Luca solves the riddle but is unable to take the culprit to justice. The murderer's alibis (she was officially playing tennis with Mussolini when the murder occurred) cannot be contradicted because it is also a cover used by Il Duce himself to secretly meet his lover, Claretta Petacci. More than De Luca's powerlessness, it is then a twist of fate that prevents justice from being done. In the last sequence of the film, De Luca, transferred to Rome, tears up a dossier that denounces Dannunzio as an anti-Fascist. Thus the movie concludes with a confirmation that De Luca belongs to the category of "brava gente" and is not complicit with the regime.

The second episode, *Carta bianca*, builds on the first in describing an honest and brave De Luca, adding to the portrait a more sympathetic nature. In the novels, De Luca, obsessed with justice, often shows no sympathy toward people who are involved in his investigation. In the filmic version, this is different. A more human side of the police detective is

delivered through the insertion of new characters and comic scenes. In *Carta bianca*, this is especially the case with Nino, a child that De Luca meets in the street as soon as he arrives in Bologna. Nino tells him that he is an orphan and is missing a toy he left at school before the building was occupied by the Gestapo. In his subsequent visit to the Gestapo quarters, De Luca makes sure he gets hold of the toy. At the end of the episode while abruptly leaving Bologna, which is going to be occupied by the partisans, he orders the driver to stop to give Nino his toy. This "humanization" of De Luca is completed when, in contrast to the novel, where he does not show compassion for murderer Adelina, in the film version he decides to set her free. Here like Augias's Inspector Flaminio Prati, filmic De Luca makes a choice of a political and moral nature, distancing himself from official justice. A further element proving his independence from the regime he serves is explained in an additional episode where, in an *osteria*, he tells an admiring Pugliese how he managed to save Mussolini's life: "'Ero lì quando quell'uomo ha tirato fuori la rivoltella. Ero in borghese. Ho fatto quello che avrebbe fatto qualunque poliziotto'" ["I was just there, when that man took his gun. I was in plain-clothes. I did what any other policeman would have done"]. This factual explanation is devoid of any patriotic emphasis. Far from being satisfied by his success, he almost regrets it: "'Tutta questa celebrità mi sta causando più danni che altro'" ["All this publicity is causing me more trouble than anything"]. Indeed, in the novel this is not the reason why De Luca is on the partisans' blacklist and needs to leave Bologna.

Carta bianca is also notable for the insertion of comic scenes that give relief and also serve to tell the audience about life under Fascism. In two scenes at the "Reduce" [Veteran] boarding house, for example, the owner gets scared because she used the term "lei" instead of the more virile "voi" when addressing De Luca.[239] While De Luca dismisses her faux pas as ludicrous, she answers: "'Basta una distrazione e ti sei giocato la licenza'" ["One case of inattention is enough to lose your licence!"], implying that Fascist spies are everywhere keeping an eye on people's behavior. The woman also makes sure she listens to Radio Munich while someone else is in the lobby, but as soon as she is alone, she tunes the radio to a popular music station and starts dancing. In both cases, a smiling De Luca clearly feels sympathy for the woman.

The investigation itself shows a more muscular police detective who is not afraid of his superiors. His meetings with the police commissioner are completely different from the ones described in the novel. While

in the book version on one occasion De Luca is completely powerless and sits with his eyes fixed on the floor, looking like a defendant, in the film his body language reveals a stronger character. He stands and looks the *questore* right in the eye. His glance is often ironic or amused by the ridiculousness of the pompous police commissioner. Once at the Gestapo headquarters—in the book—Pugliese is frightened and De Luca is "imbarazzato"; "disturbed."[240] This is very different from the film version where De Luca does not show any fear. In the book, the episode concludes with the laconic passage: "nel cortile due Esse Esse con un grembiule di pelle stavano caricando su un camion il cadavere massacrato di un vecchio"; "in the courtyard, two SS wearing leather aprons were loading the bloodied corpse of an old man onto a truck";[241] in the movie, De Luca shouts at the SS and Pugliese takes him away before he gets into trouble. This behavior is rewarded: while in the novel Pugliese is critical toward De Luca's inability to take sides, in the TV movie he is De Luca's unrelenting admirer. De Luca is also more assertive in his private life. Valeria, the clairvoyant, tells him that she can read in his eyes that he is afraid. In the novel, De Luca "represse un brivido"; "suppressed a shudder."[242] In the movie, he is ironic and in control, the typical hero of a hard-boiled novel:

> "Hai paura che ti ammazzino."
> "Questa paura ce l'hanno tutti. Non sei proprio una strega".
>
> ["You're scared you may be killed."
> "Everybody is scared to be killed. You aren't a proper witch."]

All in all, *Carta bianca* shows a more palatable De Luca: he retains his dignity in defeat. As one can see, this again is a very different portrait from the more problematic depiction offered in the novel. The following adaptation from *L'estate torbida* reinforces these traits and provides a less problematic representation of the Resistance.

The film starts with an invented scene. De Luca, Rassetto, and his comrades are hidden in a country farm. The British troops are approaching and they decide to leave. In a roadblock, Rassetto shoots a partisan and a gunfight ensues. De Luca does not participate in the shooting, but runs away instead, followed by a comrade. Arriving at the banks of a river, De Luca gets rid of his gun, but his companion confronts him: "'Io e te non l'abbiamo mai pensata allo stesso modo. Non capisco perché Rassetto diceva che eri tanto simpatico, avevi salvato la vita al Duce, ma secondo me hai avuto solo fortuna'" ["You and I have never thought the same way.

I don't understand why Rassetto used to say that you were a nice man and that you had saved Mussolini's life. I reckon you were only lucky"]. De Luca's answer reinforces his alienation from the regime: "'Mai detto il contrario'" ["I never said the opposite"]. His antagonist insists: "'E magari ti stai chiedendo se hai fatto bene o no, vero?'" ["And you are wondering if you did well, aren't you?"]. De Luca does not answer, but his glance is telling. De Luca leaves his comrades to their fate and reaches the main road. Here he meets the partisan police officer Guido Leonardi and the script follows the novel. However, De Luca's attitude is again different: if in the novel "la paura lo irrigidiva"; "he was so tense that even swallowing hurt";[243] in the movie, he is alarmed but not powerless. As in the novel, Leonardi involves de Luca in the investigation into Delmo Guerra's murder, but interestingly, this character has also changed. Here Delmo is a partisan and a decent man: "'Delmo Guerra odiava la guerra che gli ha portato via una moglie e due figli'" ["Delmo Guerra hated the war that took his wife and two kids away"]. While in the novel he is "'un mezzo ladro e un mezzo bracconiere'"; "'a petty thief and a small-time poacher'";[244] in the film, Leonardi continues by explaining a series of heroic acts that Delmo had performed during the war. He also makes many more references to partisan actions and sacrifices. Moreover, in the film, the victim, Count Menegazza, is a Fascist spy and responsible for Carnera's brother's death. This way the partisan chief's murder is in some way justified. More problematic is Carnera's behavior in the novel: not only does the partisan hero kill the Count but he also steals some jewels. Delmo blackmails him and Carnera murders the old man and his family. In the movie, Delmo's murder is attributed to Baroncini, a war profiteer who wants to recover a receipt that might compromise him. For his part, Carnera wants justice for Delmo who he looks on as his father. As one can see, *L'estate torbida* gives a more hagiographic representation of the Resistance. The hero Carnera is not guilty of greed, but he is driven by a personal—and in a way understandable—vendetta. When the Allies take him away, his comrades greet him with a Communist salute as a sign of respect. Finally in the novel, there is reference to the Allied bombings in the area. Leonardi polemically explains to De Luca:

> "La prima volta che gli Alleati hanno bombardato Sant'Alberto era lunedì e c'era mercato. Ci sono stati tanti morti che li abbiamo seppelliti dentro gli armadi perché non avevamo più casse e allora? Processiamo anche gli alleati?"

> "The first time the Allies bombed Sant'Alberto it was Monday, market day. There were so many dead bodies that we buried them in wardrobes because there weren't enough coffins. What do you say to that? Should we put the Allies on trial too?"[245]

This omission in the film is very interesting and embraces a post-war—and dated—hagiography that saw the partisans as spotless heroes and the Allies as immaculate saviors. As we know, this sanitized version of history was contested—for good and bad—by the revisionists in the 1980s and 1990s. In the film *L'estate torbida*, all the committed Fascists are invariably described as negative and the Resistance is celebrated. This can be explained by the fact that the revisionist debate had lost force in the 2000s and by the control Lucarelli kept on the film version of his works. It can also be explained by the change in political climate in the years the series was filmed.[246] At the same time, however, the description of De Luca as a champion of justice embraces the trite portrait of Italians as "brava gente" and wipes away the critique of the ambivalent attitude of many people who survived during Fascism without taking sides. This criticism was at the core of Lucarelli's novels and many other crime stories set in the 1930s and 1940s. In the final analysis, it seems that in a post-revisionist phase, RAI wanted to make sure not to upset the left and at the same time give a more reassuring story to its audience. In *L'estate torbida*, the revised version of the toast in the *osteria* is very interesting in this regard. As already mentioned, in the novel, De Luca is involved in a series of embarrassing (for him) toasts "to freedom" and "to the people," and when it is his turn, he pathetically makes a toast to everybody's health and faints. In the film, he instead proudly toasts "All'Italia!" [To Italy]. Filmic De Luca is entitled to celebrate Italy because his conscience is clear: at the end of the day, he has always done "his job" without compromising himself one way or another. When De Luca is finally waiting to be arrested by the *carabinieri*, the exchange between him and Leonardi is also expurgated:

> "La pianti con questa storia del fascista!"
> "Perché, partigiano anche lei, ingegnere?"
> "No, io sono un poliziotto. O meglio ero un poliziotto."
>
> ["Stop calling me Fascist!"
> "Why, are you also a partisan, Engineer?"
> "No, I'm a policeman. Or, rather, I was a policeman."]

The exchange ends here, and in the film Leonardi never accuses him of using his profession as a shield. Finally, when Pugliese comes to pick him up (in the novel it is an anonymous *carabiniere*), De Luca firmly put his hands in the handcuffs, saying: "'Potrò chiarire tante cose. È meglio così.'" ["I will be able to clarify many things. It's better like this"]. This is very different from the novel, where the police inspector weakly murmurs: "'Non…non mi era mai successo…'"; "'It's…It's my first time.'"[247]

Finally, like the book, the film Via *delle Oche* is set in the days around the first democratic political elections in Italy. After spending three years in backwater offices in the province, De Luca is back in Bologna, assigned to the vice squad. He still has problems with authority, embodied in this case by deputy police commissioner D'Ambrogio, a DC sympathizer. In this episode, De Luca meets his subordinate Pugliese again (as in the novel), but also the former partisan police officer Leonardi (who now works in the police commissioner's office) and Valeria (who has become a brothel-keeper). These reappearances are functional to provide more continuity to De Luca's adventures, both public and private, in the tradition of the typical crime series. They may also serve to simplify the story in order to accommodate the (allegedly) less sophisticated television audience. This episode represents the finishing touch of the process of the television canonization of De Luca that started with *Indagine non autorizzata*. The police inspector fiercely fights with whoever wants to hamper his investigation, but he still does not compromise himself with politics. Leonardi is still a militant of the Communist Party and Pugliese confesses that he will vote for the DC. Thus, Leonardi continues in the tradition of the law-abiding partisan who accepts the 1948 results and resigns himself to decades of political opposition; on his part, Pugliese gives voice to the honest average Italian (as opposed to the corrupt D'Ambrogio) who voted for the DC in those crucial political elections. What about De Luca? Leonardi ask him: "Ora da che parte sta?" [Who are you supporting now?]. De Luca's answer is his usual mantra: "'Eh, mi fa sempre le stesse domande, Leonardi e io le devo dare la stessa risposta: sono dalla parte della legge. Sarà che è l'unica cosa che mi piace'" ["Eh, you always ask the same questions, Leonardi. I have to give you the same answer: I am with the law. It's the only thing that I like"]. De Luca's inability to take sides is also the object of a joke. When Pugliese asks him in return who he is going to vote for, he answers: "'Non lo sai? Il voto è segreto'" ["Don't you know? The vote is secret"].

At the end of the story, De Luca is again under trial for something he did not commit: Rassetto (who in the novel *L'estate torbida* had been

executed) accuses him of collusion with Fascism in exchange for a reduction of his conviction. First, before being transferred to Rome, Leonardi shows respect for him: "'A me questo mestiere alla fine non me l'hanno fatto fare. Ma sono contento che in polizia ci sia gente come lei'" ["I wasn't allowed to do this job. I'm happy though that in the police force there are people like you"]. Then Pugliese tells him: "'Io l'ho detto anche a D'Ambrogio che avete fatto sempre e soltanto il vostro lavoro. E bene per di più'" ["I told D'Ambrogio too that you have always and only done your duty. And you did it very well, on top of that"]. Apparently, in an Italy split between Communist Party and DC supporters, he is able to pocket a bipartisan endorsement. Finally, waiting for him before the tribunal, there is a redeemed Valeria, who will be at his side no matter what. De Luca's solitude is over, and with the promise of family and a bourgeois life, his normalization is finally completed.

The *Commissario* [Inspector] Nardone series was aired by RAI TV in 2011. The 12 episodes directed by Fabrizio Costa featured Sergio Assisi as the main character.[248] It is based on the real-life figure, Inspector Mario Nardone (1915–1986) who was a living legend in Milan in the 1950s and 1960s. He arrived in Milan shortly after WWII, and was responsible for establishing the first Italian flying squad and creating the emergency phone line 777 for citizens to report crime. He also solved important cases such as the Rina Fort murder and arrested dangerous gangs such as the *Banda di via Osoppo* [the Via Osoppo gang].[249] Called the Italian Maigret for his acumen and sensitiveness, he was loved and respected by the Milanese.

The TV Nardone is ironic, straightforward, persistently stubborn but endowed with a strong moral code and a great sense of humanity as he fights crime in the industrial capital of a prostrate Italy still under the effects of the war. In the first episode, after punching his superior, Neapolitan Nardone is transferred to Milan, which is still rebuilding after the war and contending with the rise of a local mafia. Over the course of 12 episodes, Nardone and his assembled team of misfit officers—aging Brigadier Muraro (Luigi Di Fiore), lab technician Enrico Spitz (Francesco Zecca) who is Jewish and lost his entire family when someone betrayed them to the Nazis, file clerk/aspiring lawyer Rizzo (Ludovico Vitrano), and hotheaded former Fascist/expert driver Sergio Suderghi (Stefano Dionisi)—exasperate Chief Ossola (Franco Castellano) in their investigations which often threaten to implicate powerful members of Milanese society. Nardone's exploits are documented by intrepid photographer Trapani

(Giampiero Judica) who embodies the rise and flourishing of the *cronaca nera* [crime pages] in the Milanese press of the time. A good part of the episodes also deals with the personal lives of Nardone and his squad, following, like the Inspector Ricciardi series, an increasing trend in recent crime fiction.[250] It follows Nardone and his relationship with Eliana (Giorgia Surina), an independent Milanese woman, Rizzo, and his on-again-off-again relationship with his landlady's daughter Linda (Marguerite Sikabonyi); Muraro and his long-lost daughter Anna (Tatjana Bokan); Spitz on the hunt for the man who betrayed his family to the Nazis; and Suderghi torn between his fiancée and high-class prostitute Floriana (Anna Safroncik), making the series enjoyable and entertaining.

The aim of the series was to depict the social changes in Milan (and Italy) and in the criminal world from the end of WWII to the end of the 1950s. The Inspector Nardone story therefore does not focus on Fascism or on the war. Nevertheless, it touches on some sensitive topics, especially in the relationship between Spitz and Suderghi, and is worth analyzing. At the beginning of the series, Spitz resents the presence of Suderghi in the police team because of his colleague's Fascist past. The two policemen are often forced to work together under Nardone's vigilant eye. The role of former Fascist officials in post-war Italy is a sensitive topic that could have been tackled with insight. However, the treatment of this sub-plot in an otherwise entertaining series is disappointing. Spitz is described in a sympathetic way, and the persecution of the Jews is clearly condemned in the series, as highlighted by a heart-rending soundtrack that accompanies all the scenes where this topic is tackled. However, Suderghi is a sympathetic character as well, and his motivations for joining Fascism are not explained or put under scrutiny. Moreover, while Spitz's desire to find the person who sold his family to the Nazis takes the turn of revenge, Suderghi never repudiates his past. In "Tradimenti"/"Betrayals," Nardone investigates the murder of a prominent attorney's wife in what seems to be the first violent offense in a stream of robberies by "The Black Aprilia Gang." At the beginning of the episode, Spitz asks permission to go to his aunt's funeral. On that occasion, Muraro tells Inspector Nardone that Spitz lost the rest of his family in a concentration camp. After the Jewish funeral, Spitz talks to a friend of his aunt, Signor Tamaro.

> [Spitz] "Hanno distrutto la mia famiglia. Questo non posso sopportarlo."
> [Tamaro] "Li ritroverai dentro di te, ragazzo mio. Devi solo aspettare un po' di tempo. Devi avere pazienza."

"Il tempo, non basta, signor Tamaro."
"Ti consiglio di vivere in pace e di pregare."
"È difficile vivere in pace con tutti questi morti."
"Provaci. Cerca di perdonare."
"Abbiamo sempre perdonato. E siamo stati massacrati."
"Pregherò per te. Pregherò perché il Signore ti accompagni."

[Spitz: "My family was destroyed. It is unendurable."
Tamaro: "You will find them again inside you, my dear boy. You only need to wait. You need to be patient."
"Time is not enough, Mr. Tamaro."
"I suggest you should live in peace and pray."
"It's difficult to live in peace with all these dead."
"Try. Try to forgive."
"We've always forgiven. We have been massacred."
"I'll pray for you. I'll pray for the Lord to be with you."

Here Spritz's grief over his family's fate and his incapacity to forget are condemned by an old (and wise) member of the Jewish community who suggests that Spitz should move on with his life. The desire for justice is therefore interpreted as a negative feeling to be eradicated. The following scene sees Rizzo, Muraro, Suderghi, and Inspector Nardone having lunch in a restaurant. Rizzo comments that Spitz never joins them for lunch.

Rizzo: "Spitz è strano. Che problemi c'ha?"
Suderghi: "Spritz è ebreo. Gli ebrei ce l'hanno con il mondo intero."
Nardone: "Veramente ce l'hanno con chi li ha sterminati."
Suderghi: "Non lo sopporto e non perché è ebreo."
Muraro: "Per favore, lasciamo stare Spitz, eh! Voi non potete neanche immaginare quello che ha passato, quel ragazzo."
Suderghi: "Tutti abbiamo passato qualcosa, Muraro."
Muraro: "Non è la stessa cosa. Suderghi, prova tu ad avere tutta la famiglia sterminata in un campo di concentramento e poi ne riparliamo."

["Spitz is weird. What's his problem?"
"Spitz is a Jew. Jews are against the entire world."
"Actually, they're against those who exterminated them."
"I cannot stand him, and not because he's a Jew."
"Please, let's leave Spitz alone, eh! You can't begin to imagine what that guy has been through."
"We've all experienced something."
"It's not the same thing. Superghi, think about having your family exterminated in a concentration camp and then you can talk."]

This exchange is very interesting as Muraro, a highly moral character in the story, rejects Suderghi's attempt to put all the war experiences at the same level. In other words, Suderghi's revisionism ("we've all experienced something") is once and for all defeated by comparison with the tragedy of having your loved ones exterminated by the Nazis. Moreover, Suderghi's accusations ("Jews are against the entire world"), a legacy of the Fascist ideology, are firmly rebuffed by Nardone himself. Unfortunately, the rest of the episode continues to follow the thread of Jewish revenge. Spitz follows Suderghi and finds out that he is a drug addict. He decides to blackmail his colleague. He gives Suderghi two weeks to find out who betrayed his family to the Fascist secret service; otherwise, he will reveal Suderghi's secret to Nardone: "'Se un ex fascista, no? Hai ancora dei contatti. Usali e trovami quel nome. Ti do due settimane'" ["You are an ex Fascist, aren't you? You still have contacts. Use them and find me the name I need. I'll give you two weeks"]. In other words, Spitz takes advantage of a weak Suderghi in order to pursue his vendetta.

In "Il falsario"/"The Forger," the death by shooting of Carlo Torcia, a respected engraver, reveals his secret life as a master forger responsible for perfect counterfeit notes and passports. Spitz and Suderghi come into conflict over the likely suspect, Professor Alberto Volterra, a Jewish academic and war hero who has no alibi:

> Spitz: "Il professor Volterra è un genio ed è un eroe. Ha salvato centinaia di ebrei, ha scritto decine di libri…"
> Suderghi: "Mi spiace, Spitz. Credo che il tuo eroe non abbia detto tutto."
>
> ["Professor Volterra is a genius and a hero. He saved hundreds of Jews, he wrote dozens of books."
> "I'm sorry, Spitz. I think your hero hasn't told us everything he knows."]

Here Suderghi refers to professor Volterra as "your" hero, highlighting Italy's "divided memory" where a hero is not necessarily a hero for everybody. Spitz and Suderghi's clash becomes violent in Nardone's office:

> Spitz: "Tu stai zitto, sappiamo tutti perché sospetti del professor Volterra."
> Suderghi: "Dimmelo, dimmelo tu perché. Dimmelo se hai il coraggio."
>
> ["Shut up! We all know why you suspect Professor Volterra."
> "Tell me, tell me why. Tell me if you have the guts!"]

Nardone diverts the heated conversation to another subject and makes sure he compliments Spitz on his work. Subsequently Spitz confronts

Suderghi and threatens to reveal his secret if he does not give him the name of the person who sold his family. At this point, Spitz is way ahead on what the series depict as a dangerous path toward violence. The following exchange with Professor Volterra is interesting in this regard:

> [Volterra] "È finita. Se ne è accorto lei?"
> [Spitz] "No, non è finita, professore."
> "Non mi fraintenda. Il dolore non finisce mai. Però abbiamo il dovere di ricominciare. È così, la vita va avanti nonostante tutto. L'abbiamo imparato a nostre spese. La mia generazione ha dovuto subire due guerre devastanti. Non è stato facile."
> "Che intende dire? Non la capisco, professore…"
> "Il problema è che siamo usciti tutti stremati dalla Prima guerra. Ricordo che c'era tanto rancore. Abbiamo passato troppo tempo a vendicarci. Quello che spero è che stavolta voi facciate di meglio."
> "No, non si tratta di vendetta, ma di giustizia."
> "Uhm, c'è il rischio che qualche volta le due cose si confondano. E allora è un brutto guaio."
>
> [Volterra: "It's over. Do you realize that?"
> Spitz: "No, it's not over, Professor."
> "Don't get me wrong. Pain is never over. However, we have a duty to start again. It's how it is, life goes on, in spite of everything. We learnt it at our own expense. My generation had to suffer two devastating wars. It wasn't easy."
> "What do you mean? I don't understand, Professor…"
> "The problem is that we were all exhausted at the end of the First World War. I remember there were a lot of hard feelings. We spent too much time getting revenge. What I hope is that this time you do better."
> "It's not revenge. It's justice."
> "Um, there's the chance that sometimes you mix up the two things. And then there's trouble."]

Here Spitz expresses the frustrations of many Italians who suffered violence during the occupation, but did not see the culprits delivered to justice. The Jewish policeman rightly points out that identifying people who committed crimes against civilians during the war is a matter of justice, but Professor Volterra dismisses Spitz's feelings as revenge. Indeed, Volterra can only see two possible solutions to Spitz's dilemma: he can either forget (and this is seen as a wise solution) or take violent revenge and that would be a "brutto guaio." A third way (i.e., identifying and arresting) is never seen as an option for Volterra or any other characters with whom

Spitz shares his anguish. They all invariably suggest he should forget. Thus the Inspector Nardone series, in spite of fighting against revisionist theories, ends up endorsing the general amnesia that characterized post-war Italy for the sake of the reconstruction of the country.[251] After the arrest of Volterra, Suderghi expresses sympathy for a distraught Spitz, but the Jewish policeman does not want to have anything to do with his ex-Fascist colleague. The episode ends with *commissario* Nardone, Spitz, and Suderghi arresting the real murderer, who is not Professor Volterra. Spitz's sub-plot disappears for a few episodes to return again in episode 11. In the meantime, ten years have passed by. Crime in Milan has become more violent and Nardone has established the flying squad as well as the emergency phone line 777 for citizens to report crime. Nardone and Eliana have married and have a child, Trapani has left the newspaper to found his own successful photo agency, and Floriana has a nightclub (although she is still an informer for Nardone). A violent robbery of a post office is revealed to be the work of two French criminals, whose bodies are discovered along with the getaway car a short time later. Nardone suspects that his arch-enemy Bosso is behind these crimes and gathers together his old group which had gone separate ways. In "Il gatto e il topo"/"Cat and Mouse" (part 1), Spitz's quest for revenge comes to a conclusion and with it his rivalry with Suderghi. In this episode, Spitz has finally found Angiolillo, the man who sold his family to the secret police. After spending many years in South America, Angiolillo is back in Milan. He is now a disempowered figure, a ghost of a man with no desire to live. Accompanied by the usual heart-rending tune in the background, the audience sees Spitz preparing his gun, walking the streets of Milan and waiting in a corner for Angiolillo to go back to his room in a dilapidated hotel. In the meantime, a worried Suderghi goes to Spitz's house. Frantically, searching among his things, he finds out Spitz's intentions. Back at the hotel, a tense Spitz asks the concierge for Angiolillo's room spare keys. He finds him lying on the bed half asleep:

> [Spitz]: "Svegliati, bastardo! Non voglio ammazzarti mentre dormi….Sai chi sono io? Eh, Angiolillo sai chi sono? La mia famiglia è stata sterminata: mia madre, mio padre, mia sorella…tutti morti…e sei stato tu a denunciarli! Sono dieci anni che aspetto questo momento…dieci anni!"
> [Angiolillo]: "Per favore, spara! Che aspetti, coraggio, spara! Mi fai soltanto un favore…"

> [Spitz: "Wake up, bastard! I don't want to kill you while you're sleeping… Do you know who I am? Eh, Angiolillo, do you know? My family was exterminated: my mother, my father, my sister…they're all dead…and you denounced them! I have been waiting for this moment for ten years!" Angelillo: "Please, shoot me! What are you waiting for, come on, shoot! You are only doing me a favor…"]

Suderghi arrives at the hotel and hears a gunshot. He enters the room. Spitz looks at him: "'E tu? Che ci fai qui?'" ["And you? What are you doing here?"]. The camera moves to Angiolillo who is in fact alive and handcuffed. Spitz continues: "'Non meritava neanche di morire'" [He didn't even deserve to die]. Spitz explains to Suderghi that he shot his gun to unload his consuming rage. Suderghi comments: "'Finalmente è finita, Spitz!'" ["It's finally over, Spitz!"]. Spitz answers: "'Era già finita, ma non lo sapevo. Grazie di essere venuto'" ["It was already over, but I didn't know it. Thank you for coming"]. Spitz renounces his vendetta and arrests Angiolillo (with what accusation, it is not clear). Spitz and Suderghi finally make peace and embrace each other. Justice is finally done. However, this cheesy solution to Spitz's tragedy leaves many questions unanswered: first of all, Suderghi's responsibilities during the Fascist years and the war; second and most importantly, the speed with which Italy has closed a painful chapter of its history that includes the Racial Laws and the persecution of the Jews on Italian soil.

All in all, the *commissario* Nardone series hosts the serious issue of postwar Italy without having the courage to tackle it in depth. Conceived as a secondary storyline, the rivalry between Suderghi and Spitz has the purpose of creating interest in the private lives of the detectives and keeping the audience wondering what is going to happen to the unfortunate Jew. However, the shallow storyline characterized by stereotypical characters—from the wise old Jew to the good Fascist—and situations—such as the final reconciliation between the Fascist and the Jew—constitute a case of a missed opportunity for an otherwise engaging crime series.

Finally, the cinematic version of *Quer pasticciaccio*, Pietro Germi's *Un maledetto imbroglio*, is a powerful example of the mechanism that brings a reader of historical crime fiction to make a parallel between a story's past and their own present. Indeed, this is what Germi did while adapting Gadda's novel and it resulted in a film, where by drawing on the Fascist past, he was able to replicate his own anxieties about Italy of the late 1950s.

Carlo Emilio Gadda's[252] crime novel, first published in serialized form in 1946 and then as a book in 1957, relates the story of two crimes committed within a matter of days in a large apartment house in central Rome: a burglary affecting Countess Menegazzi, whose money and precious jewels are taken, and the murder of a young woman, Liliana Balducci, who is found with her throat cut. Called in to investigate, melancholic Inspector Ciccio Ingravallo, a secret admirer of the murdered woman and a friend of her husband, discovers that almost everyone in the apartment building is somehow involved in the case, and with each new development, the mystery only deepens and broadens. The novel, which presents numerous false leads, finishes leaving the reader without an explicit final solution, a choice which has brought Sciascia to define it as "the most absolute crime story ever written: a crime story with no solution."[253] A social novel, a comic opera, an act of political resistance, an exploitation of baroque puns, and a poignant story of life and death, *Quer pasticciaccio* is considered Gadda's masterpiece. As Calvino put it, in this novel, written to a large extent in Roman dialect, "the characters' voices, thoughts, and sensations, the dreams of their unconscious, are mingled with the author's omnipresence, his fits of impatience, his sarcasm, and the fine network of cultural references."[254]

An admirer of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and an avid reader of real-life cases, Gadda wanted to be "Conan-Doylan," but in his opinion, readers were too familiar with the structure of the Sherlock Holmes stories. He decided to write a complex novel as, he stated, it was not that life was simple, or even flat, rather he believed that sometimes it was highly complicated and resembled a novel.[255] The result is a highly sophisticated novel where reality is a complex phenomenon epitomized in the very title of the book—and specifically in the word "pasticciaccio" or "mess"—to indicate not only the crimes committed on Via Merulana but also life in general.[256] Indeed, *Quer pasticciaccio* is a crime novel that tackles the elusiveness of the truth, the impossibility of proof, and the infinite complexity of the workings of fate, showing how they come into conflict with the demands of justice and love.

Apart from the use of a pastiche of languages and dialects and formal experimentalism—that made his critics compare his novels with Joyce's work—and the presence of philosophical motives, *Quer pasticciaccio* is also notable for its political criticism and attacks on Mussolini.[257] While in post-war Italy Gadda shied away from any kind of radicalism in politics, through Ingravallo's investigation in *Quer pasticciaccio*, he "conducts a

minute, extensive analysis of the effects on the daily administration of justice caused by a failure to respect the separation of powers as envisioned by Montesquieu, to whom there is explicit reference."[258] The book also contains a description of the city of Rome "in its most infernal aspects, like a witches' Sabbath."[259] This contrasted with the Fascist desire to present Italy as an ideal place to live.

Germi's adaptation came from a joint work between Germi himself, Alfredo Giannetti, and Ennio De Concini. The resulting script won a *Nastro d'argento* [Silver Ribbon] in 1960. Like Gadda, Germi was a crime fiction enthusiast and he had already inserted mystery elements in his previous films. He then took the opportunity of adapting *Quer pasticciaccio* for the screen. In Un *maledetto imbroglio*, the narration shifts to the 1950s, the plot is simplified, and a clear-cut solution to the case is provided, turning the Gadda story into the first Italian crime movie.[260] One may argue that Germi's adaptation is a banalization of a complex and philosophical novel that represents one of the finest examples of postmodern detective fiction. This may be partially true, but it can be argued that in giving a solution to the mystery, Germi makes a choice that Gadda had also made with *Il palazzo degli ori* (1946–1947) a script inspired by *Quer pasticciaccio* (and written in the same years) where the Milanese writer opted for unveiling the culprit at the end.[261] One can equally say that Germi did not merely reproduce Gadda's work, but reworked it and delivered a story on his own terms that incidentally met with Gadda's approval.[262] Indeed, unlike De Luca's TV series, which turns a highly problematic policeman into a muscular and likeable protagonist and avoids dealing with topics such as personal and collective responsibilities, Germi makes uses of the tropes of the hard-boiled genre, but gives it an Italian flair. At the same time, far from avoiding sensitive issues, he embraces Gadda's polemical vein, molding his own Inspector Ingravallo with it. Finally, Germi's *Un maledetto imbroglio* illustrates the very function of historical crime narrative of commenting on current issues in Italian society. In other words, by pointing to the flaws of Italian society of the late 1950s through a story originally set during Fascism, Germi powerfully visualizes the mental process undergone by the reader of historical crime fiction who typically makes a comparison between the present of the investigation and their own present, pointing at the flaws of the society they live in.

Strongly believing in the autonomy of cinema from literature, the director/actor made a point of distinguishing his film from the novel.[263] In spite of the changes made to the plot, Germi was nonetheless able to

build on many of Gadda's motives.[264] For example, like the novel, the film is set in a building, the *palazzo degli ori* [the palace of jewels], inhabited by a hypocritical bourgeoisie; in popular suburbs of Rome; and the countryside occupied by misfits and derelicts who try to make ends meet by any means, both licit and illicit. In describing these environments, the film keeps Gadda's ferocious criticism focused on hypocrisy and greed. It is through the figure of the detective, a more assertive Ingravallo, that the movie director manages to deliver Gadda's (and his own) disapproval of Italian society of the time. For example, like his fictional colleague, the cinematic Ingravallo also does not want to be called *dottore* and repeats this quite obsessively. This attitudes contrasts with a gallery of characters—which in the movie are depicted as veritable *macchiette* [caricatures]—who are ridiculously fond of their titles, such as *commendatore* Anzaloni (Angeloni in *Il pasticciaccio*), the general ("Sono un generale!"; "I'm a general!"), and Valdarena who passes himself as a doctor in spite of not having graduated. As Ricci argues, this extreme characterization will become central in the *commedia all'italiana* [Italian-style comedy].[265] Moreover, Ingravallo, interpreted by Germi himself, does not hide his dislike of the victim's cousin, the opportunist Valdarena, and the hypocritical husband, Banducci. Being both a moral figure and the typical hard-boiled hero, Ingravallo concludes his final encounter with Banducci and Valdarena by slapping both of them. He then comments that he acted that way for "'una questione personale'" ["a private matter"]. In vindicating the victim by "punishing" two men who were disrespectful to her when she was alive, cinematic Ingravallo expresses an outrage that in the novel belongs to the narrator. However, if Gadda condemned hypocrisy and the petty conformism of the Fascist era, Germi's eye critically scrutinizes compliance in the Italy of the Economic Boom.

Less than 20 years had passed by from the end of the war, but Italy had undergone huge social and economic transformations. The presence of US armed forces in the country from 1943, the aggressive marketing of American films after 1945, and the American aid program and a massive propaganda effort aimed at preventing the Communist Party from taking power in Italy, all contributed to a progressive "Americanization" of Italian society.[266] As Gundle observed, Italy was more receptive than other European countries to cultural imports from America because of its backward economy and the absence of a strong national cultural tradition at the popular level. From music to cinema and advertising, the impact of American culture was evident.[267] In four years, the Marshall Plan had

pumped into Italy the exorbitant sum of 1.3 billion dollars. Aid from the USA in the form of food, fuel, and low-interest loans helped revive the Italian economy: by the end of the 1950s, most sectors of the economy had returned to pre-war levels of production. During the 1950s and the 1960s, Italy's growth was exceptional, comparable to West Germany's. Together with internal migration and displacement, internal racism, and alienation, the rapid growth in Italy brought with it significant changes in people's lifestyle in the areas of work, education, health, and leisure. A more extensive wealth, an augmented access to education, more free time, and an improved mobility (epitomized by the great success of vehicles such as the Fiat 500 and the Vespa scooter) also resulted in changes in consumption, sexual attitudes and norms, and a greater freedom in dress codes and language. With more wealth, Italy also became a consumer society following the American model. Consumerism, urbanization, and mobility changed old customs and habits, and Italian society with it. The modern and frantically urbanized Italy replaced the image of an old and traditional rural country. As Clark argues, "a 'mass', 'lay' society was gradually forming; no one had anticipated it, and few intellectuals welcomed it."[268] It is precisely in this period that Germi set his film.

Several scenes in *Un maledetto imbroglio* take place in bars where consumer icons such as jukeboxes, advertisements for fashionable drinks, and neon lighting are symbolic of the Americanization of Italian society. One bar in particular—where Inspector Ingravallo meets *commendatore* Anzaloni—is populated by idle young people wearing jeans and playing with a pinball machine. Some of these young men address Anzaloni and ask for a cigarette, while trying to seduce the covertly homosexual *commendatore*. The following scene at the police headquarters sees them being interrogated by one of Ingravallo's colleagues. The camera lingers with sympathy on their attractive and impudent faces, drawing a portrait that recalls Pasolini's *ragazzi di vita*. In Germi's film, these young men are victims of a corrupt society: they are ready to lie, steal, and sell themselves in order to get the new symbols of well-being in a consumerist Italy. However, everybody seems to sell themselves in Germi's *Imbroglio*: Diomede (Nino Castelnuovo), Assuntina (Claudia Cardinale)'s fiancé, "accompanies" matures American ladies visiting Rome and is pressed by Ingravallo: "'tutto pagato, naturalmente, ma come fai, per la dignità voglio dire, passano i soldi prima oppure metà e metà [...] Loro pagano [al ristorante] e tu pigli il resto'" ["it's all paid, of course, but how do you? I mean, what about your dignity? They pay you first, or go half and half

[…] They pay [at the restaurant] and you keep the change'"]; Valdarena sells his friendship to Liliana Banducci and then, in Ingravallo's words, draws "'il fisso e, a fine mese, gli extra'" ["fixed income and, at the end on the month, some extra money"]. Moreover, many characters surrender to the cult of the ephemeral, such as Camilla la beduina [the Bedouin] who undergoes a suntan session in Valdarena's studio, commenting: "'È la moda!'" ["It's in fashion!"]. She gets a fake tan in order to have a fake look in the studio of a fake doctor. Indeed, in this brief scene, more than any other, Germi's ferocious look highlights the phoniness of Italian society of the 1950s.

In a movie that retains Gadda's polyphony through the use of a variety of dialects spoken by different characters, the novel's choral tone is heard in the numerous scenes that involve the noisy tenants of the *palazzo*, Ingravallo's police team, and sequences at fruit and vegetable markets, bars, and restaurants. Some of these scenes represent a comic relief in an otherwise fast-paced narrative and a conscious operation of destabilization of the neo-realist canon on Germi's part.[269] This is also the most original trait in Germi's adaptation of the American hard-boiled novel onto Italian soil. The Italian director is able to turn some crime fiction tropes into hilarious moments. This is the case, for example, with a sequence when policeman Marchetti sees the suspect, Remo Banducci, taking a car. Marchetti jumps into a taxi and shouts: "'Dietro quella macchina!'" ["Follow that car!"]. This typical scene of crime films turns into something unexpected:

> Taxista: "Eh?"
> Marchetti: "Presto, polizia!"
> "Con tutte le macchine che ce stanno a Roma…."
> "Allora, che fai, ti muovi?"
> [il motore non parte]
> Taxista: "Dottò, se me dà una spintarella…"
>
> [Taxi driver: "Eh?"
> Marchetti: "Go, police!"
> "With all the cars that are in Rome…"
> "What are you doing? Move!"
> (the engine does not start)
> Taxi driver: "Sir, can you push?"]

This amusing taxi scene is only one of the sequences that involve cars, another symbol of the Economic Boom. In the typical hard-boiled

tradition, Ingravallo and his team shadow many characters. They drive from the crowded center to growing peripheries with tall and bleak buildings (also symbolic of the Economic Boom). Their investigations also take them to the countryside with its images of the increasing gap between the city and rural areas in 1950s Italy.

Until the end, Germi's *Imbroglio* is a powerful denunciation of greed and hypocrisy in the Italy of the Economic Boom. This hypocrisy, however, does not spare the detective himself who, in spite of presenting himself as a moral figure, shows his flaws. For example, he is able to understand that Banducci took his lover Virginia to a motel on the beach because he has done exactly the same with his lover, Paola. When Ingravallo and Saro leave the motel, the owner says: "'Eppure io quello con i baffi l'ho già visto'" ["Yet, I have already seen that one with the moustache"]. Indeed, the moralizer Ingravallo is also a culprit of hypocrisy, choosing to conduct his affair away from indiscreet eyes, just like Banducci. The detective's flaws are also revealed in the last scene of the film, when he finally arrests Diomede, Liliana Banducci's murderer. Confronted with Assuntina and Diomede's desperation, he feels moved and allows them to embrace each other for the last time. Then once in the car with Diomede, he looks alarmed and presses the driver to leave quickly. Assuntina is fast approaching, and in a scene that consciously recalls Anna Magnani's run in *Roma città aperta*,[270] Assuntina/Claudia Cardinale starts chasing the police automobile. Diomede bursts into tears and helplessly looks at Assuntina through the car window, while Ingravallo looks away. This overlapping between Claudia Cardinale and Anna Magnani and between *Un maledetto imbroglio* and *Roma città aperta* is not a mere homage to the neorealist cinema on Germi's part. As Palumbo argues, it is functional to an overturning of roles in *Imbroglio*'s ending.[271] From being the culprit (she covered up her fiancé's actions), Assuntina assumes the role of the victim. Conversely, from being the representative of law and order, Ingravallo turns unwillingly into a tormentor, embodying a merciless law that deprives the poor servant of a happy future.

This unsettling ending contrasts with the closure of a traditional crime story when order is invariably restored. By contrast, it points a finger at the rigid application of the law that crushes young lives and becomes a powerful manifesto against the mob justice often present in public discourse. Ingravallo's piety toward Diomede and Assuntina also contrasts with his harsh and uncompromising attitude toward the older generations involved in the Fascist regime (as embodied by Banducci) and the parasitic

and shallow middle class of the new Italy (embodied by Valdarena) for which there is no mercy. It looks as if after his frantic search for the culprit, Ingravallo sees the limits of his actions and justice itself. He sympathizes with the younger generation as they face a world they have not built and sadly end up being corrupted by an undignified society dominated by greed. In the end, Ingravallo realizes that he (with his generation) is also guilty of constructing a hypocritical society. Feeling awkward, he hides behind his oversize sunglasses to avoid Diomede's glaze and his own conscience. Thus, *Un maledetto imbroglio* becomes a powerful reflection on the responsibilities of a generation of Italians that created a wealthier Italy, but failed to regenerate it from a shameful past.

Notes

1. In 1990, Gianni Amelio made a cinematic version of the novel. *Porte aperte* features Gian Maria Volontè as Judge Vito Di Francesco.
2. Sciascia, *Porte aperte* in *Opere*, 333; *Open Doors*, 12.
3. In an interior monologue, the judge contemplates the irony of justice being dispensed from Palermo's *Palazzo di Giustizia* [Law Courts], a building that had served as the seat of the Inquisition.
4. Sciascia, *Porte aperte* in *Opere*, 340; *Open Doors*, 19.
5. JoAnn Cannon, *The Novel as Investigation. Leonardo Sciascia, Dacia Maraini and Antonio Tabucchi* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2006), 18.
6. As Claude Ambroise has pointed out in the introduction to *Opere* 3 (xlii), the death penalty was an issue of continuing concern for Sciascia.
7. Jonathan Dunnage, *Twentieth Century Italy. A Social History* (London and New York: Longman, 2002), 224.
8. Michele Soavi, *Il sangue dei vinti*, 2008.
9. Carlo Emilio Gadda, *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana* (Milan: Garzanti, [1957] 1964), translated by William Weaver as *That Awful Mess on Via Merulana*, (New York: NYRB Classics, 2007).
10. Dunnage, *Twentieth Century*, 225.
11. In the last 20 years, a number of books that re-examine the post-1943 period have been published. Among the most successful are: Sergio Luzzatto's *Partigia. Una storia della Resistenza* [Partisan. A History of the Resistance] (Milan: Mondadori, 2013) in which, in spite of its flaws, the Resistance is still considered a vital experience for establishing a democratic and free Italy; Giampaolo Pansa's controversial books *Il sangue dei vinti* [The Blood of the Defeated] (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2003), *La grande bugia* [The Big Lie] (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2008), and *Bella*

ciao. Controstoria della Resistenza [Bella Ciao. Counter-history of the Resistance] (Milan: Rizzoli, 2014); Claudio Pavone's *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità della Resistenza* [A Civil War. An Essay on the Morality of the Resistance] (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991), which introduced for the first time the concept of "guerra civile" [civil war] for the war between Fascists and partisans; Santo Peli's *Storia della Resistenza in Italia* [History of the Italian Resistance] (Turin: Einaudi, 2006); Nuto Revelli's *Le due guerre. Guerra fascista e guerra partigiana* [The Two Wars. The Fascist War and the Partisan War] (Turin: Einaudi, 2005); and historian Roberto Vivarelli's memoir *La fine di una stagione. Memorie 1943–1945* [The End of a Season. Memories 1943–1945] (Bologna; Il Mulino, 2000).

12. For example, Belusconi dismissed the Fascist practice of sending political opponents and homosexuals to internal exile as a "holiday camp" as reported in the article "Mussolini non ha mai ammazzato nessuno" [Mussolini never killed anyone], *Il Corriere della sera* online, 11 September 2003. In http://www.corriere.it/Primo_Piano/Politica/2003/09_Settembre/11/berlusconi.shtml (consulted on 1 March 2015).
13. Lichtner, *Fascism in Italian Cinema*, 22–3.
14. Raffaele Romanelli, "Retoriche di fine millennio," in *Due nazioni. Legittimazione e delegittimazione nella storia dell'Italia contemporanea*, ed. Loreto Di Nucci and Ernesto Galli Della Loggia (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003), 335–65 (343).
15. Gustavo Corni, "Fascism, anti-Fascism, and Resistance in the Politics of Memory and Historiography in Post-War Italy," in *The Many Faces of Clio. Cross-Cultural Approaches to Historiography*, ed. Q. Edward Wand and Franz L. Fillafer (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), 420–36 (429).
16. Luca Somigli, "Rewriting Histories," 18.
17. Edoardo Angelino, *L'inverno dei mongoli* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995).
18. Corrado Augias, *Quella mattina di luglio* (Milan: Mondadori, 1995).
19. Leonardo Gori, *Il passaggio* (Milan: Hobby & Work, 2002).
20. A journalist for newspapers such as *La Repubblica* and TV host, Augias is also the author of a spy trilogy set in the decade between the Libyan War (1911) and the rise of Fascism. The novels are: *Quel treno da Vienna* [That Train from Vienna] (Milan: Rizzoli, 1981), *Il fazzoletto azzurro* [The Blue Handkerchief] (Milan: Rizzoli, 1983), and *L'ultima primavera* [The Last Spring] (Milan: Rizzoli, 1983).They feature former police commissioner Giovanni Sperelli, brother of Andrea Sperelli, fictional character of D'Annunzio's *Il piacere* (Milan: Treves, 1889), translated by Georgina Harding and Arthur Symons as *The Child of Pleasure* (New York and Berlin: Mondial, 1889).
21. Augias, *Quella mattina*, 20–21.
22. Ibid., 89.

23. Somigli, "Rewriting Histories," 24.
24. Augias, *Quella mattina*, 45.
25. Ibid., 35.
26. Ibid., 233.
27. Bertini, "Il giallo storico," 188.
28. Somigli, "Rewriting Histories," 26.
29. Leonardo Gori, *Nero di maggio* (Milan: Hobby & Work, 2000); and *La finale* (Milan: Hobby & Work, 2003).
30. Leonardo Gori, *L'angelo del fango* (Milan: Hobby & Work, 2005); and *Musica nera* (Milan: Hobby & Work, 2004).
31. Gori, *Il passaggio*, 53.
32. Ibid., 38.
33. Somigli, "Rewriting Hitories," 30–1.
34. The *carabinieri* is the national military police of Italy, policing both military and civilian populations. It was originally founded as the police force of the Kingdom of Sardinia. During the process of Italian unification, it was appointed the "First Force" of the new national military organization. Although the *carabinieri* assisted in the suppression of opposition during the rule of Benito Mussolini, it was also responsible for his downfall and many units were disbanded by Nazi Germany, which resulted in large numbers of *carabinieri* joining the Italian Resistance movement. Since 2001, it has been one of the four Italian Armed Forces.
35. Luciano Marrocu, *Debrà Libanòs* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2002). After an unsuccessful attempt by two Eritreans to kill him on 19 February 1937 (and after other murders of Italians in occupied Ethiopia), Graziani ordered a bloody and indiscriminate reprisal upon the conquered country, later remembered by Ethiopians as "Yekatit 12": up to 30,000 civilians of Addis Ababa were killed indiscriminately; another 1469 were summarily executed by the end of the next month, and over 1000 notable Ethiopians were imprisoned and then exiled from Ethiopia. Graziani became known as "the Butcher of Ethiopia."
36. The *Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell'Antifascismo* [Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism] was the secret police of the Kingdom of Italy, founded in 1927 under the Mussolini regime. The secret police were assigned to stop any anti-Fascist activity or sentiment. Approximately 5000 OVRA agents infiltrated most aspects of domestic life in Italy. The OVRA was headed by Arturo Bocchini.
37. Marrocu, *Debrà Libanòs*, *24.*
38. Ibid., 26.
39. Ibid., 33.

40. Graziani's suspicion of the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy (and the fact that the wife of one of the assassins had briefly taken sanctuary at the monastery) had convinced him of the complicity of the monks in the attempt on his life.
41. Ibid., 75.
42. Ibid., 142.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 153.
45. Marrocu, *Il caso*, 33.
46. Angelino, *L'inverno*, 16.
47. Ibid., 35.
48. The Leggi r*azziali* [Italian Racial Laws] were a set of laws promulgated from 1938 to 1943 to enforce racial discrimination in Italy. This was directed mainly against the Italian Jews and the native inhabitants of the colonies. The first and most important of the *leggi razziali* was the Regio Decreto 17 Novembre 1938 that restricted civil rights of Jews, banned their books, and excluded Jews from public office and higher education. Additional laws stripped Jews of their assets, restricted travel, and finally provided for their internship in internal exile, as was done for political prisoners.
49. Ibid., 164–5.
50. Ibid., 166.
51. Ibid., 168.
52. Ibid., 160.
53. Philip Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (Houndmills and Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave McMillan, 2011), 166.
54. Marco Sangiorgi, "Il fascismo e il giallo italiano," 145.
55. For the concept of "Italiani, brava gente," see Davide Rodogno, "*Italiani Brava Gente*? Italian Policy Toward the Jews of the Balkans," *European History Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2005): 213–240.
56. Cooke, *The Legacy*, 166.
57. The first includes "Nikita," in *I delitti del Gruppo XIII*, ed. Massimo Moscati (Bologna: Metrolibri and Granta Press, 1992), 77–94; *Falange armata* [Armed Phalanx] (Bologna: Metrolibri and Granata Press, 1993); and *Il giorno del lupo* [The Day of the Wolf] (Bologna: Metrolibri and Granata Press, 1994). The second includes *Lupo mannaro* [Werewolf] (Turin: Einaudi, 1994); *Almost Blue* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), translated by Oonagh Stransky as *Almost Blue* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2001); and *Un giorno dopo l'altro* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), translated by Michael Raynolds as *Day After Day* (London: Harvill Press, 2004).
58. Carlo Lucarelli, *Carta bianca* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1990), translated by Michael Reynolds as *Carte Blanche* (New York: Europa Editions, 2006); *L'estate torbida* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1991), translated by Michael Reynolds

as *The Damned Season* (New York: Europa Editions, 2007); and *Via delle Oche* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1996), translated by Michael Reynolds as *Via delle Oche* (New York: Europa Editions, 2008).

59. *Indagine non autorizzata* [Unauthorized Investigation] (Milan: Hobby & Work, 1998), *L'isola dell'angelo caduto* [The Island of the Fallen Angel] (Turin: Einaudi, 1999).
60. Elisabetta Bacchereti, *Carlo Lucarelli* (Fiesole, FI: Cadmo, 2004), 185. The Italian Social Republic (RSI), informally known as the Republic of Salò, was a satellite state of Nazi Germany during the later part of WWII (from 1943 until 1945). It was the second and last incarnation of the Fascist Italian state and it was led by Il Duce Benito Mussolini and his reformed Republican Fascist Party. The policeman interviewed by Lucarelli had served in the police force for 40 years, starting during the *Ventennio* and finishing with his retirement in the 1980s. When Lucarelli asked the policeman which party he had voted for, the interviewee answered: "Che c'entra questa domanda, io sono un poliziotto" ["This question is nonsense. I am a policeman"] (Bacchereti, *Carlo Lucarelli*, 185). Lucarelli then had the idea of writing a novel about a police detective who identified himself completely with his job. The result was the publication of *Carta bianca*.
61. The *Brigata Muti* was one of the Fascist paramilitary corps *Brigate nere* [Black Brigades] operating in Northern Italy from 1944 till the end of WWII. They acted as political police and were responsible for the repression of the Resistance. The Brigata Muti, operating in Ravenna, was responsible for several episodes of violence and torture.
62. Angela Barwig, "The Via Emilia," in *Differences, Deceits, and Desires: Murder and Mayhem in Italian Crime Fiction*, ed. Mirna Cicioni and Nicoletta Di Ciolla (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 120.
63. Lucarelli, *Carta Bianca*, 88; *Carte Blanche*, 80.
64. Ibid., 19; Ibid., 21.
65. Ibid.; Ibid.
66. Ibid., 79; Ibid., 73.
67. Ibid., 20, 81; Ibid., 22, 75.
68. Ibid., 110; Ibid., 99.
69. Ibid., 113; Ibid., 101.
70. Ibid., 24; Ibid., 27.
71. Ibid., 66; Ibid., 62.
72. Ibid., 88; Ibid., 80.
73. Katharina Hall, "The 'Nazi Detective' as Provider of Justice in Post-1990 British and German Crime Fiction: Philip Kerr's *The Pale Criminal*, Robert Harris's *Fatherland*, and Richard Birkefield and Göran

Hachmeister's *Wer übrig bleibt, hat recht*," *Comparative Literature Studies* 50, no. 2 (2013): 288–313 (292).
74. Barwig, "The Via Emilia,"120.
75. Lucarelli, *L'estate torbida*, 109; *The Damned Season*, 106.
76. Ibid., *emphasis in the text*; Ibid.
77. Lucarelli, *Carta Bianca*, 29; *Carte Blanche*, 31.
78. Ibid., 27, 45; Ibid., 29, 44.
79. Ibid., 56–7; Ibid., 54.
80. Lidia De Federicis, "Poliziesco storico," *L'Indice dei libri del mese*, no. 11(1996), 23.
81. Lucarelli, *Via delle Oche*, 148, *emphasis in the text*; *Via delle Oche*, 154.
82. Ibid., 149; Ibid., 155.
83. Bacchereti, *Carlo Lucarelli*, 37.
84. Lucarelli, *La stagione torbida*, 93; *The Damned Season*, 96.
85. Ibid., 9, 10, 11; Ibid., 17, 18, 18.
86. Ibid., 22; Ibid., 28.
87. Ibid., 58–9, *emphasis in the text*; Ibid., 61; *emphasis in the text.*
88. Ibid., 61; Ibid., 63.
89. Ibid., 62; Ibid., 63.
90. Ibid., 99; Ibid., 95–6.
91. Sarah Amrani, "Le investigazioni storico-poliziesche del commissario De Luca," in *Il romanzo poliziesco. La storia*, *la memoria*, 363–74, (370).
92. An earlier version of this section has been published as "The Detective as an Historian," 213–235.
93. Loriano Macchiavelli, *Le piste dell'attentato* (Milan: Campironi, 1974).
94. Robert Gordon, *The Holocaust in Italian Culture. 1944–2010* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 123.
95. Francesco Guccini and Loriano Macchiavelli, *Macaroní. Romanzo di santi e delinquent* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997).
96. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Un disco dei Platters. Romanzo di un maresciallo e di una regina* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998).
97. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Tango e gli altri. Romanzo di una raffica*, *anzi tre* (Milan: Mondadori, 2008).
98. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Questo sangue che impasta la terra* (Milan: Mondadori, 2001). For the meaning of "the strategy of tension," see Chap. 4.
99. J. Douglas Porteous, "Literature and Humanist Geography," *Area* 17, no.2 (1985): 117–22 (119).
100. Maria Pia De Paulis, "Oblio della storia e pena sociale in Macaronì di Francesco Guccini e Loriano Macchiavelli," in *Il romanzo poliziesco. La storia*, *la memoria*, 31–48 (38).

101. *Fiori alla memoria* (Milan: Garzanti, 1975) starts with a series of acts of vandalism against a monument of a group of fallen partisans and ends with the discovery of the identity of the traitor who caused their death at the end of WWII. In *Sequenze di memoria* (Milan: Garzanti, 1976), Macchiavelli associates the cruelty of the Fascist past with the aggressiveness of the capitalist economy, which radically transformed the way of life of entire communities during the Economic Miracle. Analyzing *Sequenze di memoria*, Somigli argues that "[v]iolence and death are the result of the refusal to come to terms with history, to understand and deal with the wounds left by it upon the social body" (Luca Somigli, "L'impossibilità del ritorno: morte e memoria in un romanzo di Loriano Macchiavelli," *Narrativa* 26 [2004]: 27–35, 78). This is also true of the Sansovito series, for which *Sequenze di memoria* represents an ideal prologue.
102. Macchiavelli and Guccini, *Macaronì*, 84.
103. Ibid., 85.
104. Paolo Chirumbolo, "Raccontare il passato: il ciclo di Sansovito tra microstoria e cultura popolare," *Italica* 86, no.3 (2009): 471–87 (478).
105. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Un disco*, 301.
106. Robin W. Winks, *The Historian as a Detective*: *Essays on Evidence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), xiii; Ginzburg, *Spie*, 65.
107. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Questo sangue*, 475. In July 1960 violent demonstrations took place against the decision to hold the MSI annual congress in the anti-Fascist stronghold of Genoa. Violent battles between the police and demonstrators forced the Government to postpone the congress. Subsequent conflicts between civilians and the police in Sicily and Reggio Emilia caused the death of several demonstrators, and Tambroni was forced to resign (Dunnage, *Twentieth Century*, 168).
108. Claudio Milanesi, "Le roman criminal et l'historie. Introduction," *Cahier d'études romanes* 15, no.1 (2006): 9–19, 13.
109. Dunnage, *Twentieth Century*, 226.
110. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Questo sangue*, 634.
111. Clark, *Modern Italy*, 529.
112. R.J.B. Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), 225–26.
113. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Tango*, 132.
114. Ernesto Galli Della Loggia, *La morte della patria* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1996); Giampaolo Pansa, *Bella ciao. Controstoria della Resistenza* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2014), *La grande bugia* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2008), and *Il sangue dei vinti* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2003).
115. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Tango*, 36.
116. Ibid., 283.
117. Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime*, 140.
118. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Tango*, 319.

119. Romanelli, "Retoriche," 343.
120. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Tango*, 380.
121. Sergio Luzzatto, "*Partigia*." *Una storia della Resistenza* (Milan: Mondadori, 2013).
122. Guccini and Macchiavelli, *Tango*, 197.
123. Ibid., 279.
124. Maurizio De Giovanni, *Le lacrime del pagliaccio* (Naples: Graus, 2006), re-published as *Il senso del dolore* (Rome: Fandango, 2007) and as *Il senso del dolore* (Turin: Einaudi, 2012). Translated by Anne Milano Appel as *I Will Have Vengeance* (New York: Europa Editions, 2013). In this book, the Einaudi edition is used for all the De Giovanni's novels.
125. Maurizio De Giovanni, *La condanna del sangue. La primavera del commissario Ricciardi* (Turin: Einaudi, 2008), translated by Anthony Sugaar as *Blood Curse* (New York: Europa Editions, 2013); *Il posto di ognuno. L'estate del commissario Ricciardi* (Turin: Einaudi, 2009), translated by Anthony Sugaar as *Everyone in Their Place* (New York: Europa Editions, 2013); and *Il giorno dei morti. L'autunno del commissario Ricciardi* (Turin: Einaudi, 2010), translated by Anthony Sugaar as *The Day of the Dead* (New York: Europa Editions, 2014).
126. In the meantime, Einaudi also re-published the first four books under the title *Le stagioni del commissario Ricciardi* [The Seasons of Inspector Ricciardi] (Turin: Einaudi, 2012).
127. This trio resembles another famous fictional trio in Italian crime fiction, that is the maverick Inspector Montalbano, his sidekick Fazio, an elderly and wise policeman, and the forensics pathologist doctor Pasquano with whom Montalbano has a love–hate relationship.
128. Daniela Palamidese, "Maurizio De Giovanni, il lettore che scrive," *L'Ora del té* Blog, Biblioteca di Spinea, 23 February 2014. In http://www.biblioteca-spinea.it/blog/2014/02/23/maurizio-de-giovanni-il-lettore-che-scrive/ (consulted on 15 June 2015).
129. De Giovanni, *Per mano*, 237–38; *By My Hand*, 276–77.
130. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 101.
131. De Giovanni, *Per mano*, 238; *By My Hands*, 277.
132. Ibid., 191–92; Ibid., 225.
133. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 254; *Everyone*, 310.
134. On 15 June 1935, the Italian Cabinet approved a Bill instituting the "Fascist Saturday." According to the new law, employees and workers were released from work on Saturday afternoon, but had to place themselves at the complete disposal of the Fascist organization to which they belong and undergo sport and military training. Children also participated in the Fascist Saturday. See Whittam, *Fascist Italy*, 73.

135. *Balilla* was the name given to boys between the ages of 8 and 14 who enrolled in Opera Nazionale Balilla, a Fascist youth paramilitary organization. This term represents the nickname given to the popular historical figure Giovan Battista Perasso, a young boy who initiated the Genovese insurrection of 1746 against the occupying Austrians by throwing a stone.
136. De Giovanni, *Per mano*, 39; *By My Hand*, 53.
137. De Giovanni, *Il senso*, 109; *I Will Have Vengeance*, 122.
138. De Giovanni, *La condanna*, 83; *Blood Curse*, 106.
139. Ibid., 177; Ibid., 221.
140. Jonathan Dunnage, "Italian Policemen and Fascist Ideology," *The Italianist* 31, no.1 (2011): 99–111 (99–100).
141. Ibid., 104.
142. De Giovanni, *Per mano*, 39–40; *By My Hand*, 54.
143. Whittam, *Fascist Italy*, 152.
144. De Giovanni, *Per mano*, 60; *By My Hand*, 76.
145. Whittam, *Fascist Italy*, 55.
146. Indeed, in 1926, all political parties, associations, and organizations opposed to the Fascist regime were dissolved. By 1928, Mussolini had concluded the party transition from being the major political force in Italy to a regime in its own right (Whittam, *Fascist Italy*, 41–52).
147. De Giovanni, *La condanna*, 253; *Blood Curse*, 308.
148. Anthony Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion: World War Two* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1976), 70–71.
149. See Nicola Tranfaglia, Paolo Murialdi, and Massimo Legnani, *La stampa italiana nell'età fascista* (Bari: Laterza, 1980).
150. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 57; *Everyone*, 72.
151. The Rocco Code limited the rights of suspects and increased the powers of the police.
152. Ibid., 129; Ibid., 158.
153. De Giovanni, *Il senso del dolore*, 128; *I Will Have Vengeance*, 142.
154. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 108; *Everyone*, 134.
155. Dunnage, "Italian Policemen," 100.
156. This expression, which means a non-party view of politics, is named after Guglielmo Giannini's political movement called "Fronte dell'uomo qualunque" [Front of the Ordinary Man] founded in 1946. It voiced the resentment of the white-collar workers of Rome and the South, who had little sympathy for anti-Fascism and were worried about being purged after WWII. The party disappeared in 1949, when most of its representatives joined larger political organizations.
157. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 7; *Everyone*, 16.
158. De Giovanni, *Il giorno*, 223; *The Day*, 271.
159. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 91–92; *Everyone*, 114.

160. Ibid., 194; Ibid., 235.
161. Ibid., 314; Ibid., 378.
162. De Giovanni, *Vipera*, 248; *Viper*, 268.
163. De Giovanni, *La condanna*, 45; *Blood Curse*, 60.
164. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 40; *Everyone*, 52.
165. De Giovanni, *Il giorno*, 14; *The Day*, 24.
166. De Giovanni, *La condanna* 173; *Blood Curse*, 216.
167. De Giovanni, *Vipera*, 102; *Viper*, 114.
168. Ibid., 104; Ibid., 116.
169. De Giovanni, *Il senso del dolore*, 54; *I Will Have Vengeance*, 62–63.
170. De Giovanni, *La condanna del sangue*, 15; *Blood Curse*, 25
171. De Giovanni, *Il giorno*, 21; *The Day*, 31.
172. De Giovanni, *Per mano*, 62; *By My Hand*, 78.
173. Ibid., 70; Ibid., 88.
174. Ibid., 227; Ibid., 265.
175. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 221, 225; *Everyone*, 269, 272.
176. Ibid., 224; Ibid., 271.
177. Ibid., 229–30; Ibid., 278.
178. Ibid., 232; Ibid., 282.
179. De Giovanni, *Vipera*, 218; *Viper*, 235.
180. The *confino* was a restrictive measure similar to internal exile, meant for segregating political enemies in remote, impoverished villages. Its institution in 1922 became a major instrument of political repression.
181. De Giovanni, *Vipera*, 219; *Viper*, 237.
182. Ibid., 218; Ibid., 277.
183. Ibid., 257; Ibid., 277.
184. De Giovanni, *Il posto*, 189; *Everyone* 228.
185. Karin Molander Danielsson, *The Dynamic Detective*: *Special Interest and Seriality in Contemporary Detective Stories* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2002) 148–49.
186. Priscilla L. Walton and Manina Jones, *Detective Agency. Women Rewriting the Hard-Boiled Tradition* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1999), 153–54.
187. Saverio Lodato, *La linea della palma. Saverio Lodato fa raccontare Andrea Camilleri* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2002), 101.
188. Andrea Camilleri, *Il cane di terracotta* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1996), translated by Stephen Sartarelli as *The Terracotta Dog* (London: Picador, 2004); "Un diario del '43" in *Un mese con Montalbano* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998); *Il gioco della mosca* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1995); *La presa di Macallè* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2003); *Privo di titolo* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2005); *La pensione Eva* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2006); *Il casellante*

(Palermo: Sellerio, 2008); *Il nipote del Negus* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2010); and *Gran Circo Taddei e altre storie di Vigàta* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2011).

189. In his biography, Camilleri remembers how, at the age of ten, he wrote a letter to Mussolini asking to join the Abyssinian war. He received a letter from Il Duce where he showed appreciation for the offer, but declined it because Camilleri was far too young to go to war. Mussolini concluded: "There will be an occasion in the future to show his courage" (Lodato, *La linea*, 78–8).
190. Most reviews are available on the Camilleri Fan Club's website www.vigata.org
191. Gianni Bonina, *Il carico da undici. Le carte di Andrea Camilleri* (Florence: Barbera, 2007), 385.
192. Carlo Emilio Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*: *da furore a cenere* (Milano, Garzanti, 1967).
193. Zygmunt Baranski and Rebecca J. West, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 163.
194. Simona Demontis, "Un'infanzia da sillabario. Il fascismo secondo Camilleri," in *Lingua*, *storia*, *gioco e moralità nel mondo di Andrea Camilleri* (Cagliari: CUEC, 2004), 72.
195. Andrea Camilleri, *La presa di Macallè* in *Romanzi storici e civili*, ed. Salvatore Silvano Nigro (Milan: Mondadori, 2004), 1433–1653 (1469).
196. Ibid., 1467.
197. Whittam, *Fascist Italy*, 66–70.
198. Camilleri, *La presa*, 1551.
199. Whittam, *Fascist Italy*, 76.
200. Ibid.
201. Camilleri, *La presa*, 1529.
202. Ibid., 1452.
203. Carlo Buti (1902–1963) was an Italian interpreter of popular and folk music. He was known as "the Golden Voice of Italy," and was possibly the first superstar of Italian music in the twentieth century. He recorded 1574 songs during his career, among which were the famous "Vivere" [Living] and "Dove sta Zazà" [Where is Zazà].
204. It was written by Renato Micheli with music by Mario Ruccione in 1935. The lyrics talk about how the young woman will be taken back to Rome and offered a new Fascist life, free from the bonds of slavery.
205. "Il Balilla" was a popular children's comic and the official magazine of the regime. "L'Avventuroso" [The Adventurous] (1934–1943) was a colonial-spirited journal for children that aimed to mold Italian boys for their future as soldiers and colonialists. "Modellina" was the equivalent for Italian girls whose destiny was to become the ideal housewife. "L'Audace"

[The Intrepid] (1937–1943) was a comic book where popular characters such as Superman were italianized to please the Fascist censorship. For example, Superman became "Ciclone" [Tornado] or "Uomo d'acciaio" [Man of Steel]. See the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/italy (consulted on 17 January 2015).

206. Ibid., 1545.
207. Ibid., 1557.
208. Antonio Gibelli, *Il popolo bambino*: *infanzia e nazione dalla Grande Guerra a Salò* (Turin: Einaudi, 2005).
209. It was composed of the eponymous black shirt, the fez of Arditi tradition, gray-green trousers, black fasces emblems, and azure handkerchiefs (in the national color of Italy). See Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan, ed. *Nations and Nationalism*: *A Global Historical Overview*, 4 vols. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 676.
210. Macallè was the capital of the Tigray region from where Italian colonist troups were evicted in 1896. The Italian Fascist Army reconquered Macallè in 1935.
211. Camilleri, *La presa*, 1508–09.
212. Ibid., 1517. "Salve o popolo di eroi" was a line of "Giovinezza" [Youth], the official hymn of the Italian National Fascist Party, regime, and army, and was the unofficial national anthem of Italy between 1924 and 1943.
213. Ibid., 1520.
214. Ibid., 1544.
215. Mauro Novelli, "Il rosso e i neri. Fascismo e religione, sessualità e violenza in Andrea Camilleri, *La presa di Macallè*," in *Il romanzo poliziesco*, 93–102 (95–96).
216. Wu Ming, "La presa di Macallé," *Nandropausa* 5 (2203) in http://www.wumingfoundation.com/italiano/Giap/nandropausa5.html (consulted on 1 March 2015).
217. A few days after the September 11 attack of al-Qaeda, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi stated in *La Repubblica*: "The Western world must be aware of the superiority of our civilization, a system that has guaranteed well being, respect for civil rights and—in contrast with Islamic countries—respect for political and religious rights" in (http://www.repubblica.it/online/mondo/italiadue/berlusconi/berlusconi.html). Undoubtedly with this rhetoric of the superior civilization, the Italian premier echoed the Fascist colonialist discourse (consulted on 1 March 2015).
218. Elgin Kirsten Eckert, "Youth Raped, and Denied," 208.
219. This statement on the occasion of the International Film Festival in Rome was reported by the national press, including *La Repubblica* on 6 November 2010. The article in *La Repubblica* also quotes Camilleri as saying: "A suggestion to young people? Here it is: don't be influenced by

a society that pretends to give the maximum of liberty and gives us the maximum of control."

220. Luigi Mascheroni, "Eja eja Camilleri: 'Quando c'era lui si stava meglio,'" *Il Giornale*, 6 November 2010 in http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/eja-eja-camilleri-quando-c-era-lui-si-stava-meglio.html (consulted on 1 March 2015).
221. From the start Damiani shows the real culprit, Tarquinio Tirabosco (Gabriele Lavia), a young carter who lives in a popular area of Rome. The film provides a solution which is different from the most accepted version according to which the real child molester was in fact Ralph Lyonel Bridges, an Anglican priest, who was not charged with the murders and was quietly extradited to the UK. See Ettore Gerardi (2002) "Girolimoni il mostro innocente" http://www.poliziaedemocrazia.it/live/index.php?domain=archivio&action=articolo&idArticolo=340).
222. They were aired in March and April 1994. The most jarring episode depicted the gruesome scene in Milan's Piazzale Loreto where Mussolini's corpse, along with that of his mistress Clara Petacci and other Fascist officials, was hung upside down for public viewing. As Cooke argues, "by placing these images right at the start of the show, the program also problematizes the actual chronology of the events leading up to the killings, and largely decontextualizes the reasons for the public vilification of the corpses" (Cooke, *The Legacy*, 164). The public broadcast of "Combat Film" generated a heated debate about the figure of Mussolini and his execution. See Robert Ventresca, "Debating the Meaning of Fascism in Contemporary Italy," *Modern Italy* 11, no.2 (2006): 189–209 (201–204).
223. For an analysis of *Porzûs*, see Cooke (*The Legacy*, 186–188), and Lichtner (*Fascism in Italian Cinema*, 2014, 24–9). For an analysis of *Il cuore nel pozzo*, see Lichtner (*Fascism in Italian Cinema*, 29–36).
224. Renzo Martinelli, *Porzûs* (2010); Alberto Negrin, *Il cuore nel pozzo* (2005); and Michele Soavi, *Il sangue dei vinti* (2008).
225. Alberto Negrin, *Perlasca: un eroe italiano* (2001).
226. Guido Chiesa, *Il caso Martello* (1991); Massimo Guglielmi, *Gangsters* (1992); Daniele Luchetti, *I piccoli maestri* (1998); and Guido Chiesa, *Il partigiano Johnny/Johnny, the Partisan* (2000). *Il caso Martello* is a complex story that connects an unclaimed insurance policy in the 1980s with the war of liberation and contrasts the morality of contemporary Italy with that of the Resistance period (Cooke, *The Legacy*, 163). *Gangsters* gives a sympathetic portrayal of a group of Ligurian partisans "who found themselves sucked into a murky world of postwar killings and common crime" (Cooke, *The Legacy*, 163). *I piccoli maestri* was based on the autobiographical work by Luigi Meneghello first published in the mid-1960s. For an analysis of this film, see Cooke (188). *Il partigiano Johnny* was

based on the unfinished novel of the same name by Piedmontese writer Beppe Fenoglio and published posthumously in 1968. For an analysis of this film, see Cooke (*The Legacy*, 188).

227. For the main positions in the debate, see Ventresca, "Debating the Meaning of Fascism," 201.
228. See Corni, "Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and Resistance," 420–436.
229. Ibid., 430.
230. Foot, Italy's *Divided Memories*, 181.
231. Ventresca, "Debating the Meaning of Fascism," 201.
232. Ilaria Falcone, "*Il sangue dei vinti* di Michele Soavi: la storia decolorata," *Nonsolocinema*, 5. 15, 7 May 2009. In http://www.nonsolocinema.com/IL-SANGUE-DEI-VINTI-di-Michele_16440.html (consulted on 1 March 2015).
233. Falcone.
234. Lichtner, *Fascism in Italian Cinema*, 37.
235. Highly symbolic in this regard is the scene where the partisans enter a liberated village and the detective walks against the current, cutting through a crowd of cheerful villagers, refusing to share the enthusiasm for a liberation in which he does not believe.
236. Ferruccio Gattuso, "*Il sangue dei vinti* promosso. Il pubblico cerca la storia vera," *Il Giornale*, 3 October 2010.
237. It was shown in the UK on BBC Four in March and April 2014.
238. Preziosi won the Efebo d'Argento and the internazional prize Golden Chest for his interpretation of De Luca.
239. In 1938, a Fascist party *provision* stated the use of "lei" [she] to formally address a person had been abolished. The "lei" was replaced by the more virile "voi" [you] (Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle*, 113).
240. Lucarelli, *Carta Bianca*, 64; *Carte Blanche*, 69.
241. Ibid., 61; Ibid., 66.
242. Ibid., 53; Ibid., 51.
243. Lucarelli, *La stagione*, 13; *The Damned Season*, 17.
244. Ibid., 15; Ibid., 22.
245. Ibid., 89; Ibid., 95.
246. Between 17 May 2006 and 6 May 2008, the Leftist Prodi government was back in power.
247. Ibid., 122; Ibid., 117.
248. Fabrizio Costa, *Il commissario Nardone*, 2011.
249. Rina Fort, aka the beast of San Gregorio, was convicted for the murder of her lover's wife, Franca Pappalardo, and his three children Giovanni, Giuseppina, and Antonio, in their home on Via San Gregorio, 46 in 1946. She was sentenced to life and was pardoned after spending 30 years in prison.

250. Molander Danielsson, *The Dynamic Detective*, 148–49.
251. See Michele Battini, *The Missing Italian Nuremberg: Cultural Amnesia and Postwar Politics* (2007).
252. An engineer by profession, Gadda (1893–1973) was a Milanese writer and poet. Considered a revolutionary for his use of language and narrative forms, an expressionist and a follower of James Joyce, he was acknowledged as a literary master by the Italian avant-garde of the 1960s. Author of short stories, often unfinished novels, and poems, Gadda's scientific mind was intrigued by the mechanism of crime fiction (Vittorio Spinazzola, *Misteri d'autore* [Turin: Aragno, 2010], 13). He experimented with the *giallo* in *Quer pasticciaccio* and another unfinished novel entitled *La cognizione del dolore* (1938–1941), published as a novel in 1963 [Carlo Emilio Gadda, *La cognizione del dolore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963)], and translated by William Weaver as *Acquainted with Grief* (New York: George Braziller, 1969).
253. Leonardo Sciascia, "Breve storia del romanzo poliziesco," in *Cruciverba* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983), 216–31 (231). The earlier version of the story, published in a literary journal, presented five episodes, one of which was omitted from the final form of the work. Gadda explained this choice by the fact that the chapter in question (number four) contained a precocious revelation of the culprit, leading to a lessening of the suspense indispensable in a crime story. However, in the final version of *Quer pasticciaccio*, the identity of the villain remains unclear, giving rise to endless debates on who is the perpetrator of the crimes.
254. Italo Calvino, "Introduction to That Awful Mess," in Carlo Emilio Gadda, *That Awful Mess on Via Merulana* (New York: NTRB Classics, 2007), iii–xiv (ix).
255. Elisabetta Bolla, *Come leggere* Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana *di Carlo Emilio Gadda* (Milan: Mursia, 1976).
256. From the first pages of the story, readers are explicitly told that "le inopinate catastrofi non sono mai la conseguenza o l'effetto che dir si voglia d'un unico motivo, d'una causa al singolare: ma sono come un vortice, un punto di depressione ciclonica nella coscienza del mondo, verso cui hanno cospirato tutta una molteplicità di causali convergenti" (Carlo Emilio Gadda, *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana* [Milan: Garzanti, 1964], 7); "unforeseen catastrophes are never the consequences or the effect, if you prefer, of a single motive, of a singular cause; but they are rather like a whirlpool, a cyclonic point of depression in the consciousness of the world, towards which a whole multitude of converging causes have contributed" (Carlo Emilio Gadda, *That Awful Mess*, 5).
257. Fiercely critical of Fascism, Gadda was animated by a visceral hatred of Mussolini.

258. Calvino, "Introduction," ix.
259. Ibid., vii.
260. Maurizio Porro, "Presentazione di *Un maledetto imbroglio*," DVD, 2012.
261. In the script Gadda indicated Virginia, one of the adopted daughters of the victim, as the murderer.
262. Enrico Giacovelli, *Pietro Germi* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1990), 71.
263. Quite interestingly, Germi renamed the victim and her husband Banducci instead of Balducci. Not only is a plaque with the Banducci surname framed on various occasions in the movie, but one of the detectives in Ingravallo's team also spells this surname during a telephone conversation: "'No, non Balducci! Ban-duc-ci, come ban-dito'" ["No, not Balducci! Ban-duc-ci like bandit!"]. By clarifying the spelling, Germi advises the audience that he is telling his own story. He also indicates that by being a story of "banditi," his film is a hard-boiled story more than a whodunit.
264. As Gutkowski argues, Germi also retains the anti-Fascism widely expressed in the novel (Emanuela Gutkowski, "Un esempio di traduzione intersemiotica: dal *Pasticciaccio* a *Un maledetto imbroglio*," *The Edimburgh Journal Of Italian Studies* 2 [2002] in http://www.gadda.ed.ac.uk/Pages/journal/issue2/articles/gutkogerm.php, consulted on 1 March 2015). During a house search in Banducci's apartment, the police open a wardrobe. This gesture reveals a picture of Mussolini and a photograph that portrays Banducci in a black uniform. By linking one of the most hideous characters, Banducci, with Italy's Fascist past, undoubtedly Germi embraces Gadda's opposition to the regime.
265. Andrea Ricci, "Il *Pasticciaccio* di Gadda e l'*Imbroglio* di Germi. Letteratura e cinema noir a confronto," *Symposium* 59, no.2 (2005): 84–99 (96). *Commedia all'italiana* or Italian-style comedy is an Italian film genre. It is widely considered to have started with Mario Monicelli's *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*) in 1958 and derives its name from the title of Pietro Germi's *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce Italian Style*, 1961). Rather than a specific genre, the term indicates a period in which the Italian film industry was producing mainly brilliant comedies, with some common traits like satire of manners and a prevailing middle-class setting, often characterized by a substantial background of sadness that would dilute the comic contents.
266. David Forgacs, "Cultural Consumption, 1940s to 1960s," in *Italian Cultural Studies*, 276.
267. Stephen Gundle, "L'americanizzazione del quotidiano: televisione e consumismo nell'Italia degli anni cinquanta," *Quaderni storici* 21, no.62

(1986): 561–94 (591). The American influence was embodied, among others, by Ferdinando Buscaglione (1921–1960), aka Fred Buscaglione, who became famous for impersonating, in his songs and films, a humorous mobster with a penchant for whisky and women, inspired by Clark Gable and Mickey Spillane's characters.

268. Clark, *Modern Italy*, 442.
269. Ricci, "Il *Pasticciaccio*," 96.
270. Roberto Rossellini, *Roma città aperta* (1944, *Rome Open City*).
271. Matteo Palumbo, "La riscrittura di un imbroglio. Da Gadda a Germi e Ronconi," *Cahiers d'etudes romanes* 25 (2012): 179–93.

CHAPTER 4

The *Giallo* and Terrorism: The Years of Lead and the Conspiracy Theory

This chapter analyzes crime stories and films set in the season of terrorism in Italy known as the *anni di piombo* [Years of Lead] (1969–1988).[1] In the last 15 years, some writers and filmmakers have come back to this still unresolved chapter of Italian history with novels set, or partially set, in the 1970s in particular. An interest in this dark period of Italian history has been spurred by a post-September 11 climate where the need to explain what happened in New York in 2001 has brought with it a new attention to several unsolved cases such as the assassination of President J.F. Kennedy and the kidnapping and murder of Italian DC Secretary Aldo Moro in 1978. Moreover, a second wave of internal terrorism, embodied by the Nuove Brigate Rosse [The New Red Brigades] between 1999 and 2002 has re-focused attention on that dark decade. Finally, the violent clashes between anti-global demonstrators and the police in the early 2000s recalled the student and worker protests of the 1970s. An interest in this counter-narrative is also explained in the context of the new role of the social media as watchdogs for international politics in a period when several Western countries pursue a war on terrorism.

Paolin comments that since 2003 several books about terrorism, and especially about the Red Brigades, have been published in Italy.[2] According to this scholar, in order to cope with the present and the deep-seated shock of September 11 or the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, writers "with a typical Manzonian choice"[3] have sought refuge in the past, turning to another unresolved chapter of Italian history. With various

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degrees of commercial success, fiction has tried to "tell the truth about this period."[4] Alternatively, Antonello and O'Leary interpret this "emergence of an array of discourses, narrative and hypotheses and interpretations, in film and literature" as the symptom of a need for "supplementary justice." In other words, "[i]n a process which may appear paradoxical, fiction has become the pre-eminent means to account for these missing pieces of our recent history and to keep the memory of certain events alive among non-experts."[5] This is particularly important in a context where, as Cento Bull argues, whether it be described as a "civil war" or as a "violent political conflict," a peace-building process of reconciliation offering a sharable national memory of the political violence of the Years of Lead seems essential but still absent.[6]

However, according to Paolin, by concentrating on the figures of the terrorists and ignoring their victims, often watering down an epoch-making social and political clash into a father–son conflict in a bourgeois setting, and by anaesthetizing violence, these novels end up producing "acquitting tales, written in order to turn the drama of those years drama into a chronicle of an heroic youth."[7] Indeed, by being written by authors who mainly identify themselves with the left, this kind of literature is affected by a deep laceration: on the one hand, the authors distance themselves from the violence of those years; on the other, they are aware that the Red Brigades were the degenerate children (but still children) of a leftist culture and therefore they belonged to what journalist and founder of the left newspaper "Il manifesto" Rossana Rossanda defined as a "family album of intellectuals."[8] This made it very difficult for writers sympathizing with the left to provide a resolute and ultimate condemnation.

With its focus on violence, conflict and justice, and victims and perpetrators, crime fiction has also recently engaged with the topic of memory and reconstructions relating to the Years of Lead. According to Vitello, crime fiction writers exploit this topic as a "source of plots with the goal of entertaining."[9] In so doing, they "weaken the historical-political importance"[10] of this period. This is far from the truth. So-called literary fiction may have missed the mark by turning a potentially explosive analysis of the season of the Red Brigades into family dramas or adventures of misguided youth. For its part, the *giallo* often gives voice to the victims of terrorism, representing a step forward in comparison with the absolutory literature mentioned above. Moreover, some writers—and especially Giancarlo De Cataldo (b. 1956) and Simone Sarasso (b. 1978)—have turned their attention to a more neglected aspect of these years, that is, neo-Fascist

terrorism and its alleged complicity with elements of the Italian secret services. In other words, crime novels have unmercifully dug into perceived responsibilities of the Italian state in (too) many still unsolved mysteries of this era. However, as it will be shown, some novels also suffer some limits, especially when they point at the state, often embodied in a Moriarty-like character, as having the only real responsibility for the terror. In so doing, they unwittingly downplay the role of other agents of disorder, such as the Red Brigades, who sometimes are described as mere puppets in the hands of greater powers of disruption. This limitation may be partially due to a *topos* of the genre that requires the presence of a specific and well-defined villain rather than a more general culpability. Moreover, as we will see, a wide-spread idea of a "Grande Vecchio" [Grand Old Man] behind many events of post-war Italy may have influenced this choice.[11] The idea of the Grande Vecchio has been used to explain many mysterious events in Italian post-war history. As Barbacetto explains, the Grande Vecchio "is an easy answer to a complex question. The Grande Vecchio is nothing else but a system of obscure powers that controlled events. […] The Grande Vecchio, as it is explained in his name, is big, therefore he is indecipherable. He is also old and pervasively settled. He is not just one person. He is a system of powers that have made illegality a rule."[12]

Finally, the proximity of the narrated events makes an analysis of this troubled period of Italian history difficult. It also raises questions about what can be considered as historical narrative. It is generally acknowledged that one needs temporal distance to comment effectively on historical events, but how many years need to pass from the events described in order to qualify a novel as historical? Browne ends his excursus on international historical crime fiction with novels set during WWI.[13] However, it would be peculiar not to consider subsequent settings, such as WWII (as distant as they are to our experience of life), as historical. The question, however, is still open, as we will see, especially in the case with cinema where heated controversy about some recent films by people who lived in that traumatic period of Italian history challenges de facto their historical and "distant" nature. A definitive answer does not exist: this volume focuses on the most recent crime books related to the Years of Lead, allowing some decades to go by between events and their narration in order not to stretch the term "historical" beyond a comfortable zone.

This chapter continues with an analysis of recent films related to the Years of Lead, such as Michele Placido's *Romanzo criminale*, the film version of De Cataldo's bestseller, Renzo Martinelli's *Piazza delle cinque*

lune [*Piazza of the Five Moons*], and Marco Tullio Giordana's *Romanzo di una strage* (2013).[14] It also analyze a TV series, "Romanzo criminale—La serie," also inspired by De Cataldo's bestseller. Finally, running the risk of looking contradictory, it also investigates *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*. Far from being an historical crime movie in the traditional sense, this film was in fact shot on the eve of the Years of Lead. However, it is analyzed here as a reversal of the typical pattern of historical crime fiction—namely the passage past–present–past[15] into a present–past–present pattern. In other words, as we will see, it can be considered "historical," inasmuch as it detects a Fascist origin in the authoritarianism of Italian society of the late 1960s.

The 1968 and the Years of Lead

The Years of Lead originated from the social and political unrest of the late 1960s. The mass civil rights and union action brought together different categories of citizens all wishing to end social, political, and cultural repression. In the spotlight was the backwardness of the work environment and education. In those years, there was a notable growth in union membership and an increase in the numbers of strikes and demonstrations.[16] The protest grew outside the sphere of the institutions and inside various groupings known as the New Left or extra-parliamentary left that often involved workers and university students.[17]

Workers' protests reached their peak in 1969, in a mass industrial action known as the "Autunno caldo" [Hot Autumn]. The mobilization of Italian students started in 1967 in protest against the Vietnam War and had its turning point in the "Battle of Valle Giulia" on 1 March 1968. This confrontation between students and the police took place at the architecture faculty of Rome University when, for the first time, students ignored a ban on demonstrations and defied teargas and truncheon charges from the police. The events of Valle Giulia represented a collective initiation in violent conflict with the state. For some participants, it brought with it the realization that in a situation of conflict, contrary to what they had been educated to believe, rules and fair play no longer counted.[18]

The season of protests and demonstrations left an important legacy in Italian society. University access was facilitated and authoritarian and restrictive educational practices were partly overcome. Among other benefits, workers obtained the right to form trade unions and enter into collective contracts. Equally importantly, this period generated an expectation

for a better society that culminated in the rise of the women's movement that led, in the 1970s and 1980s, to important battles for the right to abortion and contraception.[19] These years also saw the establishment of the first Italian gay movements. However, the toll of deaths and injuries from police charges during increasingly violent student demonstrations and strikes escalating from the end of 1968 also paved the way to the subsequent season of terrorism or the Years of Lead.

This period in Italy's recent history is a tragic cocktail of violent confrontations between the police and demonstrators, acts of terrorism, state secrets, and too many unsolved murder cases of activists and politicians. It was an explosive combination that makes reality stranger (and more frightening) than fiction. It all started on 12 December 1969 when a bomb exploded in a bank in Piazza Fontana in Milan killing 16 people and injuring 90. The attack was first blamed on anarchists, but there were soon suspicions that right-wing groups and the state itself could be involved. During the investigation, a suspect, anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli, arrested along with other anarchists for questioning regarding the attack, was seen to fall to his death from a fourth floor window of the Milan police station before midnight on 15 December 1969. Three police officers interrogating Pinelli, including Police Inspector Luigi Calabresi, were put under investigation in 1971 for his death, but legal proceedings controversially concluded it was due to accidental causes. The episode inspired Dario Fo, recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize in Literature, to write the world-famous satirical play, *Morte accidentale di un anarchico*.[20] Despite numerous trials and investigations, nobody is in prison for the Milan bombing.[21]

Violent attacks from extremist groups of the right and the left followed. Terrorism of the right was a reaction to the mobilization of students and workers and the subsequent gains of the social movements. Through the *strategia della tensione* [strategy of tension], terrorism of the right aimed at spreading terror, mainly through indiscriminate bomb attacks that could be blamed on the extreme left and justify authoritarian forms of government that would redress the "imbalance" caused by recent democratic reforms.[22] As Dunnage explains, "[I]in the immediate aftermath of the student and worker protests [...] many members of the ruling élite were willing to give their support to such a form of terrorism."[23] Terrorist attacks of the right, which included numerous train bombings, resulted in a large number of victims among civilians. One of the most serious attacks was a train bombing in 1974 on the Bologna–Florence railway line, which resulted in 12 deaths and 105 were injured. Also, in 1974, the

explosion of a bomb hidden in a rubbish bin in Piazza della Loggia in Brescia caused 8 deaths and more than 90 people were injured. Finally, a bomb placed in the Bologna railway station killed 85 people in 1980. The *strage di Bologna* is still the most serious terrorist attack to have occurred in Italy. Two extreme right terrorists, Francesca Mambro and Valerio Fioravanti, were condemned to life sentence for this carnage, but, in spite of confessing to several other charges, they have always declared themselves innocent of this particular attack. This dramatic social climate led the Communist Party (which obtained a historic 34 % of the vote at the general election of 1976) not to form a government on its own but to opt for a national unity government with the DC in order to fight the terrorist threat.

Terrorism of the left, embodied by the Red Brigades, was brewing in several extreme left extra-parliamentary groups where the leading role of the working class was emphasized and the reformist strategies of the Communist Party were rejected. While such groups, including Avanguardia Operaia [Workers' Vanguard] and Potere Operaio [Workers' Power], were not terrorist clusters themselves, but played a critical role in creating a climate in which terrorism was to grow. Red Brigade members also sought to appropriate the moral content of the partisan struggle. They thought of themselves not as terrorists, but as a new "resistance" against what they called the authoritarian trends of the government and the criminal activities of the right. As Lumley puts it, "what remained contradictory and complex in the social movements was drastically transformed and simplified by the Red Brigades."[24] Justifying their action by the need to defend the working class against the threat of an authoritarian reaction, the Red Brigades inflicted beatings or kidnapped managers and factory foremen, as well as attacking the extreme right. During the mid-1970s they started targeting members of the Christian Democratic Party, judges, and members of the police force. Toward the end of the decade, the Red Brigades reached their most violent phase murdering trade union leaders, journalists, and promoters of a collaboration between the Communist Party and the DC.[25] In 1978, Aldo Moro, the secretary of the Christian Democratic Party and a strong advocate for cooperation, was kidnapped and executed. Many alternative points of view about Moro's death were voiced after the discovery of his body. Among other theories, the Italian secret services and the CIA were accused of infiltrating the Red Brigades and orchestrating Moro's kidnapping and execution because of his pro-Communist stance. For example, in a cryptic article published in May 1978, investigative journalist Mino Pecorelli drew a connection between Moro's death and Gladio, NATO's

stay-behind anti-Communist organization whose existence was publicly acknowledged by Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti only in October 1990. For others, the DC leadership shared the blame for Moro's death inasmuch as they did not do anything to save their own man for opportunistic reasons.[26] These different versions show once more how many opposing memories of the past still coexist in Italy[27] and have proved to be fertile ground for conspiracy theory narratives. The increasing violence of the Red Brigades' actions progressively alienated this organization from the working class and members of leftist organizations. The final years of the Red Brigades became a private war for survival against the forces of the state as they became increasingly isolated from the rest of society. In the 1980s, the group was broken up by Italian investigators, with the help of several arrested leaders who assisted the authorities in capturing the other members. After the mass arrests in the late 1980s, the group slowly faded into insignificance. A majority of those leaders took advantage of a law that gave credit for renouncing the doctrine (*dissociato* status) and contributing to efforts by police and judiciary to prosecute its members (*collaboratore di giustizia*, also known as *pentito*).

According to official Ministry for the Interior figures, over 14,000 terrorist attacks were committed in Italy in the years between 1969 and 1983, resulting in 374 deaths and more than 1170 injuries.[28] Equally interesting, as the vast majority of left-wing terrorists and almost all their actions have been documented and punished, many right-wing terrorist attacks remain unaccounted for.[29] Likewise, the Italian state has never revealed the extent of its covert support for right-wing terrorism. For these reasons, Italian historian Lanaro has written of Italy's defeat of terrorism as "vittoria a metà" [half a victory].[30]

A new group, with few links, if any, with the old Red Brigades, appeared in the late 1990s. The Red Brigades–Communist Combatant Party (PCC) in 1999 murdered Massimo D'Antona, an advisor to the cabinet of Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema. On 19 March 2002, the same gun was used to kill Professor Marco Biagi, an economic advisor to Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi. The Red Brigades–PCC again claimed responsibility. On 3 March 2003, two followers, Mario Galesi and Nadia Desdemona Lioce, started a gunfight with a police patrol on a train at Castiglion Fiorentino station, near Arezzo: one terrorist and a policeman were killed. On 23 October 2003, Italian police arrested six members of the Red Brigades in connection with the murder of D'Antona. On 1 June 2005, four members of the Red Brigades–PCC were given a life sentence in Bologna for the

murder of Marco Biagi. Since then, the group has not been responsible for terrorist attacks. However, the resurgence of violence, even if only for few years, coming less than 20 years after the defeat of the original Red Brigades, had a deep impact on the Italian population and re-ignited memories of horror and destabilization.

Crime Fiction and Terrorism: The Conspiracy Novel

After introducing the topical theme of the Mafia in Italian literature, Sciascia was also notable for using the form of literary journalism. Only a few months after Moro's assassination, the Sicilian writer published *L'affaire Moro* [The Moro Affair] (1978).[31] Part of a House of Deputies' investigation into Moro's kidnapping, in his book, Sciascia raised uncomfortable questions about the police investigations, accused of being "more for show than for the purpose of investigating"[32] and highlighted the Government's negligence in dealing with this crime, concluding that the Red Brigades were not working alone when they kidnapped the statesman. The founder of a new literary trend in Italy, Sciascia rediscovered, reread, and retold trial proceedings, archival documents, official acts, and other testimonies to give counter-information of one of the most controversial mysteries in Italian history. He also focused on Moro himself: the bulk of *The Moro Affair* is an analysis of the letters that the DC politician wrote while imprisoned. Sciascia saw these as "messages […] to be deciphered."[33] While the letters were dismissed by Moro's ex-associates as the product of probable torture and undeniable stress and therefore "cannot be ascribed to him ethically,"[34] the Sicilian writer used them to reconstruct how Moro felt, giving voice to a victim of terrorism. In so doing, he also rehabilitated Moro's reputation following the demolition of his character by former colleagues in government.

On several occasions, Sciascia likens the Moro kidnapping to a work of fiction, saying that "Moro and his vicissitudes seem to have emerged from a certain literary genre."[35] As Wren-Owens explains, this may reflect "the increasing confusion of the latter end of the 1970s, when all divisions had become blurred. […] Forces of law and order, meant to be protecting citizens, were implicated in generating the very terrorism that they were meant to impede, as indeed were various politicians. Life under terrorism seemed not to belong to real-life, but to theatricality."[36] Arising from unsatisfied demands for justice and dealing with a reality imbued with theatricality, literary, or creative journalism seemed then

"the only key to the possibility of coming to terms with a history made up of guilty forgetfulness and tragically unresolved questions that are nevertheless still very present and mark national identity."[37]

Sciascia's interpretation also introduced elements of "conspiracy theory" in Italian literature by suggesting a complicity of elements of the state in the Moro affair. If, as Popper argues, "the conspiracy theory of society is very widespread, and has very little truth in it,"[38] the conspiracy novel may become "an explanation that is contrary to an explanation that has official status at the time and place in question."[39] Conspiracy theories often represent a form of hyper-rationalization of events that are artificially tied together. In dictatorships—the setting Popper had in mind—they serve as the foundation of the totalitarian state that draws on paranoid theories of racial or classist conspiracies. However, as Fenster argues, in the democratic context, they can represent a "form of resistance" of mainstream histories.[40] Polese observes that since the Cold War, divisions in Europe have been a fertile ground for the propagation of legends and beliefs. In particular, the silence by governments and institutions which hold power over events such as the murder of Moro in 1978 and Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme in 1986, just to name two of the most famous, gave certain credibility to many explanations.[41] This can be particularly true for Italy where, since the foundation of the Republic in 1946, and especially during the Years of Lead, a series of tragic events has not yet been fully explained, generating skepticism toward the official version of much of the history of the Italian Republic, and contributing to interpretations tending toward theories of conspiracy. However, in some cases, the conspiracy theory in literature and cinema becomes "an economical means to communicate widespread suspicion and dissatisfaction with the official version of a contentious history."[42] Likewise, the success of such narration, as Butler explains, may be due to the alleged privileged knowledge conveyed that would mitigate the disempowerment felt by its readers, and compensate for the sense of dislocation and confusion felt by many in post-September 11 societies.[43] However, and this is Butler's argument, by attributing all violent acts to the state, conspiracy theorists are denying anyone else the capacity to act (for good or ill).[44]

In Sciascia's novel *Il contesto* (1971, translated as *Equal Danger* in 1974 and 1984), a series of high-profile murders is attributed to a left-wing revolutionary group, to the general satisfaction of the country.[45] In *L'affaire Moro*, Sciascia points at many elusions of the state for the kidnapping and murder of the DC leader. Subsequently a "conspiracy constant" in

the Italian psyche has generated a crime fiction output, or rather crime "faction" which, by mixing true stories and official documents with fictionalized episodes, tries to explain some obscure episodes of the 1970s Italy and give an alternative perspective to some pivotal events. Building on Sciascia's lesson, these books have, once more and maybe imperfectly, taken up the role of filling the blanks left by official history. This chapter only analyzes the most recent crime novels on this subject allowing some significant time to pass between the events and their interpretation. Most of them are set in contemporary times with long flash-backs to the 1970s, and only a few, which will be analyzed in more detail, are completely set in the past. Among the most interesting novels dealing with the Red Brigades are Vincenzo Mantovani's *Il cattivo maestro* [The Bad Teacher], Girolamo De Michele's *Tre uomini paradossali* [Three Paradoxical Men], and Giampaolo Simi's *Il corpo dell'inglese* [The English Body].[46]

Il cattivo maestro and *Tre uomini paradossali* are interesting as the protagonists–investigators are involved in left-wing terrorism because they either were part of it or were emotionally involved with people belonging to the Red Brigades. In these novels, the detective is not a figure who identifies with the state, but someone who has taken sides in the past and needs to readdress their choices. *Il cattivo maestro* is a novel that intersperses a crime plot with the reminiscences of the protagonist, Lorenzo Vitali, which occupy almost all the first half of the book. Vitali is a retired professor of Italian literature who, during the 1970s, sympathized with the student movement. He assumed an ambiguous position regarding terrorism, neither supporting nor condemning it. Accused of being a chief ideologist of left-wing terrorism, he was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment. Once released, he moved to France where he learnt that an ex-leader of the Red Brigades, Nanni Ferraresi, had been murdered in prison. Just before his death, Ferraresi had announced he would give evidence only after speaking to Vitali. The retired professor decides to investigate with the help of a British journalist, Bob Fisher, who is also killed in a mysterious car accident. Vitali finds out that the Red Brigades were infiltrated by elements of corrupt secret services that pushed for raising the level of violence of the terrorist organization. This is one of the theories which, as we have seen, are quite common in the conspiracy theory circuit. He also discovers that his ex-girlfriend, terrorist Eleonora Gaetani d'Alife, was killed by a policeman who embezzled the huge amount of money she was carrying for the Red Brigades with the help of Ferraresi. This policeman then used the money to support a right-wing politician for whom he

would become chief of cabinet. The novel ends with the wrongful arrest of Vitali for a murder he did not commit. With a chilling ending that reminds us of Sciascia's novels, the actual murderer of Ferraresi is never identified or arrested, and the protagonist–investigator is punished for searching for the truth.

In *Tre uomini paradossali*, Inspector Andrea Nannini wants to take revenge on the man who involved his friend Cristiano in the kidnapping and assassination of an industrialist in 1980. The story set in 1993 is told by an unnamed first-person narrator who is a private detective hired by Inspector Nannini and also hosts the inspector's and his friend Cristiano's points of view. The private investigator and Inspector Nannini are long-time friends who were both involved in the student movement. They lost contact after their common friend Cristiano was arrested as a terrorist and the private detective's girlfriend Barbara died in a drug-related accident. The person the inspector and the private detective pursue is another friend of the past, Alberto, a terrorist and the son of businessman Gian Maria Dondi who at the beginning of the novel commits suicide with Alberto's gun, spurring the new investigation into the kidnapping. Alberto was the person who convinced Cristiano to murder the industrialist, his father's business associate. The alleged execution by a terrorist group is revealed to be a machination with strictly economic motives. The novel ends with the murder of Alberto Dondi by the hand of the private detective.

The Years of Lead only provide a background to *Il cattivo maestro* and *Tre uomini paradossali*, which are set in the present and have as protagonists people directly involved in those troubled years. Vitali, Nannini, and the private detective reluctantly decide to get involved in the investigations. Their motives are strictly personal and not dictated by political or social reasons. Both novels renounce the classic ending where the culprit is arrested. In *Il cattivo maestro*, Ferraresi's murderer is not even identified and Vitali is framed. *Tre uomini paradossali* concludes with a personal vengeance: the sleuth kills Alberto because he mistakenly believes that he was responsible for Barbara's death. Finally, and more importantly, both novels deal with the necessity to come to terms with the past. Vitali realizes that "[p]er quanto ci si sforzi di ignorarlo, il passato ci segue. In silenzio, senza farsi scorgere. Come un pedinatore ben addestrato che non si fa seminare da nessuno" [No matter how much you try to ignore it, the past follows you. In silence, without being noticed. Like a well-trained shadow that nobody can shake off].[47] Inspector Nannini makes the same observation: "'Tutte quelle storie che crediamo di aver dimenticato sono qui, su

di noi. Sono sulla nostra pelle'" ["All these stories we think we have forgotten are here, on us. They are on our skin"].[48] However, the two novels differ in the way the past is interpreted. In Mantovani's novel, the responsibilities of the state are highlighted: "Per capire la storia d'Italia [...] del dopoguerra [...] non occorrono strumenti particolarmente raffinati. C'è una chiave che apre tutte le porte: il passe-partout dell'anticomunismo. [...] In Italia la paura dei comunisti ha sempre spiegato e giustificato ogni cosa" [In order to understand Italy's post-war history no particularly refined instruments are needed. There is a key that opens all doors: the passe-partout of anti-communism. In Italy the fear of communism has always explained and justified everything].[49] This statement, attributed to journalist Fisher, is also at the base of De Cataldo's *Romanzo criminale* and Sarasso's *Settanta*, as we will see. Mantovani also embraces a conspiracy theory when he explains the increase of violence by the Red Brigades as a consequence of the infiltration of secret agents in the organization (a hypothesis also used by Sarasso). However, in *Il cattivo maestro*, the strategy of tension does not justify the Red Brigades' actions per se. This is symbolized by Vitali's own gesture when he finally admits his own responsibilities: "Ho parlato soltanto, questo è vero. Ma le mie parole non hanno pesato meno del piombo di cui erano fatte le pallottole che hanno ucciso questa gente. Non posso fingere di non averle mai dette" [I only spoke, this is true. However, my words didn't weigh less than the lead the bullets killing these people were made of. I cannot pretend to have never said them].[50] At the end of the novel Vitali condemns extreme left violence and realizes he has been a bad teacher indeed. In contrast, *Tre uomini paradossali* endorses a different perspective. When Cristiano says: "'Ma cosa credevi [...]? [...] Che ci fossero buoni e cattivi?'" ["What did you think? That there were bad ones and good ones?"],[51] this character puts common criminality and left terrorism at the same level, blurring the boundaries between the two. This nihilism however does not permeate the novel. The unveiling of the truth shows how the murder of the industrialist was a cover for a criminal act motivated by greed. Gian Maria Dondi makes Alberto arrange the assassination of his business associate and he is then blackmailed by his son. The act of terrorism is not in fact an act of terrorism and terrorist Cristiano is revealed to be only a puppet in a game that escaped him, while "terrorist" Alberto exploits his position in the revolutionary group for personal gain. The exploitation of Cristiano for a bourgeois crime inevitably ends up by exonerating him. Equally significant is the ending of the novel. The first-person/private investigator

kills Alberto Dondi with a gun recovered from an old partisan. As we have seen, the Red Brigades thought they inherited the war for liberation from people who fought against the Nazi–Fascist occupation of Italy. The execution of Alberto with a partisan weapon uncomfortably equates to the execution of a "bad" opportunistic terrorist from a "good" idealistic one.

As mentioned, *Il cattivo maestro* and *Tre uomini paradossali* have for protagonists people involved and even active in left-wing terrorism of the 1970s. *Il corpo dell'inglese* concentrates instead on the victims of terrorism and also mentions explicitly the new Red Brigades of the 1990s and early 2000s. Set in Tuscany in the north-western region of Versilia in 2003, *Il corpo dell'inglese* is a thriller with an intricate plot composed of three stories: the first follows Gherardo Colombini aka Gheghe, ex-terrorist released after 20 years in prison for the murder of a University professor Corrado Alderighi in 1981. A former associate, the policeman who arrested him and a mysterious young man contact him, each with their own agenda; the second follows Leo, a young man who works for a funeral home and is in love with an English tourist, the elusive Mary Jane; finally, there is Mattia, a former drug addict and English teacher who has a troubled past and falls in love with Allegra, a terrorist. The three stories converge only at the end, with tragic consequences for all the protagonists. With a prose enriched by literary, musical, and cinematic references, *Il corpo dell'inglese* builds a convincing portrait of an era and a society through an original and gloomy representation of a part of the Italian coast traditionally seen as the symbol of leisure and summer holidays. Beyond the beaches and noisy restaurants, Simi's novel takes the reader to a:

> terra di nessuno che unisce la periferia di Viareggio alle paludi dell'entroterra. Un posto dove ognuno ha finito per fare quello che proprio non può fare sotto gli occhi dei turisti: una casa abusiva con l'orto, un ingrosso di vernici, un cantiere, una discarica […] una baraccopoli di roulottes.[52]
>
> [no man's land that unites Viareggio's suburbs with the inland marshlands. This is a place where everybody has ended up doing what you cannot do under the eyes of tourists: unauthorized buildings with an orchard, a shop selling paint wholesale, a building site, a dump (…) a shantytown of caravans.]

The three protagonists drive along highways and get lost either in anonymous shops or restaurants or in a monotonous countryside scarred by wild urbanization. In other words, they move in a corrupt landscape

dominated by consumerism ("la notte è una grande esposizione di merce deperibile" [The night is a huge exposition of perishable goods])[53] and exploitation. In the last pages of the novel, they are revealed to be victims of other people's plots: Gheghe finds out that he was used in the past and is still being manipulated by a former comrade who is now in an illegal business of disposing toxic waste; Leo's naiveté is exploited by his English girlfriend who works for the Irish Republican Army (IRA); Mattia—who is in fact the son of the University professor murdered 20 years before—realizes his uncle Ninetto, a former colonel and agent of the secret service, was behind his father's murder, which was orchestrated to cover up illegal business with Somalia that Alderighi wanted to expose. As Lettieri argues, uncle Ninetto is the embodiment of a power able to survive, adapt, and profit from new political and social climates.[54] In this sense, Simi does not renounce the use of a conspiracy theory where most of the crimes in the novel can be traced back to someone in the state apparatus. However, what differentiates *Il corpo dell'inglese* from other novels with the same topic is a strong denunciation of violence and its focus on the victims. As mentioned, one side of the story is told by Mattia whose father was a victim of an alleged act of terrorism. He is obsessed with revenge and befriends Gheghe in order to kill him. At the beginning of the third part of the novel, he bitterly comments about Gheghe: "Che lo Stato avrà anche punito per aver commesso un reato, non per aver ridotto la vita di due altre persone a un Calvario senza nessuna Resurrezione" [The state may have punished him for committing a crime, but not for reducing the lives of two more people as a Calvary without Resurrection].[55] This passage points at the suffering of the families of victims, their wives, fathers and mothers, or children whose lives have been marked forever by those horrible events. It is true that in this case also the murder is committed for greed and is disguised as a terrorist act, but Gheghe's involvement in it is not condoned. Moreover, the foolishness of the Red Brigades' violent actions is highlighted in other parts of the novel. The terrorist Allegra, Mattia's love interest, who belongs to the New Red Brigades, wants to leave the armed struggle:

> "Se colpisci un simbolo, non devi aver bisogno di inviare dieci pagine di spiegazioni ai giornali, cazzo! Dovrebbe essere già chiaro di per sé, quello che hai fatto. Altrimenti quello che hai colpito era un simbolo solo per te e per tutti gli altri era un padre di famiglia che rientrava a casa in bicicletta.

> [...] La nostra violenza è autoreferenziale. [...] È una trappola schifosa. Mi ci sento soffocare."[56]
>
> ["If you hit a symbol, you don't need to send ten pages of explanation to the press, for fuck's sake! What you have done should be obvious. Otherwise, the person you have just hit was a symbol only to you. For everybody else he was a family man who was going home by bike. [...] Our violence is self-referential. It's a rotten trap. I feel trapped in it."]

This passage is a powerful condemnation of the violent actions of the Red Brigades in both the 1970s and the 1990s. The reference to the family man who goes home by bike is a clear reference to Marco Biagi who was killed while biking home. By treating him as a symbol that only they understand, terrorists want to deprive him of his humanity which is by contrast reinforced in an extract ("un padre di famiglia che rientrava a casa in bicicletta") that highlights the "autism" of terrorism of yesterday and today. Ultimately, *Il corpo dell'inglese* is a novel that, rather than concentrating on terrorists and their motivations, or worse justifying them, gives the victims and their relatives a dignity and a voice.

As one can see, these novels show a variety of approaches to the Years of Lead that goes from a condemnation of violence and attention to the victims to narratives that end up absolving "good and naïve terrorists." Out of this increasing output, two writers in particular have set their stories entirely in the Years of Lead: Giancarlo De Cataldo with *Romanzo criminale* and Simone Sarasso with *Settanta*.[57] As both wrote their novels 30 years after the period of the Years of Lead, and set their stories entirely in the past, the books fall into the category of historical crime fiction. Equally interestingly, both have elements of conspiracy, but the writers use the theme differently.

Giancarlo De Cataldo's *Romanzo criminale*

Giancarlo De Cataldo was born in Taranto (Puglia) in 1956 and works as a Court of Assizes judge in Rome. A writer, playwright, and screenwriter, he has published several crime stories.[58] This section concentrates on *Romanzo criminale*, a novel inspired by the exploits of a real criminal organization called *Banda della Magliana* active in Rome from the 1970s to the early 1990s.[59] By using the Banda della Magliana as a model, with its links to criminal forces such as the Mafia, Camorra, and 'Ndrangheta, as well as to sectors of the Italian secret services, the P2 and some fringe

elements of extreme right subversive forces, De Cataldo delivers an interesting analysis of the relationship between criminality, terrorism and secret services during the Years of Lead.

With *Romanzo criminale*, De Cataldo managed to obtain both critical and commercial praise "contributing decisively to the success of the noir" in Italy thanks to his ability to tell a crime story "with the tones of the epic and the tragedy."[60] Indeed the narrative is an epic in the style of the New Italian Epic, which is a way to reread history critically by creating collective narratives linked to specific communities. As Wu Ming acutely states, *Romanzo criminale* is "a piece of Italian history seen from the street, a choral fresco seen through the eyes of second leads."[61] With its primary focus on crime rather than investigation, *Romanzo criminale* is a noir that works at two levels: the first is fictional and concerns the characters of the novel and their actions; the other is linked to an evocation of the 1970s and 1980s with the presence of real names and circumstances. In other words, while *Romanzo criminale* is not, and does not want to be, a faithful reconstruction of those decades, many crucial mysteries of Italy's recent history are interpreted by linking them to corrupt secret service organizations and the gang protagonist of the novel. Indeed, in the novel the story of the ascent of a criminal organization intertwines with real events such as the kidnapping of Moro and the murder of investigative journalist Pecorelli, and tackles hot topics such as the connection between the secret services, the Mafia, and the terrorism of the right. Thus, the vicissitudes of a Roman gang become an excuse to revisit Italy's recent history. As Chu and Amici have argued, in *Romanzo criminale*, De Cataldo "insinuate[s] himself into those shadow zones which historiography has not succeeded in enlightening due to lack of proof and, from there, drawing deeply from crime reports, judicial acts, journalistic reconstructions and various other sources, to construct the framework of a narration which attempts to give plausible answers to the unanswered questions of history."[62] In line with the tradition founded by Sciascia, the novel is based on trial proceedings and other official documents to which De Cataldo, as a judge at the Court of Assizes in Rome, had privileged access.

The novel tells the story of the rise and fall of a Roman gang in the 1970s and 1980s. It recounts their struggle to find a space in the Roman underworld. Once they succeed, the story follows the struggle among their leaders for predominance: after the murder of Libanese [Libanese], Freddo [Ice] devotes himself to vindicating his friend's death, while Dandi [Dandy] runs the business with the complicity of the Mafia and is

protected by some corrupt secret agents for whom he works in exchange for immunity. Soon Dandi tries to take control and isolate his old mate, while many gang members take advantage of the tension at the top to pursue their own interests. Particularly interesting for our analysis is the first half of this novel, which concentrates on a period from 1977 to 1979. Right at the beginning of the novel, the connection between criminality and state is established. Libanese is contacted by the Italian police to help find Moro's prison, and he succeeds in doing this. However, after the intervention of the secret services in the person of Zeta [Zed] and Pigreco [Pi]—two agents who work for the mysterious Vecchio [Old Man]—the mission of rescuing the DC secretary is cancelled. During a meeting with Raffaele Cutolo, a Camorra man and go-between for the gang and the police, Libanese realizes that things are more complicated that he initially thought, when he is told: "'Guagliò, lo vuoi capire che a quell'anima di Dio lo vogliono morto?'" ["Man, don't you understand that they want him dead?"].[63] Libanese cannot come to terms with the fact that he is not able to sell this information to anybody: "Magari ai democristiani: ci doveva pur essere in mezzo a quella gente qualcuno che voleva salvargli la pelle, a Moro" [Even among the Christian Democrats: there must have been someone who wanted to save his life, Moro's that is].[64] This episode clearly refers to a theory according to which the police knew the location where Moro was kept but did not act because the Government and Moro's fellow DC were not interested in his rescue. According to this theory, the Propaganda 2 secret Masonic lodge was also involved in the kidnapping.[65] In this sense, De Cataldo shares the same doubts expressed by Sciascia in his *L'affaire Moro*, explicitly quoted in the text.[66] In the novel, the Roman gang occasionally works for the Old Man. Politically, most of the members of the gang associate themselves with Fascism, but their affiliation is more superficial and tied to hyper-masculinity ideas rather than political. They witness terrorist crimes and sometimes they participate in them, but they lack the political and social acumen to interpret them. This task is instead performed by the quintessential character in crime fiction, the detective, in the person of investigative judge Borgia and detective Scialoja. For example, after expressing doubts about the police investigation into Moro's case, Borgia wonders:

> se, cioè, qualcuno, per suoi calcoli, aveva dàto una mano ai brigatisti dopo il rapimento di Moro…proteggendoli…schermandoli…ostacolandone la

> cattura…non significava comunque che i buoni erano in qualche modo corresponsabili, avendovi cooperato in maniera decisiva, del cruento finale?[67]
>
> [whether someone, for their own purposes, had helped the terrorists after Moro's kidnapping…protecting them….shielding them…hampering their arrest….didn't that mean that the good guys were somehow co-responsible, cooperating, in a decisive way, towards such a cruel ending?]

In this extract, Judge Borgia does not accuse the state of being the mastermind of Moro's kidnapping. However, by hampering the investigation and protecting the terrorists who did it, he sees the state as being co-responsible for it. Thus, the character of the investigator allows the writer to give an interpretation to some obscure episodes of the 1970s.

In *Romanzo criminale*, the Roman gang is also involved in other obscure episodes of Italy's recent history. Zeta and Pigreco recruit the neo-Fascist Nero [the Black], who is affiliated to the gang, to eliminate the so-called Pidocchio [Louse], a journalist writing for a scandal magazine. The killing is clearly inspired by the murder of Pecorelli whose assassination has never been resolved, although the same rare type of bullet used to kill him was later found in a weapon stock of the Magliana gang. In the novel, the murder is commissioned by the Old Man, but at the scene of the crime there is also a Sicilian boy "piccolo, scuro con grandi occhi nei quali saettavano lampi di terrore improvviso" [small, dark, with big eyes that shot flashes of sudden terror] whose presence "suggellava un accordo i cui dettagli erano noti a pochi" [sealed a deal, the details of which were known only to a few]. Nero executes his orders: he moves easily "in quella zona grigia dove Stato e Antistato si davano la mano" [in that gray zone where the state and the anti-state went hand in hand].[68] Here *Romanzo criminale* suggests a network of complicities around Pecorelli's murder that links the Mafia, the Italian secret service, and high-profile DC, giving the state an even more sinister responsibility than for Moro's kidnapping.[69] However, the novel, which clearly presents itself as a work of fiction, never makes claim to authority and truth. Far from revealing the ultimate truth behind an unsolved case, De Cataldo suggests instead connivance between criminal elements and the state with the purpose of maintaining their respective spheres of influence. In other words, this novel acts at the level of the social imagination in a way that expands and complicates the interpretative possibilities of the narration of the past itself, by proposing new, plausible interpretations of past events.[70]

The novel also follows the vicissitudes of Inspector Scialoja, an ambitious police detective who has devoted his life to pursuing the Roman gang. Scialoja is soon transferred to Bologna and is among the first people to arrive at the scene of the Bologna railway station bombing in 1980. Once there he sees Zeta and Pigreco wandering through the ruins, and he is able to elaborate:

> La presenza di uomini dei Servizi sul teatro della strage era più che giustificata. Indagano, è il loro mestiere. Eppure, lui sapeva chi erano quegli uomini. Sapeva chi proteggevano a Roma. Indagano per sapere o indagano per evitare che altri sappiano? Scialoja intuì collegamenti, strade maestre, deviazioni per viottoli oscuri e malsani. L'enormità dello scenario che gli si stava spalancando davanti agli occhi lo fece tremare.[71]
>
> [The presence of men of a secret service organization at the scene of the massacre was more than justified. They were investigating, it was their job. Still, he knew who these men were. He knew who they protected in Rome. Were they investigating in order to find out or in order to prevent others from doing so? Scialoja intuited connections, main roads, diversions via obscure and unhealthy lanes. The enormity of the scenario unrolling in front of him made him shiver.]

In this extract, Scialoja becomes aware of the strategy of tension as exemplified by the use of the world "deviazioni" [diversions] that recalls "servizi deviati" that is the term commonly used in Italian to mean covert activities of some elements of the Italian intelligence. The presence of Zeta and Pigreco, who work precisely for the *servizi deviati*, on the scene of the terrorist attack, suggests the activity of obscure powers behind the most horrific events of the Years of Lead. In the novel, some events orchestrated by the Old Man are defined as "il crocevia di tutti i più grandi misteri della Storia recente" [the intersection of the biggest mysteries of recent history].[72] The Old Man manages a branch of the secret service known by very few that plots an authoritarian shift for Italy:

> Il Vecchio è il Vecchio, il Vecchio ordina e Dio dispone. Il Vecchio comandava un'unità informativa dal nome neutro il cui potere era noto solo a pochissimi eletti. Circondato dai suoi giocattoli meccanici, pezzi autentici del Settecento austriaco, prototipi dei moderni automi, il Vecchio combatteva l'insonnia giocando a disordinare il mondo.[73]

> [The Old Man is The Old Man. The Old Man proposes and God disposes. He commanded an anonymous intelligence unit whose power was known only to a very select elite. Surrounded by his mechanical toys, authentic pieces from eighteenth century Austria, prototypes of the modern automata, the Old Man fought insomnia by playing at upsetting the order of the world.]

The Old Man is a symbol of a hidden power that manipulates people and organizations in order to keep control of Italy.[74] His mechanical toys are metaphors for criminal gangs, Red Brigades, and neo-Fascist terrorists whose actions he exploits for his game of causing chaos in the world. Even when he is not directly responsible for murders and attacks—such as in the case of the *strage di Bologna*—the Old Man is able to use many criminal events to pursue his goals: "*Viviamo in un'epoca degenere. Persino la mafia non è più quella di una volta. Tuttavia, non tutto il male viene per nuocere. Un altro tassello s'aggiunge al mosaico della confusione*" [We live in a degenerate era. Even the Mafia isn't what it used to be. However, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Another piece is added to the mosaics of confusion].[75] The Old Man loves chaos: "L'unica risorsa di una mente superiore: giocare a disordinare il mondo per preparare un caos sempre più nuovo" [The only resource for a superior mind is to play at preparing an ever-changing chaos].[76] He assures Scialoja that there is not just one plot that puts together all the bloody events of the 1970s. However, the chaos he helps to create has the precise scope to support authoritarianism.

The figure of the Old Man is an explicit reference to the idea of il Grande Vecchio according to which there was a single, obscure figure behind various Italian mysteries. De Cataldo admitted using this figure as a metaphor.[77] However—and this marks De Cataldo's originality in comparison with other crime novels that deal with the Years of Lead—he does not embrace a classic interpretation of the conspiracy theory where everything is directly ascribable to the Italian state. For this reason, O'Leary's objection to conspiracy plots does not completely apply here.[78] De Cataldo believes that behind many of the mysteries of the Years of Lead, there were hidden powers that used situations, after they had happened, to their own advantage. He explained in an interview that if by conspiracy "we mean general strategic lines that have to govern the world, not necessarily state lines, let's say movements of interests that then are channelled in specific people who have the power to act on some levels, from the one at the top down to the person who carries out the plan, then yes, I believe con-

spiracies exist."[79] This movement of interests all converged in fighting an alleged Communist plot that aimed at taking power in Italy, disregarding or covering other agents of violence. In various parts of the novels, powerful judges downplay the role of the neo-Fascists in the terrorism season and only concentrate on the Red Brigades: "'Ah, vabbuò…rossi e neri sono un pericolo per le istituzioni, ma se vuoi sapere come la vedo io… il fascismo è morto e sepolto! E le Bierre so' cento volte cchiù carogne! Comunque, questo è il nostro obbiettivo prioritario: la difesa delle istituzioni'" [Yes, right…reds and blacks are a danger for the state, but if you want to know what I think…Fascism is dead and buried! And the Red Brigades are a hundred times worse! Anyway, this is our main goal: defend the state].[80] In a period when for red terrorists, "il sospetto era un certezza" [a suspicion was a certainty],[81] the novel highlights how neo-Fascist terrorism, criminal organizations such as the Magliana gang and the Mafia were willingly ignored or, even worse, became occasional partners in the fight against left terrorism. This suited the many supporters of a coup in Italy, as a fight against an alleged Communist danger—depicted as the only entity responsible for the 1970s murders and attacks—would justify all the actions, legal and illegal, taken to guarantee law and order. As Scialoja comments: "La gente doveva rendersi conto che non c'è solo il terrorismo, a questo mondo. Il terrorismo passa. La mafia resta" [People need to understand that there isn't only terrorism. Terrorism goes away. The Mafia stays].[82]

In a country where "insecurity" is used in an Agambian sense as a "political strategy,"[83] power tolerates only those infractions that serve its purpose, creating a milieu where criminality is endemic and is exploited in order to keep control over society. This is exactly the scenario depicted in *Romanzo criminale* where the collaboration between state and organized crime is at the center of the narrative. As a far-right theorist, Professore [the Professor] explains: "'Militanti idealisti, mafiosi, soldati sbandati, e anche ladri, assassini, quelli che, insomma il piagnisteo comunistoide definisce 'criminali'. Tutti uniti nella comune battaglia contro lo Stato corrotto della Stella a cinque punte'" ["Idealistic militants, Mafiosi, wayward soldiers, also thieves and murderers, and all those who the whining communist defines as 'criminals' should be united in the common fight against the state corrupted by the five pointed star"].[84] This happens in *Romanzo criminale* where the Old Man exploits deviancy for his own ends: "'Prendi un deviante o supposto tale, lo fai deviare, lo afferri mentre sta deviando e gli poni una brutale alternativa: o devii per mio conto o hai chiuso'"

["You take a deviant, or an alleged one, and you make him deviate. Then you grab him while he is deviating and offer a brutal alternative: either you deviate for me or you're done"].[85]

As Scialoja bitterly comments:

> I bombaroli potrebbero essere utili. Li lasciano fare. Li usano. Li coccolano. Tutto dipende dall'anticomunismo. La leva iniziale è stata la paura dei rossi. Personalmente ho smesso di votare da anni. Ma mi fa inorridire l'idea che per tenere alla larga gente come Amendola e Berlinguer si debba andare a letto con gli assassini. Proteggere i trafficanti di droga. Pagare i terroristi neofascisti. Lasciare mano libera alla mafia.[86]
>
> [Terrorists could be useful. They let them do what they want. They use them. They pamper them. Everything depends on anti-communism. The initial lever was the fear of the reds. Personally, I stopped voting ages ago. However I am horrified at the idea that in order to get rid of people such as Amendola and Berlinguer you need to get into bed with murderers; protect drug-traffickers; pay neo-Fascist terrorists; give the Mafia a free hand.]

From what has been said it is clear that while following the rise and the demise of the Roman gang and far from downplaying the responsibilities of the criminal organization and the Red Brigades, *Romanzo criminale* also points at passive and active participation of the state in many dark episodes of Italian history, without making it solely responsible for all the mysterious events of the 1970s. Omissions ("restiamo a guardare" [Let's wait and see]),[87] indirect support (as in the case with the Moro case), or complicity as in the case of the murder of journalist Pecorelli, are the crimes committed by a state that wants to preserve power at any rate. The list of crimes is so long that one may wonder what the title of the novel really refers to. Is it a novel of the exploits of an organized band? Or, rather, of the crimes against Italian society at large in a long period stretching from the late 1960s to the 1980s? The impression that crimes against Italy are the real protagonists of the novel is reinforced when, after investigating the ties between the Roman gang and the secret services for many years, at the end of *Romanzo criminale*, Inspector Scialoja decides to takes the place of the Old Man by becoming the head of that "anonymous intelligence unit" he wanted to uncover. Being the new custodian of Italy's secret history, the Inspector is sucked into the very system he had tried so stubbornly to change.

Simone Sarasso's *Confine di Stato* and *Settanta*

Simone Sarasso was born in 1978, and lives in Novara. He is the author of *Confine di Stato* [The State Border] (2007), *Settanta* [Seventy] (2009), and the epic historical novel *Invictus: Costantino, l'imperatore guerriero* (2012).[88] He also writes for film and television and teaches creative writing at the Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan.

If *Romanzo criminale* starts in 1977, Sarasso's *Confine di Stato* has an ambitious plot that pulls together several important events in Italy's post-war history, such as the unsolved murder of a young woman, Wilma Montesi, in 1953, the assassination of the administrator of the National Fuel Trust (ENI), Enrico Mattei in 1962, the Piazza Fontana bombing in 1969 and the mysterious death of left-wing publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in 1972. The novel is interspersed with allusions or explicit references to other authors, such as James Ellroy, films, such as those of Quentin Tarantino and the *Die Hard* series, and comic books. More importantly, in *Confine di Stato* conspiracy is not an expedient by which to fill shadowy areas of Italian contemporary history, but represents "the main perspective on Italian history and all the events narrated are located according to this logic."[89] While in *Romanzo criminale*, the Old Man is not responsible for all the mysterious murders and attacks of the 1970s, even though he is able to use them to his own advantage, in *Confine di Stato*, all these mysteries are part of a conspiracy controlled by a clandestine organization, called Ultor, which is supported by the US intelligence with the goal of preventing the Communist Party from gaining power in Italy. The hypothesis of a foreign agent behind at least some of the (many) unsolved murders and attacks in post-war Italy has some basis as (as Italians found out in 1990) "Operation Gladio" was in fact the codename for a clandestine NATO "stay-behind" operation in Italy and other European countries during the Cold War. However, in the novel everything, nothing excluded, is ascribable to Ultor/Gladio. The novel starts with the Piazza Fontana bombing in 1969:

> Camera a mano.
> L'uomo cammina lento, di tanto in tanto sbircia l'orologio.
> [...]
> La camera segue l'uomo, procede in linea retta. Ogni tre passi, ritmicamente, si volta sui due lati.
> [...]

L'uomo arriva nella piazza. La camera si ferma.
Fish-eye: la piazza in grandangolo.[90]

[Hand held camera.
The man walks slowly, from time to time he glances at his watch.
…
The camera follows the man, proceeding in a straight line. Every three steps, rhythmically, he looks to either side.
…
The man arrives in the square. The camera stops.
Fish-eye: the square in wide angle.]

As we can see from this extract, Sarasso gives a cinematic description of the events preceding the bombing. He uses an explicitly fictionalized technique to tackle real events that were staged by sinister powers in order to spread terror among Italians. In the novel, it is the Ultor long arm, Andrea Sterling. Confined to a psychiatric hospital since childhood, Sterling is enlisted in a police training course where his violent tendencies are appreciated. A sadist and ferocious anti-Communist, he becomes the long arm of all the alleged state murders, such as the already mentioned assassination of young Ester Conti, which has consequences for the political career of a DC official; the death of the president of the State Oil Board Fabio Rivera (inspired by Enrico Mattei); and a militant Communist revolutionary known as Editore [the Publisher] (Giangiacomo Feltrinelli). In other words, the whole "conspiratorial" development of the novel rests exclusively on this character. A figure characterized by absolute wickedness in a novel where, like in a James Ellroy's book, nobody is innocent, Andrea Sterling is certainly "the embodiment of the terrorism of the right and a radical thinking imbued in a culture of violence."[91] However, Sterling is also a highly stereotypical character who reminds us too much of an action movie or cartoon character to be effective. The adaptation of several real-life events in order to accommodate his role in the action, such as his responsibility for the Piazza Fontana bombing, seems contrived in the narrative.

If *Confine di stato* is unconvincing for embracing a conspiracy that works around one single character, it nevertheless has some merits when it deals with the victims of terrorism, as one can see from the highly visual description of the effects of the attack:

Sembra il terremoto: non è il terremoto.
Le vetrine sull'esterno si gonfiano, come palloncini.

> Per un intero secondo, prima di esplodere e sparare proiettili di vetro.
> Due corpi volano insieme ai frammenti. Si abbattono sul marciapiede. Rantolano e respirano ancora.
> […]
> Una donna completamente carbonizzata è tutt'uno coi suoi vestiti. Solo il viso è stato risparmiato dalla vampa. E piange mentre striscia.[92]
>
> [It looks like an earthquake. It's not.
> The windows that look onto the exterior inflate like balloons.
> For an entire second before exploding and shooting glass bullets.
> Two bodies fly together with the fragments. They fall on the pavement. They wheeze and still breathe.
> (…)
> A completely burnt woman is one thing with her clothes. Only her face has been spared by the flames. She cries while crawling.]

Literature, and more specifically crime fiction, "can give voice to victims of the past forgotten by the law and thus create a kind of counter-narrative of justice."[93] In this extract, there is no trace of the anesthetization of violence that characterized previous narratives about the Years of Lead as denounced by Paolin. A virtual camera zooms in on the physical pain and despair of the victims of the bombing. The graphic description of a woman mangled by the explosion reminds the reader that the victims of terrorism were not just names in newspapers but people of flesh and blood. The first pages of the book also host fictional testimonies from survivors and family members of the Milan bombing victims; the recounting of their lives prior and following the attack contributes to the personalization of this tragic event. Sarasso returns to the Milan bombing at the end of *Confine di Stato*. After a long flash-back to the murder of Ester Conti, the last hundred pages of the novel are dedicated to the period from 1969 to 1972.

Confine di Stato goes to the core of the Years of Lead dealing with important questions related to the power and limits (or lack of them) of the state in a democratic society. However, as mentioned, this novel fails to convince completely because all the unsolved mysteries are connected to the same guilty party, Ultor, in the person of the sadistic Sterling. This volume does not want to dismiss the possibility that some of the tragic events occurring during the Years of Lead could be traced back to the state or, rather, to some corrupt elements of it. However, *Confine di Stato* uses the conspiracy plot as a "mythic mask over uncertainty."[94] In other words, by trying to explain everything through conspiracy, it ends up flattening

the past and preventing an effective understanding of this complex period of Italian history.

Equally importantly, the novel swings unconvincingly between realistic representations of 1970s Italy and cartoonish atmospheres. For example, in addition to psychopath Sterling, the Publisher is also a highly grotesque figure. In the novel, hidden in the mountains and hunted by Sterling, he joins his lover Lucille:

> Poi, una notte, come se n'era andato, era ricomparso.
> Aveva pianto, l'aveva maledetto. Poi avevano fatto pace, lui sapeva come prenderla. Le aveva accarezzato i capelli: "Non preoccuparti, bimba." Lucille aveva provato a protestare mentre lui riempiva lo zaino da montagna, ma lo sapeva che non l'avrebbe avuta vinta.
> "Devo andare, Lucille, qui non sono al sicuro."[95]
>
> [Then one night, as mysteriously as he had left, he reappeared.
> She had cried. She had cursed him. Then they made peace, he knew how to handle her. He had stroked her head: "Don't worry, baby." Lucilla had tried to protest while he was packing his backpack, but she knew she would never win.
> "I have to go, Lucille, I'm not safe here."]

As one can see from this passage, a highly stereotyped conversation between the action hero and his lover takes place. The Publisher sounds more like the protagonist of a *Die Hard* film than the victim of one of the unsolved mysteries of Italian history. The day of reckoning with Sterling takes place nowhere else than in Cuba:

> L'Editore aveva in mano una mitraglietta sovietica. Ricaricò, ordinò agli uomini di occuparsi dell'ultimo scarafaggio. [...] L'Editore rise amaro. Si alzò in piedi, estrasse la rivoltella. Cane alzato, sguardo fisso: "Hasta siempre, maricón."[96]
>
> [The Publisher held a Soviet machine gun. He loaded it, and ordered his men to take care of the last cockroach. [...] The Publisher laughed bitterly. He stood up, took out his gun. Hammer on, fixed gaze: "Hasta siempre, maricòn."]

The language to address enemies ("scarafaggio"), his coolness in front of danger and his catchphrase ("Hasta siempre, maricòn") qualifies the Publisher as a Hollywood character. As an editor and political activist, real-life Feltrinelli had visited Cuba in 1964 and befriended Fidel Castro.

He also traveled to Bolivia and gave financial support to many terrorist organizations, but it is hard to believe that he embraced a Soviet machine gun and massacred a pool of secret service agents. Admittedly, attempts to critique literature from the perspective of positivist factual accuracy is meaningless as institutional history's perspective is beyond the means of crime fiction in particular and literature in general. Moreover, Sarasso may have used the language of comics to attract a younger audience and keep the memory alive (Chu and Amici 68). However, the use of a Moriarty-style villain and over-the-top situations trivializes events for which there has not been a closure, among which there is also the death of Feltrinelli, an object itself of conspiracy theories.[97]

Sarasso's subsequent novel *Settanta* follows the vicissitudes of various characters, which are developed in parallel and subsequently intersect. Sterling is also present in this novel, but the focus shifts from one villain's point of view to a more polyphonic description of Italy in the 1970s. The story follows, among others, the actions of Ettore Brivido, a Milanese gangster inspired by real-life criminal Renato Vallanzasca,[98] Domenico Incatenato, an investigative judge, and Nando Gatti, an actor (whose description resembles actor Maurizio Merli).[99] In particular, Brivido represents the new rampant criminality that was gradually taking control of Milan. This character ends up working with the secret service and as an undercover agent in Moro's kidnapping. Actor Nando Gatti embodies an extreme version of the mob justice mentality of a part of Italian society of the period; he convinces himself he is one of the characters he has played and executes Brivido. Incatenato is an idealistic judge who is interested in pursuing justice and who has a final showdown with evil Sterling. After a personal and work setback he is more than determined to continue his job with the help of Investigative Judge Rita Briganti. Other characters clearly inspired by real figures—such as Francesco Argento (Aldo Moro), Svedese [the Swede] (Henry Kissinger), comrade Mario (Renato Curcio), the Doctor (Mario Moretti), and General Brasco (Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa)—contribute to create a choral narrative that offers a more convincing cross-section of the 1970s.[100]

Again, among the protagonists, it is Police Detective Incatenato who is most aware of the sinister network of agents behind Italian politics:

> "Gli americani c'entrano. C'entrano eccome. Lo sai che succeede se continuiamo a lasciarci comandare dagli americani? Finisce che la gente si dimentica. Si dimentica di tutto. Finisce che tra trent'anni, o pure meno, la gente fa tutto

> quello che le dice il cinema americano e pure la televisione. Finisce che se un ragazzino vede scritto da qualche parte X-mas pensa Christmas invece che Decima Mas. Ecco che cazzo succede!"[101]

> ["Americans have something to do with it. Sure, they have. Do you know what is going to happen if we keep on allowing them to rule us? It happens that people forget. They forget everything. In 30 years or so, people end up doing anything American movies and TV tell them. If a kid sees 'X-mas' written somewhere, he thinks that it refers to Christmas and not the Fascist X Mas. This is what's bloody happening!"]

A central figure in crime fiction is used to deliver the narrator's perspective on the Years of Lead, and, in this case, to foresee a future of cultural and social hegemony of American culture in Italy's everyday life, and even more importantly, a future that has forgiven the past. As in *Confine di Stato*, in *Settanta*, the conspiracy theory is at the very center of the narrative. The American secret service wants to control a strategic territory, such as Italy, that borders with the Iron Curtain. In order to do so, they intervene behind the scene with the complicity of those who want to fight the Communist Party's influence in Italian politics and society. Contradicting his name, Incatenato (translating as "chained" in English) wants to fight American influence, and predicts a future when young people are brainwashed by commercial TV and forget about the history of their own country. It is precisely to avoid a loss of this memory that Sarasso and other crime fiction writers have decided to tackle this pivotal period of Italian history.[102]

In *Settanta*, De Cataldo's the Old Man has his counterpart in a shady politician, named Omino [the Little Man]:

> L'aspetto mite, semideforme. Gli occhiali troppo spessi. L'arco innaturale della schiena: il problema peggiorava di anno in anno. […] Neutralità: la natura ontologica del centro. Controllo: il controllo è potere.[103]

> [The mild and semi-malformed look; the too thick glasses; the unnatural arch of his back: his problem was getting worse and worse. […] Neutrality: the ontological nature of the center; control: control is power.]

Omino's physical appearance—his inoffensive look and his deformity as well as his political affiliation, the center, and his thirst for control reminds us of a powerful real-life politician, Giulio Andreotti.[104] While in *Romanzo criminale* the Old Man is not responsible for Moro's kidnapping or the

strage di Bologna, Omino is the mastermind behind all the mysteries of the 1970s. He uses Sterling, who in the meantime has been promoted as secretary general of the Cesis, the Italian intelligence, to reach his goals:

> "Certa gente, non glielo devo certo insegnare io, non va molto per il sottile, specie di questi tempi. E se venisse in possesso di determinate informazioni logistiche potrebbe addirittura aver l'ardire, chi lo sa? Di sequestrare il presidente del Consiglio o qualche altra carica dello Stato. È un'ipotesi plausibile, concorda con me, Sterling?"[105]
>
> ["I don't need to tell you this, but some people aren't too fussy, especially in this day and age. If they got hold of some logistical information they could even be audacious, who knows? They could kidnap the prime minister or another public officer. It's a plausible hypothesis, isn't it, Sterling?"]

The Omino never talks directly or asks for something specific. He makes use of hypotheses or parables in order to make himself understood. After this conversation, Sterling uses one of his men, previously infiltrated into the Red Brigades ranks, to push for Argento/Moro's kidnapping. Thus, in *Settanta*, the responsibilities of the state in the murder of Moro are direct, and not indirect as suggested in Sciascia's *L'Affaire Moro* and in *Romanzo criminale*. Like *Confine di Stato*, *Settanta* seems to belong to a group of cultural products that, by embracing the theory of a secret service conspiracy, allows the Italian left to avoid an uneasy confrontation with its own past and, in particular, with its inability to prevent the armed struggle. Argento's assassination is also part of a plot on a larger scale that has been orchestrated by Omino: "Con la morte di Argento il Paese ha conosciuto il vero volto dell'estremismo di sinistra. L'ha rinnegato per sempre. Le sacche di solidarietà, persino le ultime residue: sterminate. Seppellite col cadavere dell'ex presidente" [With Argento's death the country has known the extreme left's true face. It has renounced it forever. The island of solidarity, even the last remnants: exterminated. Buried with the body of the former president].[106] With a language of death ("morte," "sterminate," and "seppellite"), Omino celebrates the end of the season of student and worker movements and social reforms, and a new era of fear and state control. Omino's work, however, is not completed. In order to generate even more panic among the Italian population he orchestrates the Bologna bombing and makes sure that right-wing terrorism is to be blamed for it:

> Con la bomba di Bologna il popolo conoscerà l'orribile grugno dell'estremismo di destra. Assassini rossi. Assassini neri. Ovunque guardi, il Paese non ha scelta. Se vuole sopravvivere, dovrà affidarsi alle amorevoli cure del centro. L'Omino è il centro. Adesso, in questo preciso istante, mentre Bologna brucia ed è ancora troppo scossa per piangere i propri morti, l'Omino è il signore assoluto del Paese. […] Il Paese non ha più bisogno della strategia della tensione. […] L'estremismo muore oggi. Oggi finisce un'epoca.[107]
>
> [With the Bologna bomb the people get to know the extreme right's hideous face. Red killers. Black killers. Wherever you look, the country does not have a choice. If it wants to survive, it will have to have trust in the all-embracing care of the center. Omino is the center. Now, in this precise moment, while Bologna is still burning and still too shattered to cry for its dead, Omino is the absolute master of the country…The country does not need the strategy of tension anymore…Extremism is dying today. Today is the end of an era.]

In the passage the description of right-wing terrorism corresponds to a description of the Red Brigades drawn in the previous passage. In both cases the narrator refers to the "face" of these organizations. In both cases a language of death is used. These conscious repetitions symbolize the fact that right—and left-wing terrorism are mirror parts of Omino's plans. If the left and the right are equally to blame for a season of terror, the only alternative for Italians is the center represented by Omino and his party. The strategy of tension has reached its goal and can be dismissed. All the people who secretly worked for it can be eliminated, Sterling included.

As mentioned, *Settanta* presents a more polyphonic narrative. However, as in *Confine di Stato*, evil is symbolized by one person, in this case, a cunning and powerful politician. During a conversation with Sterling, Omino says: "'Io sono il segretario del partito di maggioranza, non il professor Moriarty'" ["I'm the secretary of the majority party, not Professor Moriarty"].[108] However, Omino is indeed a Moriarty-like figure who has some grotesque characteristics, like some of the characters in Sarasso's previous novel. The secretary of the most influential party in Italy, Omino likes punishing himself with hair shirts and other instruments of corporal punishment. He is a "Mefistofele—tutto ossa e occhiali" [Mephistophelian, all bones and glasses] who "frena il ghigno" [holds back a sneer][109] when he can finally get rid of his rivals. He is even able to blackmail the Swede and subdue him. This is obviously a hyperbole that, as Guzzo argues, "makes historians reflect upon the controversial dialectic between the image of

Evil and some elements of a state that says it wants to defend itself from the perverted desire of local Communism."[110] However, as in *Confine di stato*, a character that resembles a villain of the Golden Age crime fiction as well as a super villain borrowed from the pages of a comic book ends up being the pivotal figure of a story and the main person responsible for everything that happened in Italy in the 1970s. One cannot refrain from thinking about Andreotti's famous remark: "Apart from the Punic Wars, for which I was too young, I have been blamed for everything that's happened in Italy." Commenting on conspiracy films, O' Leary argues that even if they provide a counter version of recent history, "the conspirators' will is shown to be irresistible, then resistance to it is pointless, and political activism or reformist aspiration is thereby allegorized as vain."[111] It may be added that by choosing to trace back all Italian evils to only one figure, they unwittingly dilute the responsibilities of other agents of violence. Using Butler's argument on the conspiracy theories related to September 11, in this case the theorists are also denying any capacity to act to anyone else. Likewise, by ascribing all the terrorist acts to the state, conspiracy theorists water down the role of the Red Brigades, among others. If De Cataldo manages to avoid this, by making his Old Man unable to control all the different "movements of interests" acting during the Years of Lead, which remain responsible for their own acts, Sarasso makes Omino a diabolical and unconvincing deus ex machina.

This may be an unwitting result because in some parts of his novel Sarasso does not hide the violence of left-wing terrorism. Many pages of his novel give an account of the violent actions of both right- and left-wing terrorism. For example, he devotes several pages to a horrifying description of Moro/Argento's kidnapping:

> Oreste che dà gli ordini, Domenico che li fa eseguire. Raffaele e Giulio che nemmeno si capisce se ti stanno ascoltando. Guida, Francesco. […]
> Guida l'Alfetta dietro l'auto del presidente.
> Con Raffaele a fianco che pare di sapone. E Oreste, Domenico e Giulio nell'altra auto, chissà che cazzo pensano.
> Chissà che cazzo pensano quando quelli col cappuccio sbucano dai cespugli e iniziano a sparare.
> Chissà che cazzo pensano quando la raffica li inchioda al sedile.
> Chissà che cazzo pensa Raffaele quando gli sparano in faccia. Da tanto vicino che il sangue schizza tutta la faccia di Francesco.
> Chissà che cazzo pensano.[112]

> [Oreste gives orders, Domenico makes sure they're carried out. Who knows if Raffaele and Giulio are listening? Francesco drives. [...]
> He drives the Alfetta behind the President's car.
> At his side, Raffaele is stiff with tension. Oreste, Domenico and Giulio in the other car; who knows what the hell they're thinking?
> Who knows what the hell they're thinking when those people wearing balaklavas emerge from the bushes and start shooting.
> Who knows what the hell they're thinking when the burst of machine gun fire nails them to their seats.
> Who knows what the hell Raffaele is thinking when he is shot in the face. From so close that his blood is splattered on Francesco's face.
> Who knows what the hell they're thinking...]

As one can see, just like in the Milan attack in 1969, there is no sanitized version of terrorist violence. At the same time, however, there is no complacency in describing blood and violence, as may happen in some crime stories. There is just a photographic and chilling description of an event that shook all of Italy. This time the protagonists of a barbarian act are the Red Brigades. In this passage, contravening what he has done in the rest of the novel, Sarasso uses the real names of the men who were escorting Moro on that fatal day. Previously the novel had followed the agents' daily routine while getting ready for work. Their ambitions, fears, the love for their family are exposed to the eyes of a reader who already knows these were the last hours of their lives. The use of their first names makes them sympathetic characters, normal Italians among Italians. The horror (the splattered blood) and the pity (the rhetorical question about their last thoughts) with which this writer describes their assassinations are palpable in these pages that are among the most moving and effective of the entire novel. Indeed, by opening the stage to the victims of violence and giving them faces and voices, Sarasso makes an important contribution to the discourse on the Years of Lead. A few paragraphs later, Sarasso also remembers the Red Brigades' responsibilities for a series of acts of violence against civilians during the Years of Lead: "come se le Br non avessero ammazzato una dozzina di civili prima del colpo grosso" [as if the Red Brigades hadn't killed a dozen of civilians before their big strike].[113] The narrator concludes by saying:

> Nessuno è innocente.
> *Nessuno merita di morire*. Comunque.
> *Nessuno*.[114]

> [Nobody is innocent.
> Nobody deserves to die. Anyway.
> *Nobody*.]

This is a clear condemnation of the violence of the Red Brigades that was missing in many literary novels with the same topic. In this sense, and with all its weaknesses, *Settanta* is a step forward in comparison with many books that concentrate on the figure of the terrorists and ignore their victims.

These works of Sarasso and De Cataldo have much in common. They both deal with the Years of Lead by blending fiction and non-fiction as well as elements of various genres, with varying degrees of success. They are both told from different narrative perspectives. They both use the detective and his investigation as a tool to uncover inconvenient truths or give an alternative explanation to official versions. They are both extremely complex in terms of structure and content. Finally they are both a powerful accusation of the distortions of political power. As Loriano Macchiavelli argues, "Italian crime writers had and still have the merit of showing an inattentive reader—the train reader or whoever reads just before falling asleep—that power, no matter what form it incarnates, destroys whoever tries to oppose it."[115] Thanks to the typical *topoi* of crime fiction—violence, victims, and perpetrators—the *giallo* has been able to address the uneasy topic of the violence of the state and commemorate its victims. As Ward rightly puts it:

> It is as if literature and writing have been handed the task of saying in conjectural, but plausible terms, protected by the safety net of fiction, what otherwise could not be said in other fora, on account of a lack of proof, or is so scandalous and destabilizing that to say it out loud, shorn of the comforting alibi of fiction, would cause scandal.[116]

In the specific context of the 1970s, this task is particularly difficult. If it is true, as Barbacetto says, that "we do not know the names of the culprits, but we have detected in the strategy of tension an apparatus of men, often working for the state with a precise goal: the conservation of power,"[117] the inaccessibility of important sources and the uneasiness of dealing with politicians and public people often still active makes this task particularly tricky. As Sarasso states:

> Telling the "real" story of the 1970s in Italy is virtually impossible. The historic reconstruction is full of gaps, there are too many mysteries; there are too many doubts about the motivations and the ideals professed by the forces in place.[118]

De Cataldo agrees: "'It's telling reality by interpreting and dramatizing it. [...] Perhaps we're forced to dramatize reality because some of its elements escapes us or maybe we cannot control them.'"[119] Thus, crime writers try to act in a situation already denounced by Pier Paolo Pasolini when he famously said: "Io so, ma non ho le prove" [I know, but I do not have evidence].[120] They try to fill these gaps with interpretations, suggestions, and fictional events. As Sarasso comments in the afterword of *Settanta*, writers hope at least "to have recreated the taste of those times, their smell."[121] They also hope that the reader "starts from fiction to become interested in the real and tragic story of our troubled country."[122] In other words, De Cataldo and Sarasso seem to follow Wu Ming when they say that the use of narrative instead of human sciences to investigate facts allows the possibility of being "visionary, to prove by reductio ad absurdum, or metaphor, to concatenate events through the use of symbols and analogies to imagine what may happen when we do not have evidence."[123]

Indeed, while reading De Cataldo's and Sarasso's books, one needs to keep in mind that, once again using Wu Ming's reflections, "even if a novel touches reality, the most precious thing I can find in its pages is not the truth of facts, but the sense of how they are woven together."[124] The issues of the vicinity to the facts addressed in the novels; the temptation to identify one person responsible for so many mysteries, following a *topos* in crime fiction; the difficulty in pointing, without clear evidence, at specific culprits who could still be alive today—are a few of the obstacles that the writers analyzed in this book had to face in dealing with the Years of Lead. This has resulted in the publication of not always completely convincing narratives—especially in the cases of *Confine di stato* and *Settanta*. However, the effort of tackling a period of Italian history that so many people want to forget is commendable.

Commenting on literary novels, La Porta laments that in Italy the retelling of the Years of Lead has not gone beyond a reassuring and consoling surface.[125] This is not true for *Romanzo criminale*, *Confine di Stato*, and *Settanta*. These novels draw a disquieting portrait of 1970s Italy and carve deeply into many (still) gray zones of Italian recent history. According to Eco, a conspiratorial interpretation of reality absolves an entire society of

its own responsibilities by allowing people to think that hidden secrets conceal plots of which they are victims.[126] However, by attributing responsibilities to atrocities and corruption to the conspirators, De Cataldo and Sarasso may have downplayed other agents' responsibilities, but do not absolve the individual and society in general. On the contrary, by offering new readings of some of the crucial events of the 1970s, they spur their readership to go deeper and "investigate" unsolved crimes that still haunt our nation and our consciences.

Years of Lead on Screen: *Piazza delle cinque lune*, *Romanzo criminale*, *Romanzo di una strage*, *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* and the *Romanzo Criminale* TV Series

The experience of terrorism and political violence in the Years of Lead has exercised the national imagination and that of Italian filmmakers to a remarkable degree. Italian cinema has played a prominent role in articulating the ongoing impact of the Years of Lead and in defining the ways in which Italians remember and work through the events of the long 1970s. As O'Leary argues, for much of the 1970s it was not the culturally valued, politically committed or auteurist cinema that addressed the problem or phenomenon of terrorism but the genres of the *poliziottesco* [the cop film] and *commedia all'italiana* [Italian-style comedy]. The cop films in particular were violent action movies that tended to focus on the ideologies and activities of the far right and on the state's covert support for neo-Fascist aspiration in a period when terrorism both of the extreme right and of the extreme left was still raging in Italy.[127] As Pergolari puts it, the *poliziottesco* is "an authentic picture of the paranoic social climate of that time."[128] Marcus argues that after a period of neglect, in the 1990s, Italian mainstream cinema seemed to return to its "vocation of civic reference" and began to document the realities of history from a politically committed standpoint.[129] In particular, since the 1990s many films have addressed the atrocities and traumas of the Years of Lead.[130] Christian Uva explains the return to the *anni di piombo* as part of a "general revival of the 1970s" in which the decade is accorded "the status of mythical refounding of the Italian collective imaginary."[131] Uva also highlights the propensity for the most recent Italian cinema to tackle the so-called *misteri d'Italia* [Italian mysteries] in which, as we have seen, the Italian state is thought

to have colluded in violent and traumatic events.[132] As already mentioned, this propensity can be explained by the worldwide resurgence of terrorism, after the September 11 attacks, an event that marks a "return to history" and disavows Fukuyama's predictions of an alleged "end of history."[133]

As in literature, the proximity of these events and the reactions that some of these films provoked among people affected by them, gave rise to some questions about the historical nature of these narratives. This is particularly relevant with films, cultural products that reach a much wider audience than literature and whose visual prerogatives have a deeper impact on their users. For example, Marnie Hughes-Warrington wonders if an alleged historical film "will be recognized as such by producers, distributors and viewers?".[134] As for Italian cinema, O'Rawe observes that "the tangled relations between the intentions of those producing the films and the reactions of those consuming them became paramount"[135] with some films set during the Years of Lead. Indeed, in some cases, such as in Renato De Maria's *La prima linea* (2009, *The Front Line*),[136] a biopic loosely based on the memoirs of the Prima Linea terrorist Sergio Segio, "history" is revealed to be still very present. Among other things, critics criticized the film as a glamorization of terrorism that was turned into a show through the use of Italian sex symbol Riccardo Scamarcio for the role of the protagonist.[137] Our discourse on films and terrorism is furthermore complicated by the interlinking of history and crime fiction. If the Years of Lead hosted an impressive series of terrorist acts, violence, and murder configuring itself as the "crime era" par excellence, any narrative set in these troubled years could qualify as a crime story. This section leaves aside biopic films that concentrate on the life of a single, recognizable public figure, such as the above-mentioned *La prima linea*; movies such as Marco Bellocchio's *Buongiorno, notte* (2003, *Good morning, night*) and others centered on the morality of terrorism and personal choices; those that negotiate a legacy other than the actuality of terrorism in Italy; or self-narratives. It instead concentrates on three recent films and one TV series such as Renzo Martinelli's *Piazza delle cinque lune* (2003); Marco Tullio Giordana's *Romanzo di una strage* (2012; *Piazza Fontana. The Italian Conspiracy*); and the film version of *Romanzo criminale* by Michele Placido (2005) and the subsequent TV series *Romanzo criminale—La serie* [Crime Story—The Series] (2008–2010) because in these cultural products the *topos* of investigation is central. This section starts with an analysis of an older film, Petri's *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*.

Elio Petri (1929–1982) was a motion-picture director and screenwriter who made use of genre films, such as crime and horror cinema, in order to address important social and political topics. He reached popular success with *Il maestro di Vigevano* [The Teacher of Vigevano] (1963), starring Alberto Sordi and Claire Bloom and *La decima vittima* (1965; *The Tenth Victim*), starring Marcello Mastroianni and Ursula Andress.[138] The Sicilian world of organized crime was the setting for Petri's following film, *A ciascuno il suo* (1967; *We Still Kill the Old Way*) inspired by Sciascia's famous novel.[139] This work marked the director's meeting with Gian Maria Volonté, the actor who in the years to come would star in several of Petri's films. In 1970, Petri directed *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (*Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*, 1970). This is the first of three movies that construct a "political" trilogy on social unrest and class struggle and sees the successful collaboration between Petri and screenwriter Ugo Pirro. The film—a bitter parable about the degeneration of power—won an Oscar for best foreign film. It was followed by *La classe operaia va in paradiso* (1971; *The Working Class Goes to Heaven*) and *La proprietà non è più un furto* [Property Is No Longer a Theft] (1973).[140]

Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto is undoubtedly Petri's masterpiece. The story concerns an egomaniacal, power-hungry police inspector (played by Gian Maria Volonté) recently promoted as the head of the political squad. He kills his mistress Augusta Terzi (Florinda Bolkan) who made fun of him and cheated on him with a young political protester. The unnamed protagonist, always called *dottore* [Excellency] by his subordinates, begins manipulating the investigation. He steers his subordinate officers toward a series of other suspects, including Augusta's gay husband and her lover. He then exonerates the other suspects and leads the investigators toward himself, by planting obvious clues (while the other police officers ignore them either intentionally or not) in order to prove that he is "above suspicion" and can get away with anything. In the end, in an oneiric and grotesque scene, he confesses to the crime in front of his superiors who refuse to believe him ("ci vogliono prove per dimostrare la propria colpevolezza!" [You need evidence to prove your culpability!]) Sure that he is safe, he recants his confession and receives the approval of the police commissioner.

Contrary to classic detective fiction, with *Indagine* the viewer knows from the outset who the murderer is and follows the story from his point of view. The ending does not carry any closure: the murderer's confession is refused and justice does not triumph. The protagonist of this noir is a

sex addict who is sexually ridiculed by his mistress; he is sadistic toward the weak and bullies his subordinates. More importantly, he is a policeman who is one step away from the stereotype of cinema's detectives as a "stoic embodiment of the conscience of the world."[141] In the diegetic structure of the film, the murder occurring in the first sequences is in fact the last act of a series of re-enactments of real-life murders performed by the protagonist and his mentally deranged lover before making love. These interludes, shown in the numerous flash-backs that punctuate the narrative, show a disturbing relationship between a torturer (the policeman) and his victim (the policeman's lover) in a superimposition of sex, blood, and exercise of power. In these scenes, the schizophrenic nature of the protagonist—a self-proclaimed defender of law and order and a narcissistic child who plays the role of the assassin—is revealed.[142]

A political allegory, the movie is clearly interested in the mechanics and misuse of authority and the extent to which position and power can protect the guilty. It makes use of typical elements of crime fiction, such as the detective, police interrogation and clues, as well as the same act of investigation, to prove its point. While the film was shot before the Piazza Fontana bombing in Milan, the dramatic event that marked the beginning of the Years of Lead, many critics see in *Indagine* a powerful denunciation of police methods in dealing with student and worker protests, and acts of terrorism. Some associate the figure of the unnamed protagonist with Inspector Calabresi, the policeman suspected of killing anarchist Pinelli. This is implausible as the film was written and shot before that event. However, as Curti explains "[e]ven though the shooting took place before Piazza Fontana the scene where Volonté questions a student, beating and slapping him, is inevitably charged with grim implications"[143] for viewers still shocked by the controversial investigation into the Milan attack. If anything else "Petri and co-writer Ugo Pirro conveyed the mood of the period with an almost shocking precision."[144] Indeed, on several occasions the film gives a disturbing example of a state-controlled society. For example, in an Orwellian scene, the protagonist visits the archives of the political police where thousands of dossiers on people—from far-left activists to politicians belonging to parties in Government—are stored and constantly updated. The protagonist also visits a branch of his office dedicated to the telephone interceptions of thousands of common citizens. After indiscriminately arresting many students and workers following a terrorist attack, the protagonist tortures a protester in order to get information on Augusta's lover. A flash-back shows the protagonist and his lover

re-enacting a police interrogation. The protagonist compares the figure of the police detective to God and says: "'Io posso sapere tutto di te. Lo Stato mi mette a disposizione i mezzi per mettere a nudo un individuo'" [I am able to know everything about you. The State provides me with the means to lay bare an individual]. In a grotesque scene, the protagonists and his subordinates also discuss a police survey on graffiti drawn in the previous ten years. The protagonist comments:

> "Giovani, giovani che scrivono sui muri. Giovani studenti, giovani operai che vanno in giro di notte, che parlano di rivoluzione al telefono [...] tonnellate di vernice rossa per insultarci. Lo so io quello che ci vorrebbe. Altro che la squadra imbianchini per cancellare questa ondata eversiva, anti-autorità."
>
> ["Young people, young people wrote graffiti. Young students and young workers wander around at night, and talk about revolution on the phone. [...] Tons of red paint insults us. I know what we need. We need something more than the painter squad to erase this anti-authority and subversive wave."]

In this passage the protagonist clearly hopes for an authoritarian shift of the state ("altro che la squadra imbianchini"). In the film, common crime such as prostitution and thefts and political activism such as strikes and street protests are equated: "'Sotto ogni criminale si può nascondere un sovversivo, sotto ogni sovversivo può nascondersi un criminale'" ["Inside every criminal there may be a subversive; inside every subversive there may be a criminal"]. Even worse: a homicide is preferable to student protests: "Tre occupazioni in 24 ore, studenti, baraccati e insegnanti… insegnanti…io a questa roba preferisco l'omicidio" ["Three occupations of a public area in 24 hours, students, people living in emergency housing, teachers…teachers. I prefer a homicide to this stuff"]. The protagonist is obsessed with the student and worker protests:

> "I nostri giovani colleghi devono tornare a scuola. Nelle università, nelle fabbriche, che si facciano crescere la barba, i capelli, indossino tute sporche di grasso. Noi dobbiamo sapere tutto, controllare tutto, servendoci anche dei nostri figli, se necessario."
>
> [Our young colleagues need to go back to school. They need to go to university, factories. They have to grow a beard, their hair. They have to wear overalls dirty with grease. We need to know everything, control everything, using our own children, if this is necessary.]

Petri describes an Orwellian society where the exercise of power is a systemic operation of control of the masses through the use of coercion and intimidation. The police who should represent the law act outside it, by criminalizing political opposition. The law is imposed on citizens by a lawless authority. The murder of Augusta is symbolic of the limitless power of the authority that successfully escapes the law and is preceded and followed by acts of transgression of various degrees of importance. Particularly significant is the scene when, after returning to the police station from the murder scene, the protagonist reads in the newspaper that a policeman has killed a protester. He asks a colleague:

> "Agente spara. E chi è?"
> "Non lo conosciamo."
> "Naturalmente, gli è cascata la pistola ed è partito un colpo."
>
> ["Police agent shoots. Who's that?"
> "We don't know him."
> "Naturally, he dropped the gun and a shot was accidentally fired."]

By covering a bad action by a policeman, the protagonist endorses illicit measures to cope with political opposition. Again, this scene can be read sinisterly in the aftermath of Pinelli's death: the judiciary gave the farcical explanation of an "active illness" that would lead Pinelli to fall down from the windows of a police interrogation room to his death.[145] It also recalls many protesters who were victims of police violence in the late 1960s. To the contemporary viewer, it even evokes subsequent controversial police actions, such as the one that led to the death of Carlo Giuliani during the G-8 protest in Genoa in 2001. Undoubtedly, in *Indagine*, the description of the Italian police force also transcends the 1970s events to become the "Kafkaesque secular arm of an authoritarian Power."[146]

From what has been said, it is clear that Petri's film can hardly be considered a traditional historical crime movie: it deals with and, in some cases, foresees the history of its time and becomes a manifesto against absolutism. However, at the risk of appearing a contradictory choice, it is analyzed in this book. This is due partially to the desire to include a movie director who has been criticized for a long time for making political films with sophisticated and "bourgeois" techniques as well as for using popular genres such as crime and horror to talk "to the masses."[147] Only recently have critics revaluated Petri's cinema and analyzed his films in general, and *Indagine*, in particular, from many angles, covering

political, psychoanalytical, and aesthetic perspectives.[148] Petri's masterpiece is functional to this volume because it shows forcefully how the genre can intervene effectively in the social and political debates of its time. It is also useful from a historical perspective: *Indagine* is a powerful example of a reversal of the typical pattern of historical crime narrative. In other words, instead of presenting the reader with a past–present–past pattern, it introduces a present–past–present pattern. Mellen identifies *Indagine* as one of the films shot during the worker–student struggle of the late 1960s where "directors are sensing the possibility of new fascist repression or even its rise to power in the advanced capitalist countries."[149] She delineates some sub-categories of such films and in particular one that explores "the social dynamics and means by which fascism functions."[150] It can be argued that *Indagine* belongs to this sub-category. Many references to the Fascist era are scattered throughout the film. First, the set and costumes are evocative of the Ventennio. Augusta's apartment sports an oriental-style decor, evocative of 1920s decadentism (and D'Annunzio and decadent atmospheres are explicitly quoted during the film), and the functional architecture of the police headquarters recalls the rationalist architecture promoted by Mussolini. In the same way, Augusta's filmy kaftans and the protagonist's anonymous black suits are evocative of a time where orientalism and conformism coexisted. Augusta's apartment is situated in Via del Tempio [Temple Street] opposite a synagogue, a reminder, this time, of Fascist persecutions. It is, however, in the protagonist's words and gestures that the *Ventennio* is powerfully evoked. He is an authoritarian figure who likes to express his opinions boastfully. He always seizes the opportunity of highlighting an alleged socialist and Communist danger to civilized society. He evokes the use of force to keep law and order. In his first speech as head of the political crime squad he makes clear his view on society:

> "L'uso della libertà minaccia da tutte le parti i poteri tradizionali, le autorità costituite.[…] Noi siamo a guardia della legge, che vogliamo immutabile, scolpita nel tempo. Il popolo è minorenne. La città è malata. Ad altri spetta il compito di curare e di educare, a noi il dovere di reprimere. La repressione è il nostro vaccino. Repressione è civiltà."
>
> [The use of freedom threatens traditional powers and the authority from all sides. We are guardians of the law that we want to be immutable, carved in time. The people are under-aged. The city is sick. Someone else has the

> duty to cure and to educate. We have the duty to repress. Repression is our vaccination. Repression is civilization.]

In this delirious speech a representative of the state indicates freedom as a cause of instability. He also associates "repression" (another word evocative of the evil of Fascism) with civilization (a theme of imperialist Mussolini). It is not only the words that plummet the audience into a Fascist nightmare. The grotesque use of dialect, the ridiculous facial movements, the gestures, and the moving arms reminds one of the black and white footage of a *gerarca*'s speeches, if not of Mussolini himself. The new head of the political squad raises and lowers his voice with mastery in front of a raptured audience. A skillful movement of the camera conveys the impression that the entire crowd—composed of officials and policemen, all dressed in a standardized gray—is co-opted by their leader. Undoubtedly, *Indagine* was inspired by the idea that a repressive society requiring the presence of a father and turning us into children is imbedded inside any single human being. This unconscious desire was tragically fulfilled with Mussolini's regime.

The film then returns to contemporary Italy with the scenes of the bombing of the police headquarters, and arrests and interrogation by the police. The clothes of the young protesters, their hairstyles, and their slogans are unequivocally of the 1970s ("Poliziotti siete nostri fratelli!" ["Policemen, you are our brothers!"]; "Il potere alla classe operaia!" ["Power to the working class!"]). However, in spite of the protagonist's reassurance, "'Non siamo il KGB, non siamo le SS. Siamo la polizia di un Paese democratico'" ["We're not KGB. We're not the SS. We are the police force of a democratic country"]), the police methods remind us of a Fascist repression of dissent. Undoubtedly, Petri wants to highlight the danger of a new authoritarian drift for Italy as the state's response to the worker and student protests of those years. Petri's worries were more than justified as demonstrated by the strategy of tension and the attempted military coups that characterized the decade to come. By describing the authoritarian attitude of power through the figure of the unnamed detective, this film reminds the reader of a period when Italy experienced dictatorship, namely the Fascist era, and then shifts back pointing at the danger of an authoritarian turn in the present and the near future with the excuse of fighting social and political unrest. While setting its action in the present, *Indagine* suggests a dialectical and critical attitude toward the past and concern about the present and the future. In this powerful film, unresolved history returns to haunt our present.

After September 11, some Italian films returned to the Years of Lead. *Piazza delle cinque lune* was made by the controversial director Renzo Martinelli, who was already at the center of a heated debate for his previous movie *Porzûs* (1997), set during WWII.[151] It was released on the 25th anniversary of Moro's kidnapping and death and takes an explicitly retrospective gaze into the Moro affair. It is not a historical film as it is completely set in contemporary times, but it is briefly discussed here as an example of a conspiracy plot that erases the distinction between past and present, by implying that the hidden powers who controlled the Italian state in the 1970s are still working in the present.

Rosario Saracini (played by Donald Sutherland) is a judge at the end of his career. He is contacted by a mysterious person who leaves him a copy of an old super-8 film showing Moro's kidnapping where many elements contradict the official version of the event. The mysterious man, who states he was a member of the team that kidnapped the DC politician and killed his bodyguards, urges the judge to find out the "truth" behind Moro's abduction. Saracini, who at the beginning of the story in his farewell speech had declared that "nell'appassionata ricerca della verità risiede il segreto della vita" [the meaning of life is in the passionate search for truth] decides to accept this challenge. In order to help him, the former terrorist feeds the judge with various clues and, finally, an encrypted CD rom. Judge Saracini involves a colleague, Fernanda (Stefania Rocca) and his former bodyguard and friend Branco (Giancarlo Giannini) in the investigation with the ultimate aim of getting hold of Moro's *memoriale*, the diary that the statesman wrote in captivity. The conversations that the investigative trio have throughout the film function as a way of explaining the facts—such as the kidnapping itself—to contemporary viewers and possibly an international audience and identifying historical characters and agents of disorder—such as the Minister of the Interior, Francesco Cossiga, and the secret organization Gladio. It contrasts the official version of the truth with findings of the informal investigation performed by Saracini and finally with the testimony of a CIA secret agent (Murray Abraham) whom the judge meets in Paris. The film is set, rather incongruously, in Siena and embraces a full-blown conspiracy theory that sees Gladio and the American CIA as the main agents responsible for Moro's death. As we have already seen, several theories about the rationale and meaning of Moro's abduction have divided commentators and historians. Martinelli stated that he consulted senator and historian Sergio Flamigni whom he defined as the most authoritative expert on Moro's kidnapping

and European terrorism.[152] It is not by chance that in one scene on a train, Judge Saracini reads a book by Flamigni entitled *I fantasmi del passato* [Ghosts of the Past].[153] The lengthy conversations in *Piazza delle cinque lune* enumerate contradictory facts, coincidences, and ambiguous episodes surrounding Moro's abduction as identified by Flamigni. The meeting with the CIA agent finally unveils that "'È Yalta che ha deciso il rapimento di Aldo Moro'" [Moro's kidnapping was determined by the Yalta meeting]. In other words, in a Cold War climate, Washington could not accept collaboration between the Communist Party and the DC in an allied country such as Italy and actively pursued the elimination of one of the advocates of such an alliance, that is, Moro. O'Leary comments that this alleged American role in the Moro kidnapping "seems to have the additional function of adding to the film's transatlantic appeal"[154] and is in fact an *escamotage* to gain an international audience. An Italian-Anglo-German production, the film also profited from funding from the *comune* of Siena. Originally filmed in English with famous international actors, undoubtedly the film betrays its nature as a "heritage or tourist film."[155] Many events take place in famous landmarks of the Tuscan city, such as Santa Maria della Scala, the Duomo, and Piazza del Campo, and scenes in the exquisite Sienese interiors are interspersed with long frames of the beautiful Tuscan countryside. The beginning of the film illustrates this choice: a long sequence is dedicated to the Palio, the famous horse race which takes place each year in the city. The film also exploits some easy tools of the thriller, such as claustrophobic alleyways, dark parking lots, and underground rooms illuminated by candles to convey a sense of adventure and mystery. O'Leary accuses *Piazza delle cinque lune* of being a "postcard" film that proclaims authority and truth.[156] He also accuses it of voyeurism for its pedantic recreation of the abduction scenes and the use of pictures and real footage of the recovery of Moro's corpse and his funeral.[157] In a more positive interpretation, Tardi suggests the possibility that the staged and deliberately "distressed" super-8 film of the kidnap scene might be a reflexive device, intended to alert the viewer to the constructed nature of accounts of Moro's kidnapping in general.[158]

Ultimately, Martinelli's film presents many flaws because it attempts to be a historically accurate and "political film" while being a cheap thriller that wants to attract an international audience show-casing Tuscan arts and landscape. However, its ending is of interest to our discourse. Throughout the investigation the judge expresses mistrust for the state and its institutions. He does not want to contact the public prosecutor's office because

"'metterebbero tutto a tacere'" ["they would silence the investigation"]. In his conversation with the CIA agent he exclaims: "'Mi viene a dire che la verità prima o poi salta fuori? Non sono d'accordo'" ["Are you telling me that sooner or later the truth surfaces? I don't think so"]. In the last part of the film, the investigation is hampered by a series of tragic events: the judge's informant is run over and killed by a car; Fernanda's husband dies and her children are severely wounded in a car accident orchestrated by the secret service; the judge's apartment is destroyed by intruders. Summoned by his superiors in Rome, the judge entrusts his friend Branco with the CD rom containing Moro's *memoriale* that in the meantime he has been able to find and decipher. Once at the meeting he finds out that Branco had worked for the secret service from the start and the CD rom has presumably been destroyed. The last scene sees the judge in a government office surrounded by a group of high-profile hostile individuals who have succeeded (once more) in hiding the truth. Thus, in *Piazza delle cinque lune*, the conspiracy plot is not an item of the past, but an issue of the present. Rather than convincingly addressing an obscure episode of the past, Martinelli seems to point to a present where he believes Italian democracy is at risk. If the *poliziotteschi* were a representation of the paranoid social climate of the 1970s, by projecting into the past skepticism and disillusion with the present and the future, *Piazza delle cinque lune* is paradigmatic of new post-September 11 paranoia.

Giordana's *Romanzo di una strage* focuses on the investigation into the Piazza Fontana bombing. Its title alludes to the notorious piece by Pasolini on implication of the Italian state in terrorist massacres, a theme dear to much of the narrative and filmography dedicated to the 1970s. It is completely set in the past starting with the Piazza Fontana bombing in 1969 and ending with the murder of Inspector Calabresi in 1972. The film is a loose adaptation of Cucchiarelli's controversial book *Il segreto di piazza Fontana* [The secret of Piazza Fontana][159] and argues that there were two bombs planted in the bank: one by anarchists, intended to explode at night without victims, and the second by neo-Fascists, facilitated by secret service operatives who had infiltrated both sets of groups, intended to explode in the busy afternoon with maximum cost to human life. The filmmakers insisted that they wanted to provide the "true history," but this version of events is generally considered unlikely, as the widespread conviction is that there was a single, neo-Fascist bomb in the offices of the bank. The release of the film was followed by huge controversy. Some praised this film for dealing with an important event in Italy's

recent history, but *La Repubblica* editor Ezio Mauro stated that "you cannot create a novel out of one of Italy's open wounds" and Corrado Stajano lamented the absence of a social and political context in the film.[160]

Romanzo di una strage presents a stellar cast with Pierfrancesco Favino playing the role of Pinelli, Valerio Mastrandrea (Calabresi), Fabrizio Gifuni (Aldo Moro), and Luigi Lo Cascio (Judge Paolillo). According to Giglioli, through the use of actors loved by the Italian audience and characterized by "reassuring acting," the filmmakers ask the audience for an ideological "blank power of attorney."[161] In other words, through the use of believable and popular actors, they ask viewers to believe in the film's reconstruction of the events. Giglioli contests Giordana's version arguing that all the main protagonists are portrayed as honest and decent people in a film where "nobody is responsible for anything."[162] *Romanzo di una strage* shows all the main actors in Italian politics and society of the time: many scenes are devoted to student and worker demonstrations, anarchists' and extreme right meetings, and political meetings, including governmental meetings and conversations between Moro and the President of the Republic of the time, Giuseppe Saragat, where crucial themes and events are discussed. The film condemns extremism of both the right and the left: a scene that shows the neo-Fascist violent rhetoric is followed by a scene where the left-wing editor Giangiacomo Feltrinelli incites University of Milan students to embrace an armed struggle. It also gives a hagiographic representation of two of the film's main characters: the anarchist railway worker Pinelli and the policeman Calabresi. As O'Leary explains both these figures "hold a special place in 'sectional' memory in Italy as exemplary victims of the ideological violence of the 1970s."[163] As already mentioned, Pinelli died in police custody in 1969 while Calabresi, leading the interrogation—and this episode is central to the story—was blamed for Pinelli's death and was murdered, shot outside his family home in 1972, an event that concludes *Romanzo di una strage*. In the film, Calabresi defends student demonstrators against the brutality of the police and is shown as a loving husband and father. Likewise, Pinelli is depicted as a father figure in the anarchist movement. He opposes violence and evicts an unruly Pietro Valpreda (later accused of the attack) from his circle. The film embraces a version of Pinelli's death where Pinelli is accidentally killed by the police, but Calabresi is not responsible for it, being in another room at the moment of the tragic event. Moreover, in the film the policeman respects and befriends the anarchist leader. After Pinelli's death, during a

press conference, the police inspector defines Pinelli as "una persona per bene" [a decent man].

At the beginning of the film, in a conversation with the President of the Republic, Moro declares that Italy must be completely rebuilt and states: "Mi sento pronto a essere la prima vittima" [I am ready to be the first victim] of a new beginning. This statement set the tone of the film which is indeed a celebration of victims of the Years of Lead. Their fate stands in the film as a precursor and in anticipation of the known fate of Aldo Moro, the politician who would become the "victim of all victims" of the Years of Lead.[164] According to O'Leary, this is precisely the meaning of the presence of Moro as a major character of *Romanzo di una strage*: "[i]f Moro had for so long been the vehicle of mourning for the other victims of the violence of those years, the film insists on the dignity and recognition to be granted to Pinelli and Calabresi by association with him."[165] Indeed, the subsequent murder of Calabresi at the hands of extreme left terrorists parallels Pinelli's death as having equal claim on national memory, as they are both depicted as martyrs. O'Leary also acutely explains that this umpteenth version of the tragic event that started the Years of Lead could in fact be an attempt to proffer a sharable memory of the *anni di piombo*, a project begun with Giordana's previous film *La meglio gioventù*.[166] In other words, the choice of the two-bomb thesis could be part of Giordana's project to offer a memory of the event that can be finally shared by right and left because both constituencies were guilty. In O'Leary's words, running in parallel with the exculpation of the film's two main characters, Pinelli and Calabresi, there would be a "ceremonial performance of the doling out of guilt and innocence."[167] Undoubtedly, this is a fascinating explanation of the film's rationale. It may be added that once more the tropes of crime fiction help the filmmakers to reach their ritualistic goal. In *Romanzo di una strage*, following Feltrinelli's death, Calabresi conducts an unofficial counter-investigation into the bombing at the end of which he is convinced that two bombs exploded in the Milan attack. He relates his theory to the secret service, in the person of Federico Umberto D'Amato (the person who inspired the creation of the figure of the Old Man in *Romanzo criminale*) who, however, covers up this line of the investigation. The investigation and the confrontation with Calabresi's superiors are fictionalized events that do not correspond with Calabresi's biography. However, it is through this search for truth that the filmmakers are able to provide their version of the Milan bombing to the audience. In this sense, Calabresi's murder also becomes symbolic of the suppression of the truth. *Romanzo di una strage*

configures itself as a crime story without a reassuring ending, echoing the unsatisfactory conclusion of the long judicial procedure. However, at the same time it is also a story where conspiracy theory is used to offer a bipartisan closure to an "open wound" in Italy's bowels.

Equally controversial is the filmic version of De Cataldo's novel *Romanzo criminale* (2005). The film was a commercial success in Italy and one of the biggest export successes of recent years.[168] It was directed by Michele Placido and adapted by Placido, the writer De Cataldo and screenwriters Stefano Rulli and Sandro Petraglia. The filmic version is inspired by the model of the US gangster genre and through the use of period costumes, pop music, and attractive actors, glamorized life in the underworld. As Bonsaver states, "the American models for the film are the Scorsese of *Goodfellas*, and the camera work in De Palma's *Scarface* and Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*."[169] In addition to this, Bonsaver highlights *Romanzo criminale*'s debt to the Italian tradition of B-movie gangster films of the 1970s, with Fernando Di Leo, Bruno Corbucci, and Umberto Lenzi in particular.[170] Uva sees the film as a revival of the treatment of terrorism in *Cadaveri eccellenti* and in the cop films of the 1970s.[171] It can also be argued that this movie is inspired by Sergio Leone's *C'era una volta in America*.[172] Leone's last movie explores the lives of Jewish ghetto youths who rise to prominence in New York City's world of organized crime and tackles the themes of childhood friendships, love, greed, and betrayal. Likewise, Placido's *Romanzo criminale* puts the theme of friendship among the protagonists at the center of the narrative and turns De Cataldo's chilling description of violence, despair, and death into a dazzling story of criminal friendship and brotherhood. Like Leone's film, and differently from the novel, Placido's *Romanzo criminale* takes the action back to the protagonists' childhood. The opening scene follows a group of teenagers stealing a car and heading off along the Via Cristoforo Colombo to the sea where they are apprehended by the police. One teenager dies, but the surviving three grew up to be the gang's three leaders: Libano/Libanese (Pierfrancesco Favino), Freddo (Kim Rossi Stuart), and Dandi (Claudio Santamaria). In particular, Libano who was escaping returns to try to rescue Freddo from a policeman. Beaten up and captured he suffers a permanent injury to his leg, a reminder throughout the film of his loyalty to his friends. These opening sequences of friendship and solidarity set the tone for the entire movie. Lucci argues these images may be seen as homage to Pasolini's cinema and its attention to an alleged adolescent

freedom that turns into a nightmare of violence and murder, but the subsequent representation of the gang's glamorous life may partially contradict this.[173] Placido's film rather evokes the beginning of Leone's film where the innocence of the young protagonists is crushed brutally by a murder and the arrest of one of the main characters, David "Noodles" Aaronson (played by Robert De Niro). After this prologue, the film is divided into three parts, each one taking the name of one of the main characters, and follows their personal life and career in the 1970s and 1980s. In many parts of the film, their strong familial ties are highlighted. In the novel Freddo and Libano have a special bond, but in the film Dandi is equally a brother to his mates. The "homosocial environment of the gang"[174] hosts many scenes of male friendship. In a scene featuring Freddo and Libano at their favorite beach, Libano announces to Freddo: "'Come ti conosco io non ti conosce nessuno'" ["Nobody knows you as I do"] to which Freddo answers: "'È vero'" ["It's true"]. Even Dandi—who in the novel betrays his friends and takes control of the gang—in the movie keeps his bond with his mates until the end. In the novel, neo-Fascist Nero organizes Freddo's prison break. In the filmic version, it is Dandi who asks a doctor for some contaminated blood to inject into his friend's veins so that he can be transferred to a hospital and then escape. On that occasion he says: "'Tu credi che mi faccia piacere cercare una cosa per far morire uno che è come mio fratello?'" ["Do you think I enjoy looking for something that is going to kill a person who is like a brother to me?"]. In the film, as in the novel, Dandi is the weakest link and often acts selfishly. However, in the film he is conscious of his weakness and suffers from it. Moreover, the support he offers Freddo at the end of the story redeems him and makes him a likeable character. These changes in the narrative, which also gives more space to their private lives, allow a humanization of the main characters. If the reader of the novel does not necessarily sympathize with the flawed characters, the viewer of the film is instead actively encouraged to identify with them.

Apart from a humanization of Freddo, Libano, and Dandi, the film gives them a higher degree of political consciousness and sensitivity. Indeed, Placido shifts this characteristic from the detectives to the criminals. When Libano meets a mysterious envoy of the Italian secret services called Carenza (who in the film replaces the duo Zeta and Pigreco and is interpreted by Gianmarco Tognazzi) in the aftermath of Moro's kidnapping, Carenza asks:

"Lei legge i giornali?"
[Libano]: "Guardo di più la televisione."
[Carenza]: "Il Paese è in guerra, Siamo tutti in guerra."
[Libano]: "Sì, purtroppo ho visto."

["Do you read the press?"
Libano: "I'd rather watch TV."
Carenza: "Our country is at war. We're all at war."
[Libano]: "Yes, I have seen it, unfortunately"]

In this quick exchange, Libano expresses his preoccupation ("purtroppo") for Moro's kidnapping, showing a sensitiveness that is absent in the novel.

While in the novel the link between the gang's activities to Moro's kidnapping is very feeble (they are only asked to look for Moro's secret location) and there is no connection at all with the *strage di Bologna*, the film intertwines these two historical events with the gang's story. Uva explains that the choice of showing the Banda della Magliana as the long arm of the state in the *strage di Bologna* was a choice of the director, Michele Placido.[175] Placido dismissed the official version of the truth, according to which those responsible for the attack were right-wing terrorists Mambro and Fioravanti. He instead shows how Carenza arranges with Libano for one of the Banda della Magliana killers, Nero (Riccardo Scamarcio), to collect the person responsible for the *strage* from the railway station and then execute him. In the film, Libano is forced to help through blackmail, but feels uneasy about it. Freddo disagrees entirely and he takes an active role by going to Bologna on the day of the attack. He is present when the bomb explodes and in a controversial scene where the effect of the archive video footage was carefully recreated by the filmmakers, and he wanders around the rubble in shock. O'Leary argues that the digital recreation of the Bologna explosion "is a kind of advertisement for, even a kind of celebration of the work and the success of the terrorists."[176] He positions *Romanzo criminale* in a "tainted heritage" category of films in the sense that it sports a contradictory structure when "it confronts and re-elaborates the very worst in recent Italian history" but it renders these events "in a seductive or exhilarating and exportable aesthetic."[177] It can also be argued that by giving more emphasis to the protagonists' consciousness, Placido's transposition of the novel glorifies a gang whose misery and abjection is continuously highlighted in the novel. The pivotal moment in the book (when Inspector Scialoja becomes aware of the state attitude toward right-wing terrorism) is turned into a show-case for

Freddo's humanity in the film. In the film, Freddo also outsmarts Scialoja in awareness. This is clearly seen in the interrogation scene when Scialoja asks Freddo about the involvement of the gang in the Bologna bombing:

> [Scialoja]: "Ottantacinque morti e 200 feriti ti sembrano una favola?"
> [Freddo]: "Bologna non è roba della banda, è roba vostra." [...] "Magari trovi il timer con scritto sopra Repubblica italiana."
> [Scialoja]: "Che cazzo dici?"
>
> [Scialoja: "Do you think that 85 dead and 200 wounded is a fairy tale?"
> Freddo: "Bologna isn't our stuff, it's your stuff." (...) "You may find the timer with the words 'Italian Republic' on it."
> Scialoja: "What the hell are you talking about?"]

In this scene Scialoja ignores what is behind some tragic events such as the *strage di Bologna*, while Freddo is the one who elaborates on it. In the novel, Scialoja's investigation aims at unveiling the complicity between the gang, the Mafia, and the state. In the film he exclusively pursues the gang and only at the end realizes that its activities are strictly intertwined with other criminal and political forces. He follows Carenza to a mysterious "Centro di studi sociali" [Centre for Social Studies] in central Rome where he finally meets the Old Man. The latter explains who he is:

> "Sono un servitore dello Stato. Per ragioni di servizio mi misuro con il male, come lei d'altronde. Vede, i segnali che raccolgo da un po' di tempo a questa parte mi dicono che molto presto tutto finirà. La divisione del mondo, il muro di Berlino alla cui ombra sono invecchiato, presenta crepe sempre molto evidenti e presto verrà giù, trascinando sotto le sue macerie la classe politica di cinquant'anni. Io me ne andrò un minuto prima del terremoto. Ma non si incomodi con le sue indagini di spazzarmi via. Ci penserà la storia."
>
> [I'm a servant of the state. Because of my work I deal with evil, as you do. Look, recently I have been gathering indications that all this will soon be over. The division of the world, the Berlin wall in whose shadow I grew old has very clear cracks and will soon collapse, burying the political elite of the last 50 years. I will leave one second before the earthquake. You shouldn't be bothered to wipe me away with your investigation. History will do it.]

The Old Man, who only makes a couple of brief appearances in the film, explains the reasons for the state's involvement in terrorism with the necessity of the Cold War. A less invasive presence on the screen than on the

page, he nevertheless maintains his metaphorical function. However, in Placido's transposition, he is described as a defeated figure that is going to be wiped away by history. As the Old Man further explains: "'Nel tempo che verrà non ci sarà bisogno di gente come me. Perché non ci sarà più una democrazia da salvare. Ma solo interessi privati, lotte per più potere, più denaro'" [In the future, people like me will be not needed. There won't be a democracy to be saved. There will only be private interests, and struggle for more power, more money]. O'Leary comments that filmmakers who try to deal with right-wing terrorism and its links with the state "seem constrained to do so by employing the conspiracy mode."[178] He admits that the conspiracy mode in Italian cinema may be a consequence of the fact that many right-wing terrorist attacks from the Years of Lead remain unaccounted for. However, he also believes that they "ascribe an exaggerated competence and elusiveness to those who have governed brutally or corruptly."[179] This is partially true in Placido's *Romanzo criminale*. It is undeniable that unlike the novel, the terrorist attacks described in the film are attributed to the state, something clearly avoided by De Cataldo. However, the film describes the strategy of tension as a relic of history that finds no place in contemporary Italy. Indeed, conspirators end up being disempowered figures who are defeated by history. In this sense, *Romanzo criminale* also differs from *Piazza delle cinque lune* where the conspiracy plot is an integral part of the judge's investigation into Italy's present.

The subsequent TV series entitled *Romanzo criminale—La serie* (Crime Story—The Series) has enjoyed critical and commercial success both in Italy and internationally. It was directed by Stefano Sollima and features Francesco Montanari (Libanese or Libano), Vinicio Marchioni (Freddo), and Alessandro Roja (Dandi). It was produced by Sky Cinema and broadcast on Sky in Italy between 2008 and 2010.[180] It was subsequently broadcasted on Fox Crime, Sky One, and Sky Arts with English subtitles in 2012. It belongs to a wave of recent TV series, such as *Breaking Bad* and *True Detective* whose quality disputes perceived preconceptions according to which TV series are repetitive and of low standard.[181] Its signature tune and images mimic the style of many TV crime series of the 1970s, with its recurrence of money bundles, cocaine, and semi-naked women. By contrast, the episodes show how historical events can be successfully intertwined with an entertaining crime story. More faithful to the novel, the series, divided into seasons 1 and 2, does not date back to the founding of the gang in the protagonists' childhood, but, like the book, starts when the protagonists are already adults and converge under the

guidance of Libano in order to conquer the Roman underworld. Most of the action of Placido's film was moved to the city center and to glamorous locales. In contrast, the TV series focuses on the desolate suburb of Magliana and its squalid streets, bars, and state housing interiors. The main actors were unknown before this TV series, and their characters and their interactions with each other are not idealized. As the director Sollima said in an interview: "To start with, they are absolutely not good criminals. They are stupid kids. This was the first big change from the movie."[182] At the beginning, their role as underdogs in the Roman criminal world makes them likeable. The length of the series (22 episodes) allows the viewer space to dwell on the criminal protagonists' psyche and put their behavior in the context of their personal lives and, more generally, life in poverty-stricken suburbia in the 1970s, also through the use of flash-backs. In this sense, Lucci comments on the film version in homage to Pasolini's cinema discussed in earlier pages of this book is particularly valid for the TV series. In the series, the clinical eye of the novel is tempered with a more participatory look, an involvement that nevertheless never becomes an endorsement of the gang's actions. As the episodes show, their violent life and their personal choices progressively alienate them from their families and their increased wealth does not bring a desired integration with mainstream society. As a character, Ranocchio says in episode 4, series 1, no matter how expensive the clothes they buy are, they are still "coatti" [boors]. They justify their violent life with the desire to provide for their families. However, as the estranged wife of Libano's cellmate tells Libano in episode 6, series 1, they in fact do it for their personal pleasure. With an increased level of violence perpetrated by the gang, the progression of the series brings a diminishing identification from the audience. In episode 8, series 1, the misconception that the gang would act as proletarian heroes is definitely crushed. In this episode, Libano helps a group of homeless people to squat a new residential complex. Once the owner agrees to sell it to the gang at a cheap price, Libano sends his men to throw the poor people out. The images of elderly women and children violently turned out disaffect the audience from the gang's actions. When one of the misfits asks Libano the reason for his behavior, he answers: "'Morti de fame dentro casa mia nun ce li voglio'" [I don't want bums in my own house]. Sollima says: "At the beginning you feel you like them, you have a conflict with yourself, and by the end of the second series, you will hate everybody, but one."[183] The length of the series also allows a more nuanced depiction of the police force and Inspector Scialoja in particular who is shown as an

ambiguous character who walks a fine line between legality and illegality, and desire for justice and personal ambition. The traditional dichotomy between good and evil, typical of many crime series blurs here in a convincing portrait of a crucial time in Rome's (and Italy's) history.

The span of the series also allows the criminal story to be set in the context of political and social issues of the time. The introduction of a new character, Scialoja's rebellious sister, allows an insight into the student movement and its ambiguities in supporting terrorist violence, an element that was only peripheral in the novel. The series also gives wide room to police brutality and clashes between right-wing and left-wing groups in the streets. Undoubtedly, for this focus on street political violence, the TV series recalls Petri's *Indagine*. Finally, many historical events are shown to an audience that may have not lived through those traumatic years, with a tone that is never patronizing nor sensational. In the film, the sequence of the Bologna bombing could be seen as an advertisement for the work of the terrorists, while in episode 11, series 1 of the TV series the explosion is only seen in the background. This is followed by library stock film, including testimonies from survivors. At the Bologna police headquarters, Inspector Scialoja sees Zed and Pi, the Old Man's secret agents, and senses that they might have a sinister role in right-wing terrorism.

For their part, the gang members are shown more realistically as not having any emotional involvement with the Bologna tragedy:

> [Freddo] "La storia della bomba è proprio 'na rogna! E ce scasserà i cojoni peggio de Moro!"
> [Dandi]: "Sempre a vede' 'a vita rosa, eh? Moro stave qua dietro, 'a bomba è scoppiata a 400 chilometri! "
> [Freddo]: "Sì, ma il botto s'è sentito fino a qua. E li scossoni so' appena accominciati."
>
> [(Freddo) "The story of the bomb is a pain. It will be more a pain in the ass than Moro's kidnapping."
> (Dandi) "Always optimistic, eh? Moro was behind the corner, the explosion was 400 kilometres away!"
> (Freddo) "Yes, but we heard the noise even here. And the jolts have just started."]

As it is clear from this extract, Freddo is only concerned with the economic consequences of the *strage di Bologna* (in which the gang, as in the novel, is not involved). In the film he is troubled by it. He is in fact in

Bologna and wanders in shock in the rubbles, but in the TV series he is in Rome and considers it a nuisance ("rogna"), just as the Moro affair was an obstruction to business ("ce scasserà i cojoni"). Libano is not upset as he has just "signed" an agreement with the Old Man behind Freddo's back that guarantees the gang's immunity, and comments: "'Fuori brilla il sole e soprattutto le strade sono piene di neve'" [Outside the sun is shining and more importantly the streets are covered with snow] alluding to their successful cocaine business. As the third party of the criminal triangle, the Old Man is present in some episodes of the series. He expresses the logic of the Cold War and, as in the novel, quietly exploits events not directly organized by the state. In this sense, the series hosts an amended version of the typical conspiracy theory so dear to crime narrative set in the 1970s. In the TV series the Old Man also shows prophetic acumen. In series 1, episode 12 he comments: "Vedete. Ogni giorno un canale nuovo. Il mondo sta cambiando. In futuro i crimini non si commetteranno più coi coltelli a serramanico" ["You'll see. Every day a new TV channel is born. The world is changing. In the future, crimes won't be performed with knives anymore"]. This is a clear reference to Berlusconi's rise to success as a media tycoon, and his future problems with Italian justice. Thus, the series allows an interpretation of the past and the present of Italy.

Ultimately, of the post-September 11 crime film output set in the *anni di piombo*, this TV series is arguably the most accomplished. If *Piazza delle cinque lune* does not rise above the standard of a second-rate thriller, *Romanzo di una strage* endorses a controversial interpretation of the Piazza Fontana bombing disguised as truth, and *Romanzo criminale* falls victim of the stereotypes of a gangster movie, *Romanzo criminale-La serie* is a show-case for a re-evaluation of the format of the series in the study of the intersection between history and film. With its lucid and convincing re-interpretation of the 1970s, a period of Italian life may finally become the past.

Notes

1. The term "anni di piombo" (Years of Lead) is inspired by *Die bleierne Zeit* [Leaden Times] (1981) by German director Margarethe Von Trotta, which deals with 1970s terrorism in Germany. As O'Leary explains, in its Italian translation with the allusion to bullets the term is suggestive of left-wing violence alone and appears to exclude the bombing characteristic of right-wing terrorism (O'Leary, *Tragedia all'italiana*, 244). However, since this is the term commonly used to describe the 1970s in Italy, this volume uses it.

2. Demetrio Paolin, *Una tragedia negata. Il racconto degli anni di piombo nella narrativa italiana* (Nuoro: Il Maestrale, 2008), 22. They are: Marco Baliani, *Corpo di stato. Il delitto Moro* [State Body. The Moro Murder] (Milan: Rizzoli, 2003); Erri De Luca, *Il contrario di uno* [The Opposite of One] (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2003); Gian Mario Villalta, *Tuo figlio* [Your Son] (Milan: Mondadori, 2004); Giuseppe Culicchia, *Il paese delle meraviglie* [The Wonderland] (Milan: Garzanti, 2004); Luca Doninelli, *Tornavamo dal mare* [We Came Back from the Sea] (Milan: Garzanti, 2004); Alessandro Preiser, *Avene selvatiche* [Wild Oats] (Venice: Marsilio, 2004); Antonella Tavassi La Greca, *La guerra di Nora* [Nora's War] (Venice: Marsilio, 2003); Giampaolo Spinato, *Amici e nemici* [Friends and Enemies] (Rome: Fazi Editore, 2004); Gabriele Marconi, *Io non scordo* [I don't Forget] (Rome: Fazi Editore, 2004); Antonio Tabucchi, *Tristano muore* [Tristan Dies] (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2004); Gianni Marilotti, *La quattordicesima commensale* [The Fourteenth Guest] (Cagliari: Il Maestrale, 2003); and Vincenzo Pardini, *Lettera a Dio* [Letter to God] (Ancona: Pequod, 2004). Preiser's *Avene selvatiche* is one of the few novels that have a right-wing terrorist as its protagonist. This book was written in jail by a former militant of the far right who uses a pseudonym. For an analysis of these texts see Raffaele Donnarumma, "Storia, immaginario, letteratura: il terrorismo nella narrativa italiana (1969–2010)," in *Per Romano Luperini* (Palermo: Palumbo, 2011); and Vitello, *L'album di famiglia*. Finally, three graphic novels books have been published: Alex Boschetti and Anna Ciammitti's *La strage di Bologna* [The Bologna Massacre] (Milan: BeccoGiallo, 2010); Paolo Parisi's *Il sequestro Moro. Storie dagli anni di piombo* [Moro's Kidnapping. Stories from the Years of Lead] (Milan: BeccoGiallo, 2009); and Paolo Cossi's *La storia di Mara* [Mara's Story] (Villa D'Agri, PZ: Lavieri, 2006).
3. Paolin, *Una tragedia*, 25.
4. Ibid., 22. Glynn also notices an increase in editing collections collating interviews with those who suffered injury or loss in acts of terrorism and autobiographical writing by the offspring of high-profile victims of terrorism in the same years (Ruth Glynn, "The 'Turn to the Victim' in Italian Culture: Victim-centred Narratives of the anni di piombo," *Modern Italy* 18, no.4 (2013): 373–90.
5. Pierpaolo Antonello and Alan O'Leary eds., *Imagining Terrorism. The Rhetoric and Representation of Political Violence in Italy 1969–2009* (Oxford: Legenda, 2009), 10.
6. Anna Cento Bull, *Italian Neofascism: The Strategy of Tension and the Politics of Nonreconciliation* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).
7. Paolin, *Una tragedia*, 105.

8. Rossana Rossanda, "Album di famiglia," *Il manifesto*, 2 April 1978, 1.
9. Gabriele Vitello, *L'album di famiglia. Gli anni di piombo nella narrativa italiana* (Massa: Transeuropa Edizioni, 2013), 6.
10. Ibid.
11. In April 1980, the secretary of the Socialist party, Bettino Craxi alluded to the existence of a "Grande Vecchio" of the Red Brigade. Many politicians and commentators interpreted this statement as a reference to Corrado Simioni, one of the founders of the Collettivo politico metropolitano [Metropolitan Political Collective] in 1969 that many saw as the nucleus of the Red Brigades. According to Craxi, an *éminence grise* managed many of the Red Brigades activities in Italy from abroad and Simioni was in France at that time.
12. Marilù Oliva, "Grande, vecchio e nell'ombra. Intervista sul Sistema a Gianni Barbacetto" *Micromega*, 13 October 2009, in http://temi.repubblica.it/micromega-online/grande-vecchio-e-nellombra-intervista-sul-sistema-a-gianni-barbacetto/ (consulted on 1 September 2015).
13. Ray B. Browne, "Historical Crime Fiction and Detection," in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 222–229.
14. Michele Placido, *Romanzo criminale* (2005); Renzo Martinelli, *Piazza delle cinque lune* (2003) and Marco Tullio Giordana, *Romanzo di una strage* (2013; *Piazza Fontana. An Italian Conspiracy*).
15. Milanesi, "Le roman criminal," 9–19.
16. Dunnage, *Twentieth Century Italy*, 169.
17. Ibid., 171–74.
18. Alessandro Portelli *The Battle of Valle Giulia*: *Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 193–98.
19. The legalization of divorce and abortion was confirmed by referendums in 1974 and in 1981, respectively.
20. Dario Fo, *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* (1970), translated by Ed Emery as *Accidental Death of An Anarchist* (1979). Calabresi was later killed by Lotta Continua outside his home in 1972.
21. One of the original suspects, anarchist Pietro Valpreda, was eventually tried alongside two neo-Fascists and numerous secret service agents in 1974, but all the accused were acquitted in 1985 following several trials and appeals. A new trial opened in 1999. Three neo-Fascists, Delfo Zorzi, Carlo Maria Maggi, and Giancarlo Rognoni were sentenced to life imprisonment but the decision was overturned on appeal in March 2004. In 2005, the Supreme Court confirmed this sentence.
22. For a history of neo-Fascism in Italy, see Nicola Rao's trilogy, namely *La fiamma e la celtica* [The Flame and the Celtic] (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2006), *Il sangue e la celtica* [Blood and the Celtic] (Milan:

Sperling & Kupfer, 2008), and *Il piombo e la celtica* [Bullets and the Celtic] (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 2009).

23. Dunnage, *Twentieth Century Italy*, 185. A key role in this regard was played by the P2, a Masonic lodge of businessmen, financiers, leaders of the secret services and armed forces, magistrates, and politicians, which often disrupted the investigation of terrorist crimes. On the topic of terrorism, see also Clark, *Modern Italy*, 460–64.
24. Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency: Cultures of Revolt in Italy from 1968 to 1978* (London: Verso, 1990), 290.
25. In a situation of chaos caused by an economic crisis and terrorism, the Communist Party put forward its proposal for a "historic compromise" with the Christian Democrats. They declared they were available to restore the economy and maintain public order in exchange for social reforms. In August 1976, Giulio Andreotti formed a new Christian Democrat government which could count on the support of the Communist Party. This short-lived cooperation ceased in 1979. See Clark, *Modern Italy*, 464–67.
26. The role of the CIA in Gladio and the extent of its activities during the Cold War era, and any relationship to terrorist attacks perpetrated in the 1970s and 1980s have been investigated on several occasions by various European judiciaries. See Giovanni Fasanella, Claudio Sestrieri, and Giovanni Pellegrino, *Secret of State. The Truth from Gladio to the Moro Case* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000); Giovanni Fasanella and Giuseppe Roca, *The Mysterious Intermediary. Igor Markevitch and the Moro Case* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003); Richard Drake, *The Aldo Moro Murder Case* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1996); Tobias Hof, "The Moro Affair—Left-Wing Terrorism and Conspiracy in Italy in the Late 1970s," *Historical Social Research* 38, no.1 (2013), 129–141.
27. Foot, *Italy's Divided Memories*, 27.
28. O'Leary, *Tragedia all'italiana*, 244.
29. Cento Bull, *Italian Neofascism*.
30. Silvio Lanaro, *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana: dalla fine della guerra agli anni novanta* (Venice: Marsilio, 1992), 433.
31. Leonardo Sciascia, *L'affaire Moro* in *Opere 1971–1983*, ed. Claude Ambroise (Milan: Bompiani, 2001), 467–599. Translated by Sacha Rabinovitch as *The Moro Affair* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987).
32. Ibid., 105.
33. Ibid., 35.
34. Ibid., 45.
35. Ibid., 25.
36. Liz Wren-Owens, "The Tools of the Detective: Leonardo Sciascia's Approach to Literature in the mid to late 1970s," *Italianistica Utrechtina* (2006), 700.

37. Sergia Adamo, "The Voice of the Forgotten: Narrating Justice in Italian Culture," in "Between Literature and Law: On Voice and Voicelessness," Special issue of *Comparison: An International Journal of Comparative Literature* 1 (2003): 39–53 (43).
38. Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, 4th edition (London and Henley: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1972), 123.
39. David Coady, ed. *Conspiracy Theories: The Philosophical Debate* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 2.
40. Mark Fenster, *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
41. Ranieri Polese, *Almanacco Guanda. Il complotto. Teoria, pratica, invenzione* (Parma: Ugo Guanda, 2007), 8.
42. O'Leary, *Tragedia all'italiana*, x.
43. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 9.
44. Ibid., 10.
45. Leonardo Sciascia, *Il contesto. Una parodia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), 44; translated by Adrienne Foulke as *Equal Danger* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1984), 46.
46. Vincenzo Mantovani, *Il cattivo maestro* (Florence: Giunti, 1997); Girolamo De Michele *Tre uomini paradossali* (Turin: Einaudi, 2004) and Giampaolo Simi's *Il corpo dell'inglese* (Turin: Einaudi, 2004). Other crime novels with references to the Years of Lead are: Attilio Veraldi's *Il Vomerese* [The Man from Vomero] (Rome: Avegliano, 1980); Massimo Carlotto's *Arrivederci amore, ciao* (Rome: e/o, 2000), translated by Lawrence Venuti as *The Good-Bye Kiss* (New York: Europa Editions, 2006); and Giuseppe Genna's *Catrame* [Tar] (Milan: Mondadori, 1999). In spite of being labelled as a noir former terrorist Cesare Battisti's novel *L'ultimo sparo* (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 1998) is rather a fictionalized biopic.
47. Mantovani, *Il cattivo maestro*, 51.
48. De Michele, *Tre uomini*, 190.
49. Mantovani, *Il cattivo maestro*, 306.
50. Ibid., 147.
51. De Michele, *Tre uomini*, 137.
52. Simi, *Il corpo dell'inglese*, 131.
53. Ibid., 369.
54. Carmen Lettieri, "Le noir comme révélateur de sédiments de l'histoire. Giampaolo Simi, *Il corpo dell'inglese*," in *Cahier d'études romanes* 15, no.1 (2006): 171–184 (181).
55. Simi, *Il corpo*, 267.

56. Ibid., 328.
57. Giancarlo De Cataldo, *Romanzo criminale* (Turin: Einaudi, 2002). Translated by a Antony Shugaar as *Romanzo criminale* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015); Simone Sarasso, *Settanta* (Venice: Marsilio, 2009).
58. Apart from *Romanzo criminale*, the most famous are *Nelle mani giuste* [In the Right Hands] (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), *I traditori* [Traitors] (Turin: Einaudi, 2010), *Giudici* [Judges] (Turin: Einaudi, 2011, with Andrea Camilleri and Carlo Lucarelli), and *Suburra* (Turin: Einaudi, 2013 with Carlo Bonini).
59. The *Banda della Magliana* [The Magliana Gang] from the neighborhood in the south-western periphery of Rome from which various members of the gang originated, was involved in criminal activities during the 1970s. Starting out as an organized group of robbers with aspirations of control, within a few years the *Banda della Magliana* managed to make a significant leap in the level of its operations, reinvesting its illicit proceeds in drug trafficking, kidnapping, and setting up circles of clandestine gambling, becoming, in a short time, a veritable crime holding. It is believed to be tied to other criminal organizations such as the Mafia and the Camorra, to neo-Fascist activists, and the secret services. For an analysis of the *Banda della Magliana*'s activities, see Giovanni Bianconi, *Ragazzi di malavita. Fatti e misfatti della banda della Magliana* (Milan: Baldini&Castoldi, 1997), Gianni Flamini, *La banda della Magliana* (Milan: Kaos, 1994), and Otello Lupacchini, *Banda della Magliana. Alleanza fra Mafiosi, terroristi, spioni, politici, prelati…* (Rome: Koinè Nuove Edizioni, 2004). The *Banda della Magliana* also inspired a play entitled *Chiacchiere e sangue* [Gossip and Blood] (2003) by Daniele Costantini and a subsequent film *I fatti della banda della Magliana* [The Events of the Magliana Gang] (2005) directed by Costantini.
60. Marco Amici, "*Noir* su *noir*: Romanzo criminale e storia criminale," in *Il romanzo poliziesco*, 435–446 (435).
61. Wu Ming, "Su Giancarlo De Cataldo, Romanzo criminale," in *La Repubblica*, 20 November 2002. http://www.wumingfoundation.com/italiano/outtakes/romanzocriminale.html (consulted on 20 August 2015).
62. Mark Chu and Marco Amici, "Unearthing Collusions," 49.
63. De Cataldo, *Romanzo criminale*, 85. The English edition was not available at the time of writing. All translations are therefore mine.
64. Ibid.
65. See Sergio Flamigni, *La tela del ragno* (Milan: Edizioni Kaos, 2003) and Rita Di Giovacchino, *Il libro nero della Prima Repubblica* (Rome: Fazi Editore, 2005).
66. Ibid., 124.

67. Ibid., 124–25.
68. Ibid., 194.
69. As mentioned, Pecorelli was killed in 1979 after publishing an article in which he accused a "lucid superpower" of orchestrating Moro's kidnapping and subsequent assassination. In 2002, high-profile politician Giulio Andreotti and Cosa Nostra boss Gaetano Badalamenti were sentenced to 24 years' imprisonment for the murder of Pecorelli, but they were acquitted one year later. See also note 24.
70. Wu Ming, *New Italian Epic*, 51.
71. De Cataldo, *Romanzo criminale*, 241.
72. Ibid., 540.
73. Ibid., 215.
74. Il Vecchio is said to be inspired by Federico Umberto D'Amato, a former Italian secret service agent.
75. Ibid., 350; emphasis in the text.
76. Ibid., 216.
77. Pierpaolo Antonello and Alan O'Leary, "Sotto il segno della metafora: una conversazione con Giancarlo De Cataldo," *The Italianist* 29, no.2 (2009): 350–365 (355).
78. O'Leary, *Tragedia all'italiana*, x.
79. Antonello and O'Leary, "Sotto il segno," 354.
80. De Cataldo, *Romanzo criminale*, 257.
81. Ibid., 258.
82. Ibid., 295.
83. Giorgio Agamben, *Mezzi senza fine. Note sulla politica* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1996), 15.
84. De Cataldo, *Romanzo criminale*, 149.
85. Ibid., 215.
86. Ibid., 542.
87. Ibid., 463.
88. *Confine di Stato* (Venice: Marsilio, 2007); *Invictus: Costantino, l'imperatore guerriero* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2102), translated as *Invictus: Constantine, the Warrior Emperor* (Milan: RCS Libri and Open Road Media, 2014).
89. Chu and Amici, "Unearthing Collusions," 61.
90. Sarasso, *Confine di Stato*, 16.
91. Domenico Guzzo, "Gli anni '60 e '70 in nero: Simone Sarasso," in *Il romanzo poliziesco*, 233–46 (244).
92. Sarasso, *Confine di Stato*, 18.
93. Nicole Welgen, "Novels about Mysteries = Mystery Novels? The Lead Years in Contemporary Italian Literature," in *Bloody Italy: Essays on Crime Writing in Italian Settings*, ed. Patricia Prandini Buckler (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), 27–45 (28).

94. O'Leary, *Tragedia all'italiana*, 50.
95. Sarasso, *Confine di Stato*, 379.
96. Ibid., 397.
97. On 15 March 1972, Feltrinelli was found dead at the foot of a pylon of a high-voltage power-line at Segrate, near Milan, apparently killed by his own explosives while on an operation with other members of his terrorist group, Gruppi di Azione Partigiana [Partisan Action Groups] (GAP). Forty years after Feltrinelli died, however, previously suppressed forensic reports surfaced in the national newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*, arguing Feltrinelli had been mugged and later tied to the pylon before the bomb was detonated. The implication was that he had been killed and framed by Italian or Israeli security police (Ferruccio Pinotti, "Feltrinelli, le ombre 40 anni dopo," *Corriere della Sera*, 12 March 2012 in http://www.corriere.it/cronache/12_marzo_12/feltrinelli-inchiesta_f191ccf6-6c41-11e1-bd93-2c78bee53b56.shtml [consulted on 20 July 2015]). Others have speculated Feltrinelli was murdered by the KGB.
98. Renato Vallanzasca Costantini (b. 1950) is a notorious Italian mobster from Milan who was a powerful figure in the Milanese underworld during the 1970s. Following numerous robberies, kidnappings, murders, and many years as a fugitive, he is currently serving four consecutive life sentences with an additional 290 years in prison.
99. Maurizio Merli (1940–1989) was an Italian film actor. He became one of the most prominent actors of the *poliziotteschi* genre (a subgenre of crime and action films that emerged in Italy in the late 1960s) by starring in almost a dozen films. Recurring elements in *poliziotteschi* films include graphic and brutal violence, organized crime, car chases, vigilantism, heists, gunfights, and corruption up to the highest levels.
100. Henry Kissinger (b. 1923) served as National Security Advisor and later concurrently as Secretary of State in the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. For his actions negotiating the ceasefire in Vietnam (which was ultimately never actualized), Kissinger received the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize under controversial circumstances. Renato Curcio (b. 1941) was a co-founder (with his wife Margherita Cagol and Alberto Franceschini) of the Red Brigades. From 1972 to 1975, the couple engaged in a series of bombings and kidnappings of prominent figures. Curcio was convicted in 1976. In April 1993, he was allowed to spend the day outside the jail in order to work as writer then in 1998 he was freed. Mario Moretti (b. 1946) was a leading member of the Red Brigades in the late 1970s. He was one of the kidnappers and murderer of Aldo Moro. He was sentenced to six life sentences for his crime, but, after serving 15 years in jail, he was paroled in 1998. Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa (1920–1982) was a general of the Italian *carabinieri* notable for campaigning against terrorism during the 1970s in Italy and was later assassinated by the Mafia in Palermo.

101. Sarasso, *Settanta*, 206.
102. According to a survey commissioned by the Associazione familiari delle vittime di Bologna [Association of the Families of the Victims of the Bologna Railway Bombing], Cedost, Censis and Landis, only 22% of high school students in Bologna identified extreme right terrorists as being responsible for the Bologna attack of 2 August 1980; 34% could not answer and 21.7% pointed at the Red Brigades (Vitello, *L'album di famiglia*, 2).
103. Ibid., 461.
104. Giulio Andreotti (1919–2013) was Prime Minister of Italy and leader of the Christian Democrats. He served as Prime Minister of Italy from 1972 to 1973, from 1976 to 1979 and from 1989 to 1992. He also served as Minister of the Interior (1954 and 1978), Defence Minister (1959–1966 and 1974), and Foreign Minister (1983–1989) and was a Senator for life from 1991 until his death in 2013. Admirers of Andreotti saw him as having mediated political and social contradictions, enabling the transformation of a substantially rural country into the fifth biggest economy in the world. Critics said he had done nothing against a system of patronage that had led to pervasive corruption. At the height of his prestige as a statesman, Andreotti was subjected to damaging criminal prosecutions. Charged with colluding with Cosa Nostra, courts found he had broken the links by the 1980s, and ruled the case out of time. The most sensational allegation came from prosecutors in Perugia, who charged him with ordering the murder of Pecorelli. He was later definitively acquitted by the Supreme Court.
105. Ibid., 465.
106. Ibid., 688.
107. Ibid., 668–69.
108. Ibid., 461.
109. Ibid., 624, 612.
110. Guzzo, "Gli anni '60 e '70," 242–43.
111. Alan O′ Leary, "Italian Cinema and the *anni di piombo*," in *Journal of European Studies* 40, no.3 (2009): 243–257 (246–47).
112. Sarasso, *Settanta*, 533.
113. Ibid, 570.
114. Ibid., emphasis in the text.
115. Carloni, *L'Italia in giallo*, 183.
116. David Ward, "Fact and Fiction: Narrating Crime, Murder and Mystery in De Cataldo, Sarasso, and Saviano," Paper presented at the American Association for Italian Studies (AAIS) Conference, St. John University, New York, 7–10 May 2009.
117. Oliva, "Grande, vecchio e nell'ombra."
118. Sarasso, *Settanta*, 688.
119. Antonello and O'Leary, "Sotto il segno," 358.

120. The article published in *Il Corriere della Sera* on 14 November 1974 was later republished under the title of "Il romanzo delle stragi" [The Massacres Novel] in *Scritti corsari*, 88–93.
121. Sarasso, *Settanta*, 689.
122. Ibid., 685.
123. Wu Ming, *New Italian Epic*, 190.
124. Ibid.
125. Filippo La Porta, "Oltre la rassicurante superficie," in *Una tragedia negata*, 9–11.
126. Umberto Eco, "La sindrome del complotto," *L'Espresso*, 8 February 2008. Reprinted in Ranieri Polese ed., *Almanacco Guanda*, 27–28.
127. O'Leary, "Italian cinema," 245. On the *poliziotteschi*, see also note 20 in this chapter.
128. Andrea Pergolari, "La fisionomia del terrorismo nero nel cinema poliziesco italiano degli anni '70," in *Schermi di piombo. Il terrorismo nel cinema italiano*, ed. Christian Uva (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2007),159–72 (160).
129. Millicent Marcus, "Return of the Referent: Italian Cinema for the New Millennium," *Semiotica* 183 (2011): 263–82 (275).
130. Among the most popular recent films are Mimmo Calopresti's *La seconda volta* [The Second Time] (1995), Wilma Abate's *La mia generazione* [My generation] (1996), Marco Tullio Giordana's *La meglio gioventù* (2003, *The Best of Youth*) Marco Bellocchio's *Buongiorno, notte* (2003, *Good Morning, Night*); Renato De Maria's *La prima linea* (2009, *The Front Line*) and Guido Chiesa's *Lavorare con lentezza* (2004, *Working Slowly. Radio Alice*). Two TV fiction series were screened: Michele Soavi's *Attacco allo stato* [Attack on the State], which focuses on the new Red Brigades and *Il Sorteggio* [The Ballot] (2010), which relates the story of a member of a jury in a trial against the Red Brigades. The scholarship on the representation of terrorism in Italian cinema is now substantial. See O'Leary, "Italian cinema," and *Tragedia all'italiana*; Pierpaolo Antonello and Alan O'Leary, eds. *Imagining Terrorism: The Rhetoric and Representation of Political Violence in Italy 1969–2009* (London: Legenda, 2009); Christian Uva, *Schermi di piombo*; and Ruth Glynn, Giancarlo Lombardi, and Alan O'Leary, *Terrorism Italian Style: The Representation of Terrorism and Political Violence in Contemporary Italian Cinema* (London: IGRS Books, 2012).
131. Uva, *Schermi di piombo*, 89.
132. Christian Uva, *Ultracorpi: l'attore cinematografico nell'epoca della digital performance* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2011), 8–9.
133. Francis Fukuyama, *End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

134. Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes to the Movies. Studying History on Film* (Abington, OX: Routledge, 2007), 37.
135. Catherine O'Rawe, *Stars and Masculinity in Contemporary Italian Cinema* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2014), 141.
136. Renato De Maria, *La prima linea* (2009).
137. Pierluigi Battista, "Quei volti troppo belli per il male," *Il Corriere della sera*, 13 November 2009; Roy Menarini, "La prima linea e il tabù del terrorismo," *Il Corriere di Bologna*, 25 November 2009, 16.
138. Elio Petri, *Il maestro di Vigevano* (1963); *La decima vittima* (1965).
139. Elio Petri, *A ciascuno il suo* (1967; *We Still Kill the Old Way*).
140. *Todo modo* [One Way or Another] (1976) was another incursion into Sciascia's novels. Petri's last works were the television production of *Le mani sporche* (1978; *Dirty Hands*), an adaptation of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Mains sales*, and the film *Le buone notizie* (1980; *Good News*), starring Giancarlo Giannini.
141. Mino Argentieri, "I grotteschi di Elio Petri," in *Il cinema del riflusso. Film e cineasti italiani degli anni '70*, ed. Lino Micciché (Venice: Venexia 1997), 172–87 (174).
142. For a psychoanalytical analysis of the flashbacks in *Indagine*, see Millicent Marcus, "Petri's Investigation of a *Citizen above Suspicion*. Power as Pathology," in Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neo-realism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 263–282.
143. Roberto Curti, *Italian Crime Filmography 1968–1980* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013), 40.
144. Ibid.
145. Foot, *Divided Memories*, 184.
146. Curti, *Italian Crime Filmography*, 41. Some of these themes will be also developed in Francesco Rosi's subsequent *Cadaveri eccellenti* (1976). Its plot concerns the discovery of a conspiracy—a planned military coup—by a detective investigating a series of murders. As O'Leary explains, "*Cadaveri eccellenti* portrays Italian society as a kind of panoptical prison from which escape is impossible and in which political opposition is a convenient pretext for repression" (O'Leary, "Italian Cinema," 246).
147. In an interview, Petri said that it was useless to speak to an elite of intellectuals and that he preferred mainstream culture in order to communicate with the masses (Joan Mellen, "Cinema is not for the Elite but for the Masses. An Interview with Elio Petri," *Cineaste* 7, no.1 (1973): 8–13.
148. See, for example, Roberto Gaetano, *Il corpo e la maschera: il grottesco nel cinema italiano* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1999), 87–98 for the theme of the grotesque; Larry Portis, "The Director Who Must (Not?) Be Forgotten: Elio Petri and the Legacy of Italian Political Cinema," *Film international 44* 8, no.2 (2010), 17–29 for a political analysis; Claudio Bisani, *Indagine*

(Turin: Lindau, 2011) and Alberto Tovaglieri, *La dirompente illusione*: *il cinema italiano e il Sessantotto 1965–1980* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2014) provide a comprehensive analysis of Petri's filmography.

149. Joan Mellen, "Fascism in Contemporary Film," *Film Quarterly* 24, no.4 (1971): 2–19 (2).
150. Ibid., 19.
151. See Chap. 3.
152. Renzo Martinelli and Fabio Campus, *Piazza delle cinque lune*: *il thriller del caso Moro* (Rome: Gremese, 2003), 11–12.
153. Sergio Flamigni, *I fantasmi del passato* (Milan: Kaos, 2011).
154. O'Leary, *Tragedia all'italiana*, 54.
155. Ibid., 54.
156. Ibid., 54–55.
157. Ibid., 58.
158. Rachele Tardi, "Representation of Italian Left Political Violence in Film, Literature and Theatre (1973–2005)." Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University College London (2005), 93.
159. Paolo Cucchiarelli, *Il segreto di piazza Fontana* (Florence: Ponte delle Grazie, 2009).
160. Ezio Mauro, "Quel romanzo e la ferita aperta nel Paese," *La Repubblica*, 3 April 2012 in http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2012/04/03/news/romanzo_ferita-32659838/ (consulted on 1 August 2015); Corrado Stajano, "Giochi rischiosi fra realtà e finzione. Su 'Romanzo di una strage' di Marco Tullio Giordana," *Corriere della sera*, 28 March 2012, 25. For a summary of the criticism and support for *Romanzo di una strage* see Stefano Cardini's "Dopo aver visto *Romanzo di una strage* di Marco Tullio Giordana. Sull'utilità e il danno di (questa) storia per la vita" (9 April 2012). http://www.phenomenologylab.eu/index.php/2012/04/romanzo-di-una-strage/ (consulted on 1 September 2015).
161. Daniele Giglioli, "La favola di una strage," *Meridiana* 73/74 (2012): 283–288 (284).
162. Ibid., 284.
163. Alan O'Leary, "Introduction *to Romanzo di una strage*," in http://italiancinema-mumbai.tumblr.com/post/58502045763/introduction-to-romanzo-di-una-strage (consulted on 20 July 2015).
164. Uva, *Schermi di piombo*, 69.
165. O' Leary, "Introduction."
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid.
168. It came ninth in the list of Italian films at the box office in 2005, earning 4,822,864.44 euros. See http://www.anica.it/rassegna/anicainforma.pdf (consulted on 1 August 2015).

169. Guido Bonsaver, “Romanzo criminale,” *Sight and Sound* 16, no. 11 (November 2006), 78–81 (80).
170. Ibid., 81.
171. Uva, *Schermi di piombo*, 90.
172. Sergio Leone, *C’era una volta in America* (1984, *Once Upon a Time in America*).
173. Sebastiano Lucci, “*Romanzo criminale*: tra generazioni mancate e oscuri complotti,” *Annali d’italianistica* 30 (2012): 161–69 (162).
174. Catherine O’Rawe, “More More Moro: Music and Montage in *Romanzo criminale*,” *The Italianist* 29, no. 2(2009), 214–26 (218).
175. Uva, *Schermi di piombo*, 90.
176. O’Leary, *Tragedia all’italiana*, 81.
177. Ibid., 245–46.
178. Ibid., 82.
179. Ibid.
180. Stefano Sollina, *Romanzo criminale-La Serie* (2008 and 2010).
181. For a new perspective on crime series and TV crime series see Anderson, Miranda and Pezzotti ed., *Serial Crime Fiction: Dying for More* (Houndmills and Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2015).
182. Jasper Rees, “A Word to the Wise Guy: *Romanzo criminale* is Italy’s *The Killing* styled for the 1970s. You won’t see a cooler true-life gang tale,” *Sunday Times*, 25 September 2011, 10.
183. Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

Italian history contains open wounds, which are not only difficult to heal but which also continue to infect both Italian politics and society. Indeed, the current state of Italian politics is inextricably linked to the repression of some traumatic events. These events are at the center of the most recent *giallo* output. This volume investigates Italian crime writers and directors' attraction to history and the results of the encounter between crime and Italy's past. Due to the vast production of crime fiction in Italy, this book analyzes a selection of the most representative crime stories, film, and TV series set in pivotal periods of Italy's recent history, such as the Risorgimento; Fascism and WWII; and the Years of Lead. It concentrates on the new *giallo* wave of the 1990s and 2000s, with excursions into previous decades in order to tackle works that are particularly relevant to our discourse. This volume explores whether Italian writers and film directors use the historical setting simply as a backdrop for their stories or, rather, they weave it into the very fabric of their works, turning the storytelling into a more general investigation into history and society. Other questions this book addresses are whether the alleged fixed and repetitive structure of the crime genre allows a meaningful investigation into the past and tackles, among other things, the topic of personal and collective responsibilities and the dichotomy between regional and national identities; and whether historical *giallo*, in both book and film versions, has been able to intervene in topical debates in Italian politics and society and to reflect upon the social and political changes that have occurred in contemporary

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Italy. Using Straub's terminology, it investigates in particular whether the new wave of historical crime fiction and film of the 1990s and 2000s contributes to a "regenerative" or, rather, "innovative" recollection of the past. Finally, it investigates whether Italian crime novels and films show a relationship between the historical setting and the sub-genre used.

The representation of the past can create important imagined spaces in which national anxieties are played out. It is a cultural response to moments of change or unstable and socially deprived environments. This book highlights that crime fiction and film have worked toward the recovery of the memories of traumatic historical events, spurred by the political debate of the 1990s and 2000s (and, in particular, the rise to power of the secessionist Northern League party and the post-Fascist party *Alleanza nazionale*), and the occurrence of international terrorism since the 11 September attack.

This book focuses on several crime fiction writers who have returned to the origins of the modern Italian state spurred by the political success of separatist parties in the 1990s. It shows how by tackling the troubled relationship between north and south in all its political, social, economic, and cultural aspects, the crime novels, set in the Risorgimento, explore the origins of the still unresolved issues in the relationship between central and regional powers, and point to the fissures and weaknesses that endure in contemporary Italy. In particular, as a response to the Northern League's rhetoric, Camilleri's *Il birraio di Preston* presents an honest and proud Sicilian detective able to deal with different social classes, as well as crime organizations and authorities (and who is a precursor to the world-famous Inspector Salvo Montalbano), reclaiming dignity for Sicilians in a genre that more often than not portrays Camilleri's fellow islanders as villains. He also shows how representatives of the new Italian state—mainly Northerners—exploited local crime organizations for their own agendas, contrasting with the Northern League rhetoric of an honest north that financially supports a corrupt south. For his part, Todde challenges the representation of Sardinians as backward through the choice of the protagonist of his series, historical figure Efisio Marini, a Sardinian scientist and an embalmer who lived his life between Cagliari and Naples and travelled extensively abroad. Finally, with Fois's series featuring the Sardinian lawyer–detective–poet Sebastiano Satta, the crime novel goes even further, becoming an auspice and a proposal for a new Italian identity that is respectful of cultural differences, as an antidote to the Northern League separatist agenda, offering an "innovative" recollection of the past. By contrast, with

its portrayal of a "superior" Piedmontese civilization, Soria's *La primula di Cavour*, set in a pre-unification Turin, is the result of the extreme cultural fragmentation brought forward by a plethora of separatist parties in post-*Tangentopoli* Italy.

This book also analyzes how crime writers have responded to the revisionist debate on Fascism and WWII that took place in Italy in the 1980s and 1990s. It highlights how these writers have covered a variety of perspectives that range from the problematic representation of the "good Fascist" to the condemnation of the ambivalent attitude of many Italians who survived during the *Ventennio* without taking sides. Interestingly, the writers who endorse an open stigmatization of Fascism seem to prefer problematic stories characterized by an open ending. These are stories where justice is not done because—this is what these authors imply—justice was not a feature of Fascism in the first place. Equally interesting, the search for the culprit of a murder unveils the crimes of a despotic regime, providing an open condemnation of a period that some revisionist historians and politicians of the right tried to re-evaluate. More recently, Guccini and Macchiavelli's series featuring *maresciallo* Sansovito seems to have responded to the political climate of the 2000s when *Alleanza nazionale* took power thanks to an alliance with Prime Minister Berlusconi. Far from presenting a hagiographic representation of the Resistance, Macchiavelli and Guccini deliver a strong affirmation of the core values of a movement that, with all its flaws, fought against a dictatorship and the brutal Nazi occupation of Italy. In so doing, they contribute to a "regenerative" recollection of the past. Therefore, the two authors are on the same line with historians who reaffirm the Resistance movement as a crucial experience for a democratic and free Italy, in a period when the legacy of the Resistance was under attack. By contrast, the Fascist regime is only in the background in De Giovanni's series (also published in the 2000s) where the hero, Inspector Ricciardi, is able to solve his crimes with little interference from a regime depicted as mild and ineffective. It can be argued that the softened representation of the *Ventennio* is functional to "whodunit" stories with a clear-cut resolution of the cases allowing the detective to concentrate on his sentimental life. However, it may also be symbolic of a de-ideologized Italian society more interested in the private sphere than in the public one.

Finally this volume shows how, spurred by the new post-September 11 terrorism era and by the resurgence of the Red Brigades between 1999 and 2002, the *giallo* set in the 1970s tackled the theme of neo-Fascist

terrorism and its alleged complicity with elements of the Italian secret services during the so-called Years of Lead. In so doing, crime novels have unmercifully dug into perceived responsibilities of the Italian state in still unsolved mysteries of this era. By giving voice to the victims of terrorism, they also represent a step forward in comparison with the absolutory mainstream literature of the 1990s. In particular, Giancarlo De Cataldo's *Romanzo criminale* and Simone Sarasso's *Confine di Stato* and *Settanta* try to fill history's gaps with interpretations, suggestions, and fictional events. Their use of literature to investigate facts makes them powerful examples of the "new epic" narrative identified by collective critic Wu Ming. Struggling with the inaccessibility of important sources, these books present some flaws. In particular, they resort to a super-villain or a Moriarty-type character, following a *topos* in crime fiction. The issues of the vicinity to the facts addressed in the novels and the difficulty in pointing, without clear evidence, at culprits who could still be alive today, also contribute to making their task particularly difficult. In this case, the pattern past–present–past typical of the experience of reading crime fiction sometimes seems to go haywire because the unsolved past of the Years of Lead is still—and very painfully—present. This is particularly evident in cinema set in this troubled period of Italian history. Films such as Placido's *Romanzo criminale*—the film adaptation of De Cataldo's *Romanzo criminale*—De Maria's *La prima linea*, and Tullio Giordana's *Romanzo di una strage* have caused heated debates around alleged glamorization of terrorists and their endeavors, and the exploitation of tragic events to produce cheap and entertaining films. Among the most controversial films, *Romanzo di una strage* aims to offer an "innovative" recollection of the Piazza Fontana bombing in Milan through a "bipartisan" closure to an open chapter in Italian history.

The role of the cinema in interpreting history is also demonstrated in the analysis of two classics: Germi's *Un maledetto imbroglio* and Petri's *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*. Turning Gadda's *Quer pasticciaccio* into a hard-boiled film, Germi makes his *Un maledetto imbroglio* a powerful example of the very function of historical narratives. Indeed, by pointing to the flaws of the progressive Americanization of Italian society in the 1950s through a story originally set during Fascism, he appropriates the mental process undergone by the reader of historical fiction. For its part, through the figure of the unnamed and sadist detective-protagonist, Petri's masterpiece recalls the evils of Fascism and points at the danger of an authoritarian turn in the 1970s, generating a powerful present–past–present pattern.

This study also highlights the role of broadcast TV in supporting a revisionist interpretation of Fascism and WWII though the production of films such as *Il sangue dei vinti*. It also analyzes TV series set in this period and, in particular, the series inspired by Lucarelli's crime novels. It shows how this TV series waters down the political themes and the discourse on personal responsibilities in a dictatorship in order to please an allegedly less sophisticated audience. Indeed, a disempowered detective in the novel, Inspector De Luca, is turned into a champion of the "good Fascists." Therefore, the Inspector De Luca series (and the more recent Inspector Nardone series) constitutes a missed opportunity for broadcast TV to effectively participate in a debate about collective and personal responsibilities in the darkest period of Italy's recent history. Conversely, the TV series *Romanzo criminale* shows how, through being free from the political constraints of broadcast TV, cable TV has been able to produce a high-quality show that deals effectively with the Years of Lead. The length of the series allows dwelling on the criminal protagonists' psyche and puts their behavior in the context of life in poverty-stricken suburbia in the 1970s. The span of the series also allows the criminal story to be set in the context of political and social issues of the time, such as an insight into the student movement and its ambiguities, police brutality, and right and left terrorism.

This volume shows that in the *giallo* output there is not a univocal response to political and social debates about Italian history. Indeed, it hosts a variety of interpretations, especially with regard to the Risorgimento and Fascism, showing once more the presence of diametrically opposed memories that make history still very present. The theme of the Years of Lead seems more uniformly described under the umbrella of the conspiracy theory, even though with different shades. In any case, with few exceptions, history is in the foreground of the story, and the investigation into a single case often enlarges into an investigation into history and its flaws. Italian crime fiction re-examines historical events, giving new interpretations or reiterating historical interpretations attacked by a mounting revisionism. In so doing, it also recuperates awareness and fights a general amnesia in some of the most pivotal periods of Italy's recent history. In other words, acting as "metahistorical novel," the historical *giallo* novels and films comment on history rather than simply representing it, shaping new ways of relating to the past. This happens thanks to skilful use of typical characters of the crime narrative, such as the detective, the victim, and the perpetrator. Sometimes tropes of crime fiction, such as the super-villain

of the whodunit sub-genre, end up trivializing some discourses on personal and collective responsibilities, but more often than not the use of the *topos* of the investigation itself—that is always a search into past events—becomes a powerful tool to dig into history and its mysteries. It is not by chance that the "problematic" *giallo*, a crime story with an open ending or where the culprit is not assured to justice, is the most frequent frame used to address topics such as injustice and social and political oppression. However, almost always, even the whodunit formula, which offers the solution to the case investigated, hosts interesting discourses related to the difficult relationship between central and local governments and cultures (especially in the case of crime stories set in the Risorgimento). It also showcases troubled detectives who find it difficult to negotiate between their loyalty to the state and their personal idea of justice (especially with crime stories set during Fascism).

As mentioned, the historical *giallo* output offers a wide variety of stories and interpretations of relevant issues in Italy's recent history. If anything, one common denominator may be the description of the Italian state as the culprit for its inability to create "Italians" after unifying Italy, for the denial of basic civil rights and the indoctrination of an entire population during Fascism, and for its alleged complicity with right-wing terrorism in the 1970s as a response to the political climate of the Cold War.

The study of historical crime fiction confirms that the genre is a model of investigative fiction that, in Petronio's words, is not only a "tale," but also a "message." In other words, the historical *giallo* deals with the past in order to make sense of what Italy is today. By travelling into crucial periods of Italy's recent history through historical crime fiction, this volume also explores the transformations that have occurred in post-war Italy's social and political fabric. By disputing the idea that crime fiction is a mechanical and repetitive exercise, it is the first study to examine comprehensively the many fascinating ways in which Italian crime fiction confronts history and its open wounds. A powerful cultural response to moments of change and instability, the *giallo* fiction and film penetrate the interstices of history and interpret the past. Questioning the collective recollection of the past, historical crime fiction recovers memory from silence and investigates whether the past is really past and in what ways it still haunts our present.

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